



Media Release

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Top Honour for Camberwell PhD Student

Camberwell resident Prue Cowin is capitalising on her days in the science lab at Camberwell Girls' Grammar as she continues to make her mark in medical research.

Prue, a second-year PhD student with the Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR), received the Postgraduate Student Prize for Biological Sciences from the prestigious Royal Society of Victoria on Tuesday 15 August, for her research into prostate disease.

"Winning this award was great recognition for the exciting work I'm doing with my team at the moment," said Prue. "In February this year, we announced how we grew human prostate tissue from embryonic stem cells, which was a world first."

"Our discovery means there is now the perfect research tool to study the development of prostate cancer, as well as benign prostate disease, which while not life-threatening, affects the quality of life of 80% of men aged over 80."

"As we learn more about how prostate disease develops, this breakthrough will also be an ideal model to test the effectiveness of potential new drugs developed to treat these diseases," she said.

The Royal Society of Victoria prize is just the latest in a long line of awards Prue has recently received. As well as awards from MIMR and Monash University, she has won travel grants from the Australian Stem Cell Centre and the National Health and Medical Research Council to present her research in places as far flung as the Hunter Valley, Canada and Italy.

"The awards and travel are great, but I just consider myself lucky to be working in an area I'm passionate about, under the supervision of Professor Gail Risbridger, who is internationally recognised for her work in this field," Prue said.

More information:

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About the Monash Institute of Medical Research

MIMR has an international reputation for research into stem cell biology, cancer, reproduction, development, prostate disease, the role of genes and disease, women's health and inflammation.

Since its establishment as the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development (MIRD) in 1991, the Institute's scientists and clinicians have received international recognition for their work in the vitally important areas of conception, growth, birth and development, in both the human and animal areas. Thousands of Australians have benefited from the scientists' research, including infertile young people, parents of premature babies, and men with prostate cancer.

On 1 February 2005, in recognition of MIRD's evolution beyond reproduction and development, the Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR) was born. MIMR's inception cemented the close medical research ties between MIRD, Monash University and Southern Health.

MIMR's Founding Director and newly-appointed Victorian Governor, Professor David de Kretser AC, established a strong legacy of excellence in research and scientific collaboration. This vision is shared by MIMR's new Director, Professor Bryan Williams, one of America's most accomplished cancer experts.

In keeping with this vision, collaboration is high on MIMR's agenda. The Institute is part of the Monash Health Research Precinct; a collaboration with Monash University, Southern Health and Prince Henry's Institute. This partnership between scientists and clinicians has become a strong union of scientific and clinical expertise, experience and resources.