

Emerging researchers supported with Victorian Near-miss Awards

Announcing the 11 recipients of the *Victorian Near-miss Award Pilot*, launched this year by The Victorian Chapter of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (VicAAMRI) and veski as part of the Victorian Health and Medical Research Workforce Project.

Health and medical researchers from the state of Victoria have an impressive grant application success rate overall, but every year, good research goes unfunded as applications are scored just below the cut-off. While not every application can be supported, systemic inequities and disadvantage make success less likely for women, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People; and people with a disability.

The Victorian Near-miss Award pilot addresses this disadvantage by supporting the best eligible but unfunded Victorian applicants from these groups at the 2021 NHMRC Emerging Leader level 2 scheme.

This year, 11 outstanding medical researchers were awarded the Victorian Near-miss Award. Each award is valued at \$74,000AUD, and is matched with a cash contribution of the same value from their primary employer.

The 11 recipients of the Victorian Near-miss Award are outstanding researchers in their fields and are also members of groups that typically face barriers to success in research. They are based in labs across a broad range of medical disciplines including neuroscience, physiotherapy, mental health and structural biology.

The Victorian Near-miss Award recipients in 2022 are:

- Sarah Bendall, **The University of Melbourne**
- Richard Birkinshaw, **WEHI**
- Karen Caeyenberghs, **Deakin University**
- Laura Hart, **The University of Melbourne**
- Eliza Hawkes, **Monash University**
- Kathryn Hayward, **The University of Melbourne**
- Anne-Marie Laslett, **La Trobe University**
- Alisa Pedrana, **Burnet Institute**
- Bridgette Semple, **Monash University**
- Sheena Sullivan, **Melbourne Health**
- Nicole Van Bergen, **Murdoch Children's Research Institute**

“These eleven awardees are among Victoria’s most outstanding emerging researchers. They represent the great diversity that makes Victoria’s health and medical research sector a world leader,” said Professor Elizabeth Hartland, VicAAMRI Chair and Deputy Chair of the Victorian Health and Medical Research Workforce Project’s Expert Working Group.

“We are proud to have developed this program, in partnership with the Victorian Government, that supports the ongoing work of these highly valued mid-career researchers,” said Professor Hartland.

Funding for the Pilot has been provided by the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. The awards are being administered by veski for the Victorian Health and Medical Research Workforce

Project on behalf of the Victorian Government and the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes.

Ms Julia Page, MD & chief executive of **veski** said that these awards are an exciting positive step towards greater inclusion and diversity in medical science.

“Being able to support these exceptional researchers to continue their work will have far-reaching effects on medical knowledge and breakthroughs, ensuring the sector continues to grow and innovate,” said Ms Page.

Visit [veski's website](#) for more information on the recipients of the awards.

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About the Victorian Health and Medical Research Workforce Project

The Victorian Health and Medical Research Workforce Project is being delivered by the Victorian Chapter of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes on behalf of the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. The Project is overseen by a diverse Expert Working Group that represents Victoria's entire health and medical research sector.



Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions



About VicAAMRI

VicAAMRI represents 14 of Victoria's world-class independent medical research institutes. Our members work to deliver better health outcomes through cutting-edge research across a wide range of health and disease areas. VicAAMRI aims to strengthen Victoria's medical research sector by raising the profile of health and medical research and the role of medical research institutes in building a healthy and prosperous Victoria.

About veski

veski was established to enhance Victoria's intellectual capital through a program of fellowships, awards, and international networks. **veski** is at the forefront of Australia's innovation economy. Since its inception in 2004, **veski** has been instrumental in building Australia's intellectual capital and innovation capacity.