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NSW Proof of Concept grants assist medical technology development

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The NSW Government has announced a series of grants to help innovative life science companies develop promising new medical technologies.

The Proof of Concept program aims to help emerging companies take their research discoveries from the laboratory to market.

A total of 10 Proof of Concept grants have been awarded to NSW biotechnology or medical device companies, with further funding rounds to follow.

The assistance includes a \$100,000 grant to North Ryde company EnGeneIC Pty Ltd to help it develop nanocell technology to fight cancer.

Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth said EnGeneIC's technology offers hope for a new weapon in the fight against many different types of solid tumours, such as breast, colorectal, lymphoma and liver cancers.

"The technology uses bacteria to create microscopic shells called "nanocells", 1/100,000th the width of a human hair," she said.

"These tiny nanocells would carry anti-cancer drugs into tumours so they can attack cancer cells directly, without harming other healthy parts of a patient's body.

"Better targeted treatment means more effective doses can be used and the side-effects for patients can be minimised."

EnGeneIC now plans to develop manufacturing methods for specific doses of the nanocells and to conduct further tests to prove the technology works.

Other NSW Government Proof of Concept grants include:

- A \$69,865 grant to Bondi Junction company Seagull Technology to further test a non-invasive method to treat macular degeneration, Australia's leading cause of blindness. Seagull's technology could replace the current treatment method of injections to the back of the eye with a far safer and more comfortable process using gels, ultrasound and electrical stimulation.
- A \$100,000 grant to Acu Rate Pty Ltd, a Mosman company that has invented a simple, physics-based model for controlling flow on intravenous drips. Acu Rate devices are expected to cost as little as \$1-\$2 each and will do away with the need for expensive IV electric pump systems that can cost up to \$1,000.
- A \$100,000 grant to Ablantenn Pty Ltd, a Westmead company that has invented a new surgical tool to treat irregular heart rhythm. The tool is a manoeuvrable catheter that emits microwave radiation to clear scar tissue in the heart that causes irregular heart beats. Ablantenn Pty Ltd will use the grant to refine and test a patented prototype that will eventually be targeted for United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval.
- A \$96,949 grant to Rosebery company TeleMedCare Pty Ltd to develop a monitoring device that warns frail users when they are in danger of a fall and allows them to talk instantly to a carer at the touch of a button. The technology is aimed to assist the third of people over the age of 65 who suffer falls each year.
- A \$71,038 grant to Brookvale company Special Phage Holdings Pty Ltd (SPH) to develop cocktails of bacteria-eating viruses (bacteriophages) that preliminary tests suggest are effective against antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

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