



## **The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**

Minister for Health

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

15 November 2018

#### **\$4 million to fund research into Autism**

The Liberal National Government will provide nearly \$4 million in funding for new research into autism, helping find better diagnosis, treatment and care for those affected by the developmental condition.

The research funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council has been allocated for five projects across Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales.

Professor Anthony Hannan, from the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health in Melbourne, will receive \$571,890 for his research that will focus on understanding what causes attention deficits in Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This project will provide new insights into brain changes that cause autism and identify targets for the development of new treatments.

Autism Spectrum Disorder involves abnormal brain maturation, cognition and behaviour and about one in 150 people in Australia have some form of autism.

Autism can range from mild to severe, and include difficulty in social interaction, restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviour and impaired communication skills.

These projects bring together the best people in their field to produce high-quality research to ensure that we continue to transform lives.

Every breakthrough brings us closer to an answer to autism, which makes every piece of research that much more important.

This funding continues the Government's strong commitment to supporting the best health and medical research.

The Liberal National Government is prioritising better mental health for all Australians with an additional \$338.1 million allocated in the 2018–19 Budget and \$4.7 billion expected to be spent on mental health this financial year.

(ENDS)

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

## List of grant recipients

<b>Chief Investigator</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>Funding amount</b>
Professor Anthony Hannan	Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health	What Causes Attention Deficits in Autism Spectrum Disorder?	\$571,890
Professor Sarah Medland	QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute	Examining the impact of changes to diagnostic criteria on Autism Spectrum and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders	\$1,523,438
Dr Jess Nithianantharajah	Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health	Mapping learning-dependent remodelling of synapse balance across the brain	\$735,723
Professor Cheryl Dissanayake	La Trobe University	School-age Outcomes of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Parental Wellbeing: Investigations on the contribution of Method-of-Referral and Age-of-Diagnosis	\$473,475
Dr Michael Bowen	University of Sydney	Characterising and exploiting $\delta$ subunit-containing GABA-A receptors as novel targets for treating social disorders	\$634,841