

Media Release

\$1.7 million awarded to Australian biomedical researchers through philanthropic Ramaciotti Foundations

Awards champion Australian-based research, highlight impact of philanthropy on health and wellbeing of millions worldwide

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More than \$1.7 million has been awarded to seven biomedical researchers, as Perpetual announced the recipients of the 2017 Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Awards for Biomedical Research.

The philanthropic ambition of Vera Ramaciotti, who established the Foundations in 1970, has seen more than \$59 million awarded to Australian biomedical researchers. Past winners have been responsible for the development of the world's first cervical cancer vaccines and the Cochlear implant – highlighting the unmeasurable positive impact philanthropy can have on the lives of millions of people worldwide.

The biennial **Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Award**, worth \$1 million, has been granted to **Professor Katharina Gaus** of The University of New South Wales' *School of Medical Sciences*.

The award will establish the *Ramaciotti Systems Microscopy Facility* at UNSW, the first facility dedicated to Systems Microscopy in Australia. Systems Microscopy is establishing a new gold-standard in biomedical research. It combines state-of-the-art imaging of individual molecules and single cells with complex biological systems, delivering transformative insights into human health and disease to inform improved diagnostics and therapies in cancer, immunology, neuroscience, metabolic disorders and regenerative medicine.

Accepting the award, Professor Gaus said: "It's an incredible honour to receive the Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Award. Australia is a world leader in biomedical research, and my peers across Australia – in many different specialties – are dedicated to improving the lives of millions of people worldwide.

"I am truly humbled to receive this award, which will help to establish the first Australian facility dedicated to Systems Microscopy. Systems Microscopy is shaping the future of biomedical research, and it's so exciting this new facility will strengthen Australia's leadership in the area.

"This award is testament to 12 years of continuous work, an achievement not possible without the support of my UNSW research partners, Professor Peter Gunning, Dr John Lock, and Dr Renee Whan," Professor Gaus said.

Professor Susan Clark of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research has been selected as the recipient of the **Ramaciotti Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research**, an annual award of \$50,000, to honour an outstanding discovery in clinical or experimental biomedical research. Professor Clark's ground-breaking discoveries in cancer DNA biology have led to new tests for early cancer detection.

Up to \$150,000 will also be allocated to each of the five recipients of the **Ramaciotti Health Investment Grants**. The grants are awarded to autonomous early career scientists to support health or medical research with a potential path to clinical application within five years. The recipients of the **2017 Ramaciotti Health Investment Grants** are:

Researcher	Institution	Project title
Dr Julie Brown	University of New South Wales	Development of guidelines for use of comfort and orthopaedic aids for older people travelling in cars
Dr Roisin McMahon	Griffith University	Overcoming the resistance: new antimicrobials that disarm, rather than destroy bacteria
Dr Freda Passam	Heart Research Institute	Targeting protein disulphide isomerase for the prevention of thrombotic disease
Dr Natasha Rogers	Westmead Institute for Medical Research	Normothermic machine perfusion to improve kidney transplant outcomes
Dr Makrina Totsika	Queensland University of Technology	Novel antimicrobial therapies for multidrug resistant bacteria

Commenting on the significance of the awards, Perpetual's National Manager of Philanthropy and Non Profit Services, Caitriona Fay, said: "As trustee of the Ramaciotti Foundations, we are proud of our continuous support of the Australian biomedical community.

"The Ramaciotti Foundations are one of the largest private contributors to biomedical research in Australia and have provided essential support to some of our most remarkable scientists since 1970.

"We have witnessed first-hand the life changing impact that philanthropy can have on society. Thanks to Vera Ramaciotti's vision and the legacy she has created, she has helped shape the futures of not only the recipients, but people worldwide who will benefit from their work," Ms Fay said.

Professor Derek Hart of The University of Sydney led the Ramaciotti Scientific Advisory Committee which directed Perpetual in selecting the grant recipients.

"We had an extraordinarily difficult time selecting from the outstanding array of applications for each accolade – Australian biomedical research is truly a leading contributor to worldwide clinical practice advancements," Professor Hart said.

On the work of Professor Gaus, Professor Hart added: "The work to significantly progress Systems Microscopy capabilities in Australia will make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the most important biomedical issues of our time. We expect the facility created by Professor Gaus to stimulate a collaborative research community and substantially support translational research activity."

Commenting on the grant recipients, Professor Hart said: "The Health Investment Grants cannot be underestimated in the assistance they provide to our best young researchers as they move their work into practical clinical application. The potential contribution of some of these projects is enormous, and we look forward to seeing the impact of the grants on these significant research undertakings."

This year the Foundations are awarding a total of \$1,710,000 to biomedical research through the distribution of the biennial Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Award, the Ramaciotti Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research and the Ramaciotti Health Investment Grants.

These grants bring the total funds distributed by the Ramaciotti Foundations to over \$59 million since 1970.

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Note to editors

About the Ramaciotti Foundations

Managed by Perpetual, the Ramaciotti Foundations started off with \$6.7 million in funds in 1970 with the first major grant going to the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in 1971. This assisted with the establishment of the new Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Research Laboratories building. Since then, the Foundations have donated over \$57 million to biomedical research and are one of the largest private contributors to the field. The Ramaciotti Foundations continue to support biomedical research and each year make significant distributions via the Ramaciotti Awards, providing funding support to areas such as molecular biology, genetics and immunology, and assisting young investigators taking up new challenges in biomedical research.

For more information about the Ramaciotti Foundations visit www.perpetual.com.au/ramaciotti

Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Award

This \$1 million grant is awarded every two years to a group or individual undertaking biomedical research within universities, public hospitals, medical research institutes or other similar organisations. The award funds projects including personnel, equipment, major infrastructure improvements or new laboratories that help an existing, well-funded program of research or enable a major new program to begin. Traditionally, it funds a need that would not attract funding elsewhere. The Ramaciotti Scientific Advisory Committee helps Perpetual select the winner from nominations received.

About the Ramaciotti Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research

The Ramaciotti Medal is an annual award of \$50,000. The Medal honours an individual who has made an outstanding discovery (or discoveries) in clinical or experimental biomedical research that has had an important impact on biomedical science, clinical science, or the way in which healthcare is delivered. To be eligible for the Ramaciotti Medal, the greater part of the nominee's work leading to the discovery (or discoveries) must have been conducted in Australia and they must still be actively engaged in this work. The applicant must be peer nominated and the final recipient is selected based on a recommendation by the Ramaciotti Scientific Advisory Committee to Perpetual. Many past winners are highly regarded individuals in the top echelon of the biomedical research industry. High profile past winners include Professor Sam Berkovic, Professor Chris Parish, Professor TJ Martin, Professor Robert Baxter and Professor Ian Frazer. Professor Carola Vinuesa was the 2015 recipient.

About the Ramaciotti Health Investment Grants

Ramaciotti Health Investment grants of up to \$150,000 are awarded to individuals in universities, public hospitals or institutes for a contribution towards the undertaking of health or medical research with the potential path to clinical application within five years. A Health Investment grant is intended to provide enabling research support for an autonomous early career investigator who is taking, or has recently taken, a substantive position. Grants are awarded by Perpetual, Trustee of the Foundations, on the recommendation of a dedicated Scientific Advisory Committee.

About Perpetual Philanthropic Services

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers and distributors of philanthropic funds with \$2.6 billion in funds under advice (as at 30 June 2017). Perpetual is trustee for approximately 1000 [charitable trusts and endowments](#) and provides individuals and families with advice on establishing charitable foundations and structured giving programs. Perpetual also assists charities and not-for-profit organisations with [investment advice and management](#).

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