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Australia announces $20 M funding boost for childhood brain cancer research

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The Australian Government is investing close to $20 million in funding for researchers to support groundbreaking national research that will give new hope to Australian children, adolescents and young adults with childhood brain cancers, including Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG).

Brain tumours are the most common solid tumour cancer among Australian children and are often fatal. DIPG is a rare and incredibly aggressive brain tumour. It is almost exclusively diagnosed in children, with most children living for only nine months following diagnosis.

Three universities successfully applied for funding through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) 2024 Paediatric Brain Cancer Research grants.

The grant opportunity included $14 million to establish a national childhood brain cancer clinical trial consortium, and $6 million for early-stage clinical research to increase our understanding of childhood brain cancer and develop new treatments.

Monash University researchers will receive $2 million to work towards improving outcomes for children with high-grade gliomas, including DIPG by developing new therapies which target specific genetic mutations.

They were also awarded $14 million for the CoACT-Brain Cancer: The Consortium for Australian Children's Trials in Brain Cancer project. This will ensure children with brain cancer can access the world's most promising clinical trials.

The University of Newcastle ($2 million) will use cutting edge technologies including artificial intelligence to develop a treatment regimen to improve outcomes for children with diffuse midline glioma.

The University of Western Australia received $1.1 million to develop safer and more effective treatments for rare brain cancers in babies. This research will build on existing evidence which shows newer drugs are more likely to kill cancerous cells.

This research funding follows the Australian Government's move in 2024 to ensure families have access to ONC201, an experimental medicine targeting DIPG.