

Philanthropy supports prostate cancer research

Underfunding and lack of awareness has prompted Australian philanthropist Daniel Petre to donate \$2M to the Sydney Medical School at the University of Sydney.

The funds will be used to appoint a Chair of Prostate Cancer research at the University of Sydney, who will work closely with cancer researchers based at the Garvan Institute for Medical research. It is the first such Chair in Australia.

Petre says the male cancer, which remains one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in Australia, does not receive the attention nor the support it deserves in the wider community.

“It’s a hormonal cancer just like breast cancer in women and the repercussions of treatment can be quite profound for men.”

“At this stage researchers are still working on prognosis and treatment strategies that will identify those men who require the removal of their gland and those who don’t.

“The repercussions of prostate cancer surgery can be daunting and one men would choose to avoid. Those men considering surgical treatment are facing high odds of impotency,” says Petre.

The head of the Petre Foundation said the University of Sydney had the right approach to collaborative cross-disciplinary medical research and he hoped his donation would increase the chances of finding a cure and raise awareness of prostate cancer.

He is encouraging other wealthy Australians to follow his example:

“Investment in a university has many benefits. Firstly it is an investment in Australia’s academic future but it is also an investment in the future health of Australians through the discovery of new treatments and prevention strategies.

“It is a simple choice for me and one I would encourage others to make”, he said.

The University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence said

“This is a wonderful act of generosity by the Petre family. Support like this is an endorsement of the lifesaving and transformational research that is being conducted at University of Sydney.

“It is a great privilege to accept these funds on behalf to the University of Sydney.

“Matching the donation with the best possible use in prostate cancer research at the Garvan Institute will yield a greater benefit than would have been possible by either institution alone.”

Professor Rob Sutherland, director of the Garvan Institute’s Cancer Research Program said:

“At the Garvan we take a multidisciplinary approach to prostate cancer research using the expertise of a number of cancer researchers within and outside Garvan, including clinicians and pathologists from a number of Sydney’s major teaching hospitals including the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and St Vincent’s Hospital.”

The funds provided by the Petre family will help us seek and engage the best possible prostate cancer expert,” he said.

Currently the Petre Foundation also supports a Chair of Breast Cancer Research at the Garvan Institute and neuromuscular research at the Institute for Neuromuscular Research, Children's Hospital at Westmead.