



# **Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Friday 22 August 2014**

#### **CHILDREN'S CANCER PIONEER NAMED NSW OUTSTANDING CANCER RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR**

The state's top honour for cancer research has been awarded this evening to renowned children's cancer specialist Professor Michelle Haber AM.

The Cancer Institute NSW Premier's Awards for Cancer Research is an annual event that celebrates excellence and innovation in cancer research. Seven awards were presented tonight to those leading the way in their field.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner, who represented NSW Premier Mike Baird at the event, presented the Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year Award to Professor Haber.

"Professor Haber is internationally recognised for her world-class research into improving treatment for children diagnosed with neuroblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer, and acute lymphoblastic leukaemia," Mrs Skinner said.

"Her research is changing the lives of many children diagnosed with cancer. Her work on personalised medicine is not only changing how we treat cancers across the spectrum but also how children's medical research is looked at across many disciplines.

"In presenting Professor Haber with this award we are recognising her vital work with the Children's Cancer Institute and the Kids Cancer Alliance Translational Research Centre, which is delivering real advances in the treatment of childhood cancers.

"Each year, more than 600 Australian children are diagnosed with cancer. Due to the dedication of researchers and clinicians, eight out of 10 of these children will survive their cancer and go on to live a full and fun life."

It was a big night for women in cancer research with female researchers accepting five of the seven awards handed out.

"There is a wealth of outstanding and dedicated talent in NSW and events like this shine a bright light on the future directions of cancer research in this state," Mrs Skinner said.

"The NSW Government is committed to building the state's cancer research capacity to help attract and retain the calibre of researchers we are celebrating at this event.

“Supporting innovation in cancer care is critical, which is why the NSW Government invests over \$200 million annually in medical research to pursue best outcomes for patients and first-class support for researchers.”

NSW Premier Mike Baird said \$34 million was allocated in this year’s NSW Budget for the Cancer Institute NSW to support and manage cancer research programs, including translational research, clinical trials and career support for cancer researchers across the state.

“Research is at the heart of unlocking more effective treatments for cancer and the NSW Government is committed to supporting the state’s cancer research,” Premier Baird said.

“I congratulate Professor Michelle Haber and others on the honours given to them tonight.

“I have no greater admiration than for researchers like Professor Haber, whose work is not just transforming lives but also saving them.”

Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW Professor David Currow said the state’s cancer researchers are among the best in the world.

“The work of our researchers is testament to their collaboration and dedication, as they discover new insights, novel therapies and, ultimately treatments, that will improve the lives of people affected by cancer.

“When we look at the achievements of those represented among tonight’s winners, it is clear how important it is that we continue to invest in cancer research so we continue to attract to NSW the finest research minds.”