

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED TO LEADING OBSTETRIC, BIOTECH AND BEREAVEMENT CARE RESEARCHERS

Leading stillbirth parent advocacy group, Stillbirth Foundation Australia (the Foundation), today announced major funding for three ground-breaking stillbirth research projects.

**The grants will fund a clinical trial of an innovative wearable patch to monitor baby's movements in utero; evidence-based bereavement care guidelines for parents; and a first-ever study of bereaved parent's experience during the labour and birth of a stillborn baby.**

The Foundation's CEO, Leigh Brezler, said the grants highlight the Foundation's commitment to reducing the incidence of stillbirth, which occurs six times a day in Australia.

"With six children stillborn every day in Australia, further research to improve quality of care for pregnant women and to more effectively support families is urgently needed," Ms Brezler said.

"These grants will support the development of innovative and non-invasive ways to monitor fetal health and wellbeing, and work to ensure the provision of high-quality care to support women and their families at the time of a stillbirth."

**The Foundation has awarded \$50,000 to Professor Euan Wallace, Dr Vinayak Smith and their team to fund a clinical trial of *FetalKicks*, a wearable, band-aid size patch to continuously monitor fetal movements.**

This innovative patch combines obstetric and bioengineering expertise to address one of the most important warning signs of stillbirth – decreased fetal movements. *FetalKicks* will provide simple, continuous, and objective measure of fetal movements.

**\$49,500 has been awarded to Associate Professor Jane Warland for a new study on birthing in grief, which will explore bereaved parents' experience of the labour and birth of their stillborn baby.**

This will address a critical gap in guidance for maternity care providers caring for bereaved families during labour including ways to facilitate supportive, respectful and empowering experiences during the birth of a baby who has died.

**Finally, \$40,000 has been awarded to Associate Professor Fran Boyle at the University of Queensland to test and pilot in a hospital setting the parent-version of the national clinical guidelines on care around the time of stillbirth and neonatal death.**

This will work to give parents access to evidence-based information about perinatal bereavement care and to assist them in shared decision-making with health care professionals at their point of loss.



Ms Brezler acknowledged the extraordinary efforts of the Foundation’s supporters in making these grants possible.

“This research is only possible because of the extraordinary efforts of the Foundation’s supporters, who give up their time to raise funds to invest into research priorities,” she said.

“We are grateful to our supporters, from bereaved parents to their wider circles of friends, family and colleagues, who devote their time, effort and money to stop stillbirth from happening to others.

“We also acknowledge and appreciate all of the researchers who share our vision of ending preventable stillbirths and supporting bereaved families who are impacted by this tragedy.”

To find out more about Stillbirth Foundation Australia visit: [www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au](http://www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au)

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