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Cancer projects short-listed for grants

Five potentially life-saving projects have been short-listed for millions of dollars of funding from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation.

The winning projects will be announced on November 13 after a rigorous selection process led by Professor Ian Frazer, co-creator of the cervical cancer vaccine.

"Grants for this purpose and of this magnitude are not available from other sources, outside of government," says foundation chief executive David Brettell.

"There have been incredible, lifesaving breakthroughs in cancer research over recent years."

The organisations short-listed for funding are the Children's Cancer Institute Australia, Queensland Institute of Medical Research, the Children's Medical Research Institute, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute and Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

Around \$10 million is available to share among the selected projects, which will each receive \$2 million to \$5 million.

Their proposals include a centre for child cancer patients at high risk of relapse, funding for hi-tech imaging equipment and a facility to help identify personalised treatment options.

The foundation is privately funded and relies on contributions from individuals, families, companies and community groups. It has awarded \$60 million toward cancer research in the past seven years, and more than \$86 million since it was founded in 1984.

Mr Brettell says initial grants often act as a litmus test for other funding.

"The more private philanthropy there is, the more complementary funding there will be from governments and individuals.

"Some of Australia's very best cancer research ideas stay on the shelf due to lack of sufficient and on-time funding.

"Australia needs more private philanthropy to ensure we aren't losing time on breakthrough research and patient care."