



# Media Release

**THE Viertel  
Charitable  
FOUNDATION**

Sylvia and Charles Viertel  
Charitable Foundation

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## **Viertel Charitable Foundation awards Senior Medical Research Fellowships**

The Trustees of the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation have announced two recipients of the Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship for 2008, one of the most prestigious awards for young biomedical researchers in Australia.

The recipients are Dr Gabrielle Belz from The Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; whose research is titled 'Cellular and transcriptional shaping of naïve and memory T cell development in immunity', and Dr Paul Ekert from Murdoch Children's Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne; whose research is titled 'Genetic analysis of cell death, oncogenic co-operativity and growth-factor signaling in IL-3 dependent lines'.

As recipients of the Viertel Medical Research Fellowship, Dr Belz and Dr Ekert join a distinguished group of scientists who have received these awards. The Fellowships have played an important role in fostering the development of some of Australia's most accomplished young biomedical and clinical scientists, by providing significant funding over a five year period (currently \$195,000 per year) to allow them to pursue their research.

Professor Don Cameron, Chairman of the Viertel Medical Advisory Board said: "In his role as a Viertel Senior Research Fellow, Dr Ekert will undertake basic studies into the role of growth factors and their withdrawal in cancer, particularly leukaemia, which will provide a basis for new treatments.

"Dr Belz has made major contributions in immunology," Professor Cameron said. "As a Viertel Senior Research Fellow she will lead a team investigating how the immune system works, which has important implications for our understanding of malignancy, infectious diseases and autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis."

The Trustees have also awarded five Clinical Investigatorships consisting of a one-off grant of \$60,000 designed to assist clinicians to establish research programs within the clinical setting.

The Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation, one of the largest charitable foundations in Australia, was established to support organisations involved in medical research in the area of alleviating the hardship of the elderly. Mr George Curphey, Justice Debra Mullins, Mr Rex Freudenberg and ANZ Trustees are the trustees of the Viertel Charitable Foundation.

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