

Inaugural Helen Thomas Early Career Fellowship in Type 1 Diabetes announced

In recognition of her significant contributions to type 1 diabetes research, the Australian Diabetes Society (ADS), Breakthrough T1D Australia, Diabetes Victoria and St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research (SVI) established the Helen Thomas Early Career Fellowship in Type 1 Diabetes.

Dr Kylie Jevon has been named as the inaugural fellow for 2026. The funding, valued at \$80,000 for one year plus a \$5,000 travel and conference allowance, will support her work towards discoveries in type 1 diabetes.

Dr Jevon completed her PhD at the University of Sydney, where she spent several years gaining expertise on type 1 diabetes from a beta cell perspective.

"I became motivated to broaden my understanding of type 1 diabetes by exploring the immune system mechanisms that drive it," she says.

"This led me to move to Melbourne to pursue postdoctoral training with Professor Tom Kay.

"My long-term career goal is to establish an independent research group in the field of type 1 diabetes, where I will be able to translate my findings to the clinic and make an impact in the lives of people with type 1."

Dr Jevon's research seeks to understand how to harness T cell exhaustion to treat type 1 diabetes. T cells are white blood cells that destroy other infected cells to protect the body from disease, but mistakenly attack the body's own beta cells in people with type 1 diabetes.

"I'm hopeful my research will find ways to prolong the efficacy of immune therapies such as baricitinib and [teplizumab](#)," she explains.

"We are at a pivotal moment in type 1 diabetes research, with the long-awaited emergence of disease-modifying therapies that have the potential to shift the treatment landscape.

"I am excited to contribute to this by building on the strong foundation our lab has established in studying the mechanism of action of JAK inhibitors."

"I am honoured to be named as the Inaugural Helen Thomas Fellow. As an early career researcher, this fellowship represents a major step toward becoming an independent researcher."

The research promises real-world impact for people in the early stages of type 1 diabetes.

"This research has the potential to prolong immune therapies that can delay the onset of stage 3 type 1 diabetes," says Diabetes Victoria CEO Professor Glen Noonan.

"If we can find a way to make these treatments effective for a longer time, we give people more time without the daily load of managing type 1 with insulin therapy. Ultimately this leads to better health outcomes."

ADS CEO Professor Sof Andrikopoulos says supporting early career researchers is vital.

"It is important to empower young researchers early in their career, as they will be the next generation driving future breakthroughs in diabetes treatment," Professor Andrikopoulos says.

"Fellowships like this one help young researchers establish themselves in the field."

Breakthrough Type 1 Diabetes CEO Sydney Yovic says research focusing on intervention is changing the type 1 diabetes landscape.

"Research focused on disease-modifying therapies like Dr Jevon's work aims to slow down and one day prevent type 1 progression," she says.

"Delaying the onset reduces the risk of complications. In time, we hope disease-modifying therapies will give children who are developing type 1 a childhood free from the condition."

Professor Helen Thomas served as Associate Director and Head of the Islet Biology Lab at SVI. Her groundbreaking work deepened the understanding of the autoimmune processes that destroy insulin-producing cells, paving the way for improved therapies.

"Helen was an exemplary research leader, providing empathetic support and supervision to many and building a high functioning research group and a network of friends and collaborators across Australia and all around the world," says SVI Director Professor Tom Kay.

"She was loved, respected, trusted and admired by her many collaborators and colleagues. The fellowship is a powerful and fitting tribute to Helen's lifelong commitment to research and the growth of young talent."

Image: Professor Helen Thomas. Courtesy of St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research.

