

## **Media Statement - Alan Carpenter on 15/5/2006**

### **Government of Western Australia**

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Portfolio: Premier

#### **Multi-million dollar boost for brain and spinal research**

15/5/06

Premier Alan Carpenter has today announced \$8million over five years to boost vital Western Australian research into the treatment and repair of brain and spinal cord injuries.

The Premier said the initiative would be funded by the recently announced increase in fines for speeding and other driving offences that increased the risk of serious injury or death on WA roads.

"This new funding will enable the work of the internationally-renowned Neurotrauma Research Program (NRP) at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) to continue," Mr Carpenter said.

"The funding will also be used to pilot NRP's new exercise rehabilitation and recovery program known as the 'Move Again Program' (MAP).

"The MAP initiative aims to use exercise to improve the physical fitness, emotional wellbeing, social function and mental health of people with neurological injury."

The Premier said road crashes were the leading cause of brain and spinal injuries.

"In 2005, 335 people were hospitalised in WA with significant brain or spinal injuries as a result of road crashes," he said.

"This is a tragic statistic and when there are estimates of 17,000 people already living with consequences of neurotrauma, it gives you a sense of how important this research is to the WA community.

"The annual economic impact of neurotrauma on the WA community is estimated to be more than \$150million.

"The human impact is immeasurable.

"WA is at the forefront of neuroscience research and this work needs to continue if we are to make a real difference to the lives of neurotrauma patients and their families."

Mr Carpenter said the State Government, through the WA Road Safety Council, had provided \$500,000 each year to the Neurotrauma Research Program since its inception in 1998.

The program has four major research areas:

- prevention and reduction of secondary nerve damage after injury;
- regeneration and repair after injury;
- training and rehabilitation to promote functional recovery; and
- clinical evaluation of potential new therapies.

The Premier said the work of the NRP had gained a strong national and international reputation since the program's inception in 1998.

"Over the last six years, scientists with the NRP have made significant discoveries that help promote recovery from brain and spinal injuries," he said.

The NRP involves collaboration between neuroscientists from the University of Western Australia, Royal Perth and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospitals and the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research.

The MAP initiative has been developed by the NRP in collaboration with Royal Perth Hospital's Shenton Park Campus, Curtin University of Technology, Notre Dame University and the University of Western Australia's School of Human Movement.

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