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Media Statement

## **NEW CLINICAL TRIALS FACILITY WELCOMED FOR BETTER HEALTH**

WA's premier adult medical research institute has welcomed the announcement that the State will soon become home to an early stage clinical trials facility, saying the move will give fresh hope to many West Australian patients and provide critical infrastructure for the state's fledgling biotech sector.

Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) Director Professor Peter Klinken said he was delighted with the State Government's \$9.95 million commitment to establishing the state-of-the-art centre at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Nedlands.

"Research has shown that patients who enrol in clinical trials live longer and have a better quality of life than those who don't take part, so this initiative is critical," said Professor Klinken.

"We expect the setting up of this early phase clinical trials facility will have major health benefits for West Australians as they'll be able to take part in trials of exciting new medicines and treatments that otherwise may not have been possible."

WAIMR Co-deputy Director Professor Peter Leedman said the establishment of an early stage (phase I and II) clinical trials centre would also deliver economic benefits to the State's burgeoning medical research industry.

"With Australia's excellent reputation for high standards and efficiency in clinical trials, global pharmaceutical companies keen to trial breakthrough treatments are ready and waiting to work with this new world-class facility," said Professor Leedman.

"It's an investment that really creates WA as an exciting one-stop clinical research shop that will allow joint projects with the pharmaceutical industry."

Professor Peter Thompson, also a Co-deputy Director of WAIMR, said the facility would also mean local biotechnology companies and WAIMR scientists could trial new discoveries and compounds here in WA.

"In the past, these companies would generally have had to conduct trials interstate or overseas, so this is a great boost for them," he said.

"What's also exciting is that it opens the door for slashing the time it will take for us to take fresh breakthroughs from the laboratory to hospital bedside and into the community."

North Metropolitan Area Health Service Acting Chief Executive, Dr David Russell-Weisz, said the announcement of the early stage clinical trials facility had come at an excellent time.

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"The timing couldn't be better as we plan for the \$536 million redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site," Dr Russell-Weisz said.

"This campus is already a world leader when it comes to research.

"The new early stage clinical trials facility will enhance the Hospital's overall research capability benefiting patients in the long run and medicine as a whole."

Ausbiotech WA co-chair Janet Preuss said the facility would enable WA's biotechnology industry to not only build on WA's renowned capabilities in the clinical research area, but would provide additional incentives and opportunities for local companies to remain in WA.

"It will also further promote collaboration with interstate and international groups, and provide an additional stimulus for a greater presence of major pharmaceutical and biotechnology players in WA," she said.

Investment in medical research in WA currently stands at \$35 million a year. Pharmaceutical-industry sponsored clinical trials currently contribute around \$15 million annually to the State's economy.

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