



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Wednesday May 9, 2007

MEDIA STATEMENT

FEDERAL FUNDING WELCOMED FOR RESEARCH HUBS

The Directors of WA's premier research institutes have welcomed the Federal Government's decision to commit \$100 million to the creation of two state-of-the-art medical research hubs for the State.

The research hubs are an initiative of a new alliance called the Western Australian Institutes for Health which brings together 24 research organisations that undertake 95 per cent of medical research in WA.

To establish these centres of research excellence the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR), the Lions Eye Institute (LEI) and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (TICHR) will combine with researchers from The University of Western Australia (UWA) as well as smaller specialised research teams and hospital clinicians.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said the funding allocated in the 2007-08 budget had come on top of the State Government's commitment of \$80 million and The University of Western Australia's (UWA) commitment of \$50 million, and was critical to allowing WA to compete on a global scale.

"The development of these two major facilities will create first-class research precincts that will allow us to take WA's medical breakthroughs from the bench and translate them into life-saving treatments for patients in as short a time as possible," said Professor Klinken.

"This will be made possible as these iconic buildings act as a beacon to bring the best clinical and laboratory-based minds together and establish a critical mass to work for better health for the entire community."

One of the research buildings will be built at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, the site of a newly announced early phase Clinical Trials Facility and one at the Fiona Stanley Hospital campus at Murdoch.

TICHR Director Professor Fiona Stanley said: "this great support from the Federal government will enable exciting synergies and collaborations, enhancing our capacity to reduce the major health problems of the 21st century. The new buildings will concentrate research excellence around the two major teaching hospitals, influencing both clinical care and prevention."

As well as health benefits, Professor Klinken said these new research hubs would deliver WA many economic spin-offs.

"There is no doubt these state-of-the-art centres will pique the interest of international pharmaceutical companies and generate investment that will lead to new jobs," he said.

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Professor Ian Constable from the Lions Eye Institute said science was vital to the community's welfare.

"Without internationally competitive science in WA, our economy will suffer and our quality of life will deteriorate," said Professor Constable.

Putting funds into science research will produce results for WA.

"Look at California: the fifth-biggest economy in the world, and the biggest science and research base anywhere," said Professor Constable.

"If we can become a scientifically competitive state, we can be like that too."

Professor Alan Robson, Vice-Chancellor, of The University of Western Australia, said the Federal Government's commitment marked one of the most significant steps forward taken in medical research in the State's history.

"Western Australia needs to build a massive capacity for research in all areas, but we are now well placed to drive forward by capitalising on the crop of talented medical researchers within the State for the benefit of the community at large," he said.

"The University of Western Australia is proud to be a part of this significant commitment to a partnership which reflects our goal of achieving international excellence for the benefit of all Western Australians."

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Media contact:

Natalie Papadopoulos
WAIMR Media Consultant
m0407 984 435