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Media Statement

NEW CLINICAL TRIALS CENTRE TO BOOST WA ROLE IN HEALTH BREAKTHROUGHS

WA is set to play a bigger role in ensuring new treatments for potentially life-threatening diseases make it into the community with the opening of the State's first early phase clinical trials facility.

The Western Australian Institute for Medical Research's (WAIMR) \$9.4 million facility at QEII Medical Centre in Nedlands was opened this morning by Acting Premier and Health Minister Kim Hames and Treasurer Troy Buswell.

The facility will be operated by wholly-owned subsidiary Linear Clinical Research Limited.

WAIMR director Professor Peter Klinken said these sorts of studies were the crucial first step in approving new medications for patient use.

"Not only will the centre help bring new treatments to people affected by many diseases, it will create jobs, and keep WA at the cutting-edge of clinical research," he said.

"It will also, for the first time, allow WA biotechnology companies to conduct the first tests on new compounds and medications in their own backyard – and that early work is a critical cog in the journey from medical breakthrough to patient treatment."

WAIMR deputy director Professor Peter Leedman said while WA had for some time been internationally-recognised for its capacity to conduct later phase clinical trials (phase-II and III), the ability to conduct early phase research was critical.

"The number of pharmaceutical companies interested in conducting phase-I clinical trials in Australia is on the rise and we've already been fielding calls and providing information about this new facility," said Professor Leedman.

"We also expect this world-class centre to lead to more phase-II and III trials taking place in WA which will give local patients better and faster access to new treatments."

The facility is Australia's fifth early phase clinical trials centre and will be led by Cameron Johnson who has held a number of coordinator and managerial positions across a range of phase-I to phase-IV clinical trials operations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and London.

Pharmaceutical-industry sponsored clinical trials currently contribute around \$15 million annually to the State's economy.

WAIMR is WA's premier adult medical research institute.

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