



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT BOOSTS TRANSLATIONAL CANCER RESEARCH BY \$19.3 MILLION

Health Minister and Medical Research Minister Jillian Skinner today announced \$19.3 million in funding for three new cancer research centres which will translate cancer research into patient care.

The three new research hubs will join four already operating in NSW through the Cancer Institute NSW Translational Cancer Research Program.

The three new Translational Cancer Research Centres will continue to bring together researchers with clinicians from Local Health Districts to collaborate on cancer programs.

Their work will cover a broad spectrum, from research into how cancers work and developing treatments and interventions to translating the knowledge gained into clinical practice and testing the effectiveness of these treatments through clinical trials.

“I am proud this investment of \$19.3 million by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will ensure our state continues to lead the way in improving outcomes for people diagnosed with cancer,” Mrs Skinner said.

“It is vital we ensure benchtop research meets the bedside needs of people affected by cancer in NSW.

“NSW’s translational cancer research program facilitates cutting-edge discoveries that will see the rapid translation of research into real outcomes for people with cancer.”

The \$19.3 million funds three new Translational Cancer Research Centres over five years. They are:

- **Hunter Cancer Research Alliance (\$6.5 million):** a collaboration between the University of Newcastle, Hunter New England Local Health District and Hunter Medical Research Institute.
- **Centre for Oncology Education and Research Translation (\$6.5 million):** a collaboration between South Western Sydney Local Health District, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and ACT Health.
- **Northern Translational Cancer Research Centre (\$6.3 million):** researchers from the Kolling Institute of Medical Research, Royal North Shore Hospital, Mater Hospital, Macquarie University and Sydney University will work closely together to bring new cancer investigations and treatments into routine practice.

Two examples of the way in which the Cancer Institute NSW Translational Cancer Research Program has taken discoveries from bench to the bedside are:

- In the Hunter - researchers undertook clinical trials of a new method of genome sequencing called Next Generation Sequencing (NGS). This research confirmed that NGS has the power to more rapidly and effectively screen women for BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, which cause breast cancer. The researchers have now engaged a number of Cancer Genetics Services and Surgical Oncology Units to offer NGS testing at family clinics in the Hunter. Since its implementation, the number of women referred to the services has increased more than three-fold.
- In south western Sydney - translational cancer researchers designed an integrated MRI-linear accelerator with which a cancer can be imaged when the patient moves during treatment. As a result, the patient's treatment can be adapted in real-time so that the radiation is always targeting the tumour rather than healthy tissue and organs. With this technology, researchers suggest that, for lung cancer radiotherapy, they will increase the overall survival by 25 per cent and reduce toxic side effects by 25 per cent.

NSW Chief Cancer Officer and Cancer Institute NSW chief executive Professor David Currow said today is an important day for cancer research in NSW.

“Cancer is not one disease but many different diseases. By uniting researchers through this Translational Cancer Research Program, we are giving NSW the best chance to understand how different cancers work and develop targeted new treatments,” Professor Currow said.

“More importantly, outcomes can be translated rapidly from bench to bedside, improving outcomes for the close to 40,000 people in NSW diagnosed with cancer each year.”

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government invests over \$200 million annually in medical research.