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NSW GOVERNMENT LEADS WAY ON MEDICAL RESEARCH

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will continue its multi-million investment in health and medical research in 2014-15, cementing the state's reputation as a centre of excellence in innovation, Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research Jillian Skinner said today.

Key medical research initiatives in the 2014-15 NSW Budget include:

- **\$6 million** for the Sydney Genomic Collaborative Program as part of an \$24 million, four-year investment in using genetic technologies to improve patient outcomes.
- **\$1 million** for the Pathogen Genomics Partnerships Program, to facilitate research into sequencing dangerous bugs, leading to patients being treated faster in the event of an outbreak of disease among the population.
- **\$1.5 million** over three years for NSW Health Pathology to establish a state-wide approach to research bio-banks.
- **\$34 million** continued investment for Cancer Institute NSW to support and manage cancer research programs, including translational research, clinical trials and career support for cancer researchers across the state.
- **\$7.7 million** for the Medical Devices Fund to support the development of medical devices that will lead to better treatment options and patient outcomes. This is on top of the \$10.3 million awarded in the inaugural round of funding.
- **\$448,000** over two years for a postdoctoral fellowship in medical device commercialisation. The fellowship - the first of its kind in Australia - will see two researchers chosen to work with medical device organisations in California.
- **\$44 million** towards the Medical Research Support Program to support independent research institutes - part of a \$150 million commitment over the first four-year term of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government.

Mrs Skinner said investment in research is vital to the future of the health system.

"The Sydney Genomic Collaborative Program is the most exciting new venture I've seen in my time as Minister for Medical Research," she said.

"Genomics is based upon the development and sharing of genomic databases. Sequencing of large cohorts of patients has the potential to unleash amazing improvement in health and efficiencies in health spending.

"Over time, these advances will fundamentally change the way medicine is practised, with a new focus on preventive healthcare and targeted treatments

“This investment will provide NSW researchers with access to state-of-the-art genomic technologies and establish a national leadership role for NSW in the vital area.”

Mrs Skinner said the 2014-15 Budget also includes significant support for the research workforce.

“Investing in the Medical Research Support Program is essential as it gives researchers within independent medical research institutes the financial security to concentrate on their vital work,” she said.

“And we will continue to fund the Medical Devices Fund, which supports local innovation and assists inventors to bring their ideas to commercial reality.

“Medical devices can have a life-changing effect on patients, as Australia’s own cochlear ear implant did when it was brought to market.

“If the recipients of the next round of the Medical Devices Fund are as impressive as the last, we will be fortunate indeed.”

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Government invests over \$200 million annually in medical research.

“Research cannot be an after-thought - it is at the heart of the modern health care system and has the potential to profoundly impact lives for the better,” she said.

“The NSW Government will continue to support innovation, as well as translational research, which allows us to take our brightest ideas from the bench top to the bedside, where they directly impact on patients’ lives.”