



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Minister for Women  
Minister for Science and Medical Research  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment & Water**

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### **NSW GOVERNMENT INVESTS IN COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE RESEARCH**

The NSW Government will provide \$600,000 to research that will broaden the scientific community's understanding of complementary therapies and alternative medicines.

Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth said the funding will accelerate the establishment of a National Institute for Complementary Medicine at the University of Western Sydney, supplementing the \$4 million recently committed by the Commonwealth Government.

"Australians spend between \$1 and \$2 billion on complementary medicines each year, with up to three-quarters of adults using at least one product," said Ms Firth.

"What's more, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has predicted that by 2050 the global herbal medicines industry will be worth US\$5 trillion.

"With so many people turning to complementary and alternative medicines, the development of a rigorous scientific basis for their ongoing use is absolutely essential.

"There is a strong public interest in establishing the safety and effectiveness of complementary medicines, and determining how best to integrate those products that work with modern medicine to achieve better public health outcomes.

"The announcement I make today will help achieve precisely this, broadening our understanding of the industry, its practitioners and products.

"The University of Western Sydney is also an ideal site for the National Institute as it has long been a leader in this field of research.

"In particular, the University's Centre for Complementary Medicine Research (CompleMED) is highly regarded for its world-class expertise in traditional Chinese medicine."

The roles of the soon-to-be established National Institute for Complementary Medicine will include:

- Articulate national priorities for research themes and activities;

- Coordinate national collaboration across these themes and activities with a particular focus on clinical trials and herbal pharmacology activities;
- Train the research workers to support the industry's research needs as it expands nationally and internationally;
- Disseminate research data reviews, protocols and findings to medical and health practitioners as well as the general public.

“The NSW Government’s investment will enable the National Institute to target and attract the growing international investment now flowing into complementary medicine clinical trials, including the Chinese Government’s \$450 million funding package designed to internationalise Chinese herbal medicines,” said Ms Firth.

“Australia, and particularly NSW, already has a strong reputation as the leading worldwide site for undertaking complementary medicine clinical trials.”

Within Australia, nearly half of all research centres, 60 per cent of researchers and 50 per cent of funded research projects are located in NSW. For example, the University of Sydney, Southern Cross University and University of Western Sydney are each home to specialized complementary research centres.

“NSW also dominates the complementary medicines industry with at least 30 companies now active in components of the industry,” said Ms Firth.

“The NSW Government investment in the National Institute for Complementary Medicine will build on this existing skills base, helping to tap into the health gains and economic potential of complementary therapies and alternative medicines.”

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