



MEDIA STATEMENT

Verity Firth

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

Wednesday, 14 November 2007

WORLD DIABETES DAY 2007

NSW LEADS NATIONAL RESEARCH TO TACKLE DIABETES

STATE PLAN TARGET S2: Improve survival rates and quality of life for people with potentially fatal or chronic illness through improvements in health care

STATE PLAN TARGET P1: Continue to increase business through making NSW a more attractive place to do business

On *World Diabetes Day 2007*, the Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth has declared the world-leading Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre open for business.

Ms Firth said the Centre – a joint initiative of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF) – has relocated from Melbourne to Sydney with the assistance of the NSW Government.

“The new Centre will provide strong leadership in the battle against diabetes and I am particularly proud that this globally renowned Centre is now based at the Garvan Institute in Darlinghurst,” said Mr Firth.

“The NSW Government’s \$750,000 investment in this facility is about supporting the search for better treatments, and ultimately, cures.

“It will also play an important part in attracting, retaining, and developing research talent by supporting our best researchers in the search for solutions that help drive improved health outcomes for the community – and the clinical care we provide.”

Its move to Sydney will strengthen the Centre’s clinical research capacity, create a number of high skill jobs, and boost existing NSW strengths in this important area of medical research.

“The new Centre will build on NSW’s unique research capabilities in this area and take the next steps in translational research to develop the therapies needed in our community to delay or stop the onset of Type 1 diabetes,” said Ms Firth.

The Centre will be able to work alongside leading NSW diabetes research groups such as the Garvan Institute of Medical Research; Westmead Hospital's Institute of Diabetes and Endocrinology; Royal North Shore Hospital's Sutton Arthritis Research Laboratories; and the UNSW's Diabetes Transplant Unit.

The specific focus of the Centre – Type 1 diabetes, also known as juvenile or early onset diabetes – affects about 140,000 Australians, accounting for 10 to 15 per cent of all diabetes cases and responsible for over 40 per cent of Australia's diabetes-related health care costs.

The Centre is currently facilitating a nationwide Phase II clinical trial which aims to prevent Type 1 diabetes in those identified as being at higher risk – namely, first and second degree relatives of those who already have the disease.

“Having the DVDC in Sydney will raise the State's profile and expertise in this key area of health research as well as provide opportunities to attract new funding to NSW from the Commonwealth and international philanthropic organisations,” said Ms Firth.

“It will also be a major focal point for dedicated research to enhance our understanding of diabetes and help develop better treatments.

“Ultimately, it will position NSW and Australia as a world leader in the search for better treatments for diabetes, ensuring that we are well placed to translate laboratory discoveries into treatments for local sufferers.”

A recognised world expert and NSW-based researcher, Dr Grey from the Garvan Institute, is working towards a cure for Type 1 diabetes and has attracted nearly \$5 million in peer-reviewed grant income over the past three years.

More broadly, NSW Government support for the Centre builds on:

- Efforts to make NSW a leading centre for stem cell technologies;
- Business friendly initiatives for the clinical trials sector, including establishment of the NSW Clinical Trials Business Development Centre.

“These initiatives are about the NSW Government encouraging innovation to find better treatments, and possibly cures, for a whole range of common diseases and conditions including diabetes, cancer, heart disease and spinal cord injury,” said Ms Firth.

“Today's launch of the Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre brings better treatments and cures for diabetes one step closer to reality.”

The NSW Government will continue to support strategies that achieve better health, social and economic outcomes for the people of NSW.

Media Contact: Jeff Singleton 0410 476 890