

Jodi McKay

Minister for Tourism
Minister for the Hunter
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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NSW PARLIAMENT HOSTS 'KIDS IN THE HOUSE' TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT JUVENILE DIABETES

The NSW Parliament will tomorrow host 40 children who suffer from juvenile diabetes and their parents to raise public awareness and support for research into the disease, Minister for Science and Medical Research Jodi McKay said.

Ms McKay said juvenile diabetes – otherwise known as type 1 diabetes - affects over 8,600 Australian children under the age of 18 with the diagnosis rate growing by three per cent a year.

"Tomorrow's visit to Parliament by 40 young diabetes sufferers aged 2-17 and their families, called Kids in the House, has been organised by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) with the support of the NSW Government," Ms McKay said.

"A research dinner will be held at the Strangers Dining Room at Parliament tonight (November 24) at which NSW's most prominent type 1 diabetes researchers will meet with MPs to discuss the latest research into the disease.

"Tomorrow the children, parents and JDRF representatives will attend the Legislative Assembly to speak to MPs about their experiences in dealing with juvenile diabetes and the importance of pursuing research to help find a cure."

Ms McKay said over the next three years an estimated 3,576 more young people will be diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.

"Diabetes is a major health priority, and type 1 is a condition which has a very significant impact on patients."

Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented and there is currently no cure. 95 per cent of all children under the age of 18 diagnosed with diabetes have type 1 diabetes. Unlike type 2 diabetes, it is not caused by diet or lifestyle.

"These kids have to be injected with insulin at least four times a day, placing a huge burden on them and their parents," said Ms McKay.

Ms McKay said Kids in the House will highlight the impact of type 1 diabetes on children and the need to support ongoing research into a cure.

"Fortunately, tremendous work in type 1 diabetes research is being undertaken here in NSW maintaining hopes for a future cure," Ms McKay said.

"The \$7 million that JDRF invests in type 1 research in NSW alone each year is one of the most significant investments by a single philanthropic organisation in this State.

NSW hosts two major type 1 research projects. The Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre at the Garvan Institute, supported by the NSW Government, aims to develop vaccines to prevent or delay early onset diabetes.

The Islet Transplantation Program, has been established to help move islet transplantation from being a experimental procedure to a more widely available clinical option for people with type 1 diabetes. Westmead Hospital is a pioneer in islet transplantation, a procedure where islets from a donor pancreas are transplanted into another person to produce insulin. A total of 8 transplants have been completed in NSW to date.

"The NSW Government's \$64 million Medical Research Support Program is also providing essential research infrastructure to help tackle diseases like type 1 diabetes," said Ms McKay.

"Our \$400,000 BioFirst Award has attracted internationally renowned researcher Dr Shane Grey to the Garvan Institute to progress research on ways to protect islet cells after transplantation.

"The NSW Government is also working to develop targeted medical research networks including paediatric pharmaceutical clinical trials which will incorporate type 1 diabetes research. A specific juvenile diabetes research network is also under consideration.

"Significant gains have been achieved over the past 15 years to improve the quality of life for children suffering from type 1 diabetes and deal with the complications that arise from it.

"The challenge before us is to maintain the positive momentum towards finding a cure."

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