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 UNIVERSITIES STRONGLY COMPETITIVE IN ATTRACTING INVESTMENT UNDER THE NATION BUILDING PACKAGE

NSW university research facilities have received a major boost from the Federal Government's $4.7 billion Nation Building Package, Minister for Science and Medical Research Jodi McKay said.

Ms McKay said the package includes $245 million in contributions to four major NSW university research projects under the first round of the Education Investment Fund.

"I welcome the Federal Government's investment in new NSW university research initiatives and infrastructure which will help drive innovation and competitiveness in NSW as well as contribute to positive education, economic, social and environmental outcomes for Australia," Ms McKay said.

"This investment recognises the importance of the research, teaching and learning capacity of our universities and the importance of a world class higher education system to provide the skills we need in a globally competitive market place."

The University of Sydney will receive $95 million over four years to support the development of a Centre for Obesity, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease to target the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of three of the leading causes of death and disability in Australia.

Ms McKay said the University of New South Wales (UNSW) will receive $75 million over three years to support the establishment of an Energy Technologies Building.

"The Building will be the centrepiece of a new Centre for Energy Research and Policy Analysis (CERPA) to ensure Australia remains globally competitive in energy technology and policy," Ms McKay said.

"This includes carbon capture and storage, hot rock reservoirs and environmental markets and policy."

Ms McKay said Macquarie University will receive $40 million over three years to help establish the Macquarie University Hearing Hub, a world-class hearing research and teaching facility.

“The facility’s research focus will be mapping brain/hearing function, understanding auditory processing, assessing auditory system disorders, developing hearing aid and implant technologies, and improving strategies for rehabilitation and learning to hear.”

Ms McKay said the University of Wollongong will receive $35 million over four years to support the establishment of a SMART Infrastructure Facility, a world first to transform the way that infrastructure-related disciplines are taught and researched.

“This is an exciting outcome for NSW. With Federal Government and university partner contributions, these projects reflect a total investment of over $740 million in this State and will see over $620 million of new construction commencing in the short term,” she said.

“Congratulations to these four NSW universities which were selected from a competitive field of 55 applicants from across the nation.

“I am excited by the role that these facilities will play in our future and wish them every success.”

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NSW UNIVERSITY PROJECTS – BACKGROUND DETAIL

- The Centre for Obesity, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease at the University of Sydney will be a major health and life sciences precinct providing a single research environment that combines enabling science, biomedical science, clinical science and population sciences. It will house researchers from the university as well as the Sydney Institutes for Health and Medical Research. Obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease are three of the leading causes of death and disability in Australia and the project will target the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of these diseases. The Commonwealth will invest $95 million over four years and the project will have a total cost of $406 million and is expected to be completed in 2013. The Centre will support innovative teaching, research and research training in state-of-the-art facilities that will help attract and develop world-class students, clinicians and researchers.
- UNSW will establish a Energy Technologies Building as the focal point for its new Centre for Energy Research and Policy Analysis (CERPA). The building will support UNSW’s world-leading work in photovoltaics as well as research into carbon capture and storage, reservoir characterisation, nanomaterials and policy and market analysis. The construction is designed to be carbon neutral, providing a high-profile demonstration of energy efficiency. Australia faces enormous challenges from the impacts of climate change and the Energy Technologies Building will address these needs by creating a suite of infrastructure to support new research programs, teaching and industry collaboration in emerging and rapidly growing areas of critical importance to Australia’s energy security and long-term international climate treaty obligations. The Commonwealth will invest $75 million over three years and the project has a total cost of $155 million. Planning for the project is

underway and construction is expected to be completed in late 2011 or early 2012. The Energy Technologies Building's state-of-the-art laboratories and high-tech facilities will ensure Australia remains globally competitive in energy technology and policy. It will integrate teaching, learning, research and demonstration facilities in an area of national importance; allow UNSW to build critical mass in research into carbon capture and storage, hot rock reservoirs and environmental markets and policy; house a range of nationally significant infrastructure such as a photovoltaic pilot line; and provide formal learning and teaching spaces for 300 engineering students.

- Macquarie University will build a world-class hearing research and teaching facility - the Macquarie University Hearing Hub - bringing together key university research groups in hearing and cognitive sciences, neurosurgery, special education, and electronic engineering with major organisations involved in developing hearing technologies and services. About 1 in 6 Australians have a hearing loss and, with an ageing population, this is estimated to rise to 1 in 4 by the year 2050. The Macquarie University Hearing Hub will help address this by having a significant impact on quality of life for people suffering hearing loss, with substantial consequent economic and social benefits for Australia. The Commonwealth will invest $40 million over three years with a total project cost of $100.6 million. Planning is underway and construction is expected to start in late 2009 with the project due for completion in 2011. The Hearing Hub will enable internationally leading advances in mapping brain/hearing function, understanding auditory processing, assessing auditory system disorders, developing hearing aid and implant technologies, and improving strategies for rehabilitation and learning to hear.
- The University of Wollongong will create the SMART Infrastructure Facility, a world first comprehensive research and training infrastructure facility of integrated laboratories that will transform the way that infrastructure-related disciplines are taught and researched. Facilities will include lecture theatres, specialised research and teaching laboratories and collaborative research spaces. Crucial to Australia's social, economic and environmental prosperity is the reliable operation of our complex web of interdependent infrastructure rail, air, telecommunications, road, shipping, power, water and others. The University of Wollongong will establish a facility that addresses infrastructure challenges and opportunities and provides for efficient, innovative and smart solutions. The Commonwealth will invest $35 million over four years and the project has a total cost of $81.8 million. Planning is underway and construction is expected to start in early-mid 2009 with the project due for completion in late 2010. The SMART Infrastructure Facility will deliver practical training for engineers, scientists, mathematicians and other relevant professions at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels to ensure a future supply of infrastructure professionals. It will also provide support for the management, deployment, risk assessment and optimisation of Australian infrastructure.