



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. Tony Stewart MP
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)

****EMBARGOED UNTIL 5AM Monday, September 29, 2008****

MINISTER SUPPORTS HUNTER INSTITUTE'S BID FOR FEDERAL FUNDING

Minister for Science and Medical Research, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer), Tony Stewart, today congratulated the Hunter Medical Research Institute for their latest groundbreaking research into newborn health.

"This latest research, which has only just been published, examines why baby boys are more susceptible to being stillborn," Mr Stewart said during his visit to the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI).

"This is another example of the high quality research carried out by HMRI which can save lives and improve quality of life.

"The Rees Government is pleased to work in partnership with the Federal Government in supporting HMRI's vital work and providing new premises – the Clinical Research and Development Building – to bring the Institute and University of Newcastle researchers under the one roof at John Hunter Hospital," Mr Stewart said.

"The State Government has already supplied \$17 million towards this important project, with the Federal Government to date contributing \$10 million.

"The Rees Government is supportive of HMRI's bid for a further \$35 million of Federal funding for the building project, to help promote the Institute's high quality medical research," Mr Stewart said.

Mr Stewart said he has also written to the Federal Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon, requesting a meeting with her to discuss his concern NSW's share of medical research had declined under the previous Howard Liberal Government.

"This important area was not afforded appropriate attention by the former Howard Government, and if this issue is not addressed urgently then real funding levels will continue to decline," Mr Stewart said.

"As the new Minister for this area, I will build on the higher level of engagement, initiated by my predecessor, between the NSW Government and the Commonwealth agencies administering medical research funding programs.

"I want to ensure NSW receives the funding level required to enhance research capacity, to strengthen our fight against terrible diseases - with cancer at the top of that list," Mr Stewart said.

Media contact: Gail Knox 0407 414 424

****12.45PM Monday, September 29 – Media photo opportunity with the Minister and HMRI newborn health researchers in John Hunter Hospital's maternity ward.****