

Jodi McKay

Minister for Tourism
Minister for the Hunter
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister for Women



Thursday 4th March 2010

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS RESEARCH SUPPORTED WITH \$1.4 MILLION

The NSW Government and Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia today announced \$1.4 million in funding and a new network to help researchers in their battle against Multiple Sclerosis.

Minister for Science and Medical Research, Jodi McKay, and Executive Director of Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia, Jeremy Wright, announced the historic funding and new network.

Ms McKay said the NSW Government is providing around \$270,000 to assist in setting up the NSW Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Research and Clinical Trials Network.

“The NSW MS Research and Clinical Trials Network will help bring the State’s researchers together and streamline the clinical trials process,” Ms McKay said.

“The funds will support a Multiple Sclerosis Clinical Trials Coordinator, and provide secretariat and grant writing support.

“This new initiative will build stronger links between individual researchers and provide better coordination, expansion and streamlining for important clinical trials.

“Providing a streamlined clinical trials process will make NSW and Australia a far more attractive and easier place to conduct MS research and clinical trials for MS treatments.

Mr Wright welcomed the NSW Government funding and said the new network would help support increased collaboration by MS researchers across the State.

“This initiative will help the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the Brain & Mind Research Institute, the Westmead Millennium Institute and St Vincent’s Hospital share their knowledge,” Mr Wright said.

“It will also ensure a more concentrated level of MS research and coordinate a clear disease-specific strategy for MS research in NSW and across Australia.

“This approach will help to deliver better treatments, prevention and hopefully one day, a cure.”

Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia (MSRA) is investing \$970,000 to continue the promising work of Sydney-based scientists involved in the network.

Mr Wright said MSRA’s investment would support two new fellowships for continued research into genetics and neuropathology.

“The unprecedented level of investment in these fellowships recognises the extremely impressive progress of MS research in Australia,” Mr Wright said.

“I am very pleased to announce that Ass. Professor David Booth from the Westmead Millennium Institute and Dr John Parratt from the University of Sydney are the two new fellows.

“Senior scientists and clinical researchers such as Ass. Professor Booth and Dr Parratt are the backbone of our research efforts.

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“These fellowships are a commitment to create the financial security needed to attract and nurture a talented team around both scientists to focus solely on MS.”

Ms McKay said MSRA’s investment was fantastic news and will help scientists continue their work in MS research.

“MSRA is one of our lead organisations in accelerating progress towards finding a cause and cure for MS,” Ms McKay said.

“Their work in fundraising and fostering collaborative research has been critical in supporting breakthrough research and treatments.”

Member for Parramatta, Tanya Gadiel, said the NSW Government was a strong supporter of MS research.

“The NSW Government provided a \$500,000 grant in 2007 for MSRA’s Brain Bank and is continuing that support by establishing the new network,” Ms Gadiel said.

“More than 16,000 Australians have MS, which tends to strike when a person is in their early 20s and is estimated to cost Australia nearly \$2 billion every year.

“That is why the NSW Government is providing about \$270,000 to support the ground breaking research being done by the MSRA that will help develop better treatments for the chronic disease.”

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