

Jodi McKay

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



Friday 5th March 2010

NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH SUPPORTED WITH NEW PRECINCT

The Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute is set to create a new Neuroscience Research precinct cementing it as one of the biggest research centres in Australia.

Minister for Science and Medical Research, Jodi McKay, said the new Precinct will help NSW continue to lead the way in research into brain injury, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

"The expansion of facilities at the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute was made possible after the NSW Government gave planning approval to the plans," Ms McKay said.

"This approval will help ensure NSW remains a leader in mental health, brain injury and neurological disease research.

"It will include state-of-the-art clinical research and laboratory facilities enabling researchers to take even greater strides in dealing with challenging neurological and psychiatric conditions.

"It will also enhance NSW's role as Australia's leading clever State and strengthen our research sector."

Ms McKay said the Precinct will support potential breakthroughs that could result in more effective health care for people with a range of neurological and psychiatric conditions.

"In any given year, more than 3 million Australians experience one or more episodes of major brain disorder," Ms McKay said.

"The Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute makes an important contribution to our medical research sector and is a prime example of the outstanding research being done in NSW.

"The NSW Government has supported the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute since 2004 providing almost \$9 million in funding."

CEO of the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, Professor Peter Schofield, said the new Neuroscience Research Precinct would allow the institute to attract and retain brilliant minds in NSW.

"The new Precinct will include six stories of purpose built laboratory and clinical research space," Prof Schofield said.

"The new precinct represents more than just a new building. It is designed to help researchers collaborate and therefore innovate, which is key to us conquering and curing brain diseases."

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said concept planning approval had been given to the entire \$265 million expansion as well as construction approval for a seven-storey research building.

"Approval of the concept plan provides a guideline for future development on the site, while the construction approval means work can start immediately on the new research facility," Mr Kelly said.

"The new \$118 million, seven-storey building will include more than 25,000 square meters of research floor space, which will support around 120 jobs during construction."

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Mr Kelly said several modifications had been made to the proposal following community consultation.

“While a facility of this nature has the potential for enormous social benefit, it is also important to ensure it is thoroughly and transparently assessed.

“As a result of that assessment the proposed bulk of the development has been reduced to ensure there are no inappropriate impacts on the amenity of the local area or its residents.

“In particular, building setbacks have been increased by up to almost 8 metres in some places.”

Member for Coogee, Paul Pearce, said the approval was great news for the Prince of Wales medical community and the local community.

“When the precinct is complete it will deliver an additional 61,000 square metres of floor space specifically dedicated to research into mental health in New South Wales,” Mr Pearce said.

“It will have the ability to house up to 700 researchers whose focus will be on the prevention and cure of some of the world’s major brain related diseases.”

A total of 83 strict conditions have been imposed on the Minister’s approval, including:

- The preparation and implementation of a Construction Management Plan to minimise adverse noise impacts; and
- Relocating existing cables and wires underground to deliver significant streetscape amenity and safety improvements along Barker Street.

The proponent has also made a number of commitments as part of its proposal, including:

- The construction of traffic signals at the Botany and Barker Street intersection;
- The implementation of a TravelSmart scheme to promote a shift to sustainable transport modes, including the provision of secure bicycle parking and amenities;
- Upgrade works to the Barker Street frontage; and
- Achieving a 5 star equivalent environmental rating for the approved research building.