

# New national facility translates life sciences discoveries to reality

25 July 2012

Australian life sciences researchers will translate their discoveries into commercial products faster thanks to a newly established Queensland Node of the Therapeutic Innovation Australia (TIA – Qld Node).

TIA – QLD Node, a State-based model of the future national TIA entity, is being developed under the auspices of “Therapeutic Innovation Australia (TIA)” – lead agent for the \$35 M Translating Health Discovery Project funded under the Government’s Super Science Initiative.

With \$6.9 million from the Federal Government and co-investment funding of \$2M awarded by the QLD Government, the Therapeutic Innovation Australia (TIA) Queensland Node was launched today.

The Node will provide a testing model to accelerate the movement of inventions by Australian researchers from the laboratory, through preclinical trials, clinical development and produce ‘reduced risk technologies’ that will be highly attractive for investors to commercialize into therapeutic products.

The TIA-QLD Node will initially undertake four exemplar ‘translational’ projects to deliver tangible commercial returns within 5 years.

Stewart Hay, CEO of Therapeutic Innovation Australia – lead agent for the Commonwealth Government’s \$35M Super Science Initiative – says “the major strategy embodied in this plan involves aggregating and leveraging existing infrastructure across the nation, improving researcher access and addressing gaps in infrastructure rather than establishing a large number of new facilities.

“In Queensland this will allow the expansion of facilities at The University of Queensland and Griffith University and link them in a coordinated way,” he said.

“This is the first time this coordinated approach has been implemented in Australia and represents a move to a more systematic approach to therapeutic innovation.”

Comprised of five of the leading Translational Research Centres based in South East Queensland, members include the Centre for Integrated Preclinical Drug Development; Queensland Clinical Trials and Biostatistics Centre; Centre for Clinical Research and the Diamantina Institute which are based at The University of Queensland’s Herston campus and the Griffith Health Institute based at Griffith University’s Gold Coast campus.

UQ Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry, said the node’s first focus would be projects that have a high probability of yielding tangible results for human health and the economy within five years.

“The node will initially target: a test aimed at protecting unborn babies who are at risk of premature birth; a migraine prevention product; a ‘glucose alarm’ software package to help people with conditions including diabetes to control their blood sugar levels; and an imaging technique to aid the development of treatments for bone disorders such as osteoporosis,” Professor Terry said.

Commenting on this unique opportunity to translate health discoveries on home soil, Professor Ian O’Connor, Griffith University’s Vice Chancellor said, “Some of the hardest work of developing any new medical therapy is moving from the trial stage to the product stage and this is often where Australian research is forced to go off-shore.

“However, the TIA Qld node provides an important link in keeping the development of therapies in Australia,” he said.

“With Griffith Health Institute’s migraine research now entering phase 3 clinical trials, the consortium offers an ideal platform for more personalised diagnostics and more targeted migraine therapies.

“It will ensure Queenslanders and Australians gain the most immediate treatment benefits.”

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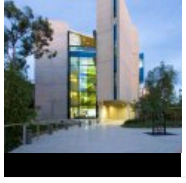
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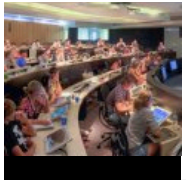
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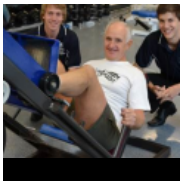


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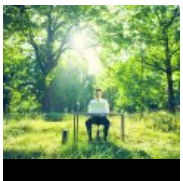
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