

Wednesday, 15 September, 2010

## **NATIONAL SCIENTISTS CHOOSE VICTORIA FOR WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH**

The Brumby Labor Government today welcomed an announcement that Austin Health will become a hub for world-class research into new ways of detecting and treating cancer,

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) will invest \$1.5 million to construct a state-of-the-art laboratory at Austin Hospital for national scientists to develop new treatments and imaging tools to advance medical research.

Health Minister Daniel Andrews said the Brumby Labor Government's \$4.3 million investment into a new cyclotron at Austin Health's Centre for Positron Emission Technology had helped lead to the collaboration.

"We are taking action to provide state-of-the-art equipment to Victorian families affected by illness and this investment has now lead to a fantastic partnership that will provide real benefits for not only Victoria, but right across Australia.," Mr Andrews said.

"The combination of the Government's ongoing investment in high-cost capital medical equipment and the strong research partnership between Austin Health and the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research (LICR) has attracted this nationally-significant investment from ANSTO.

"The ANSTO investment will support Austin Health and the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research to continue conducting cutting-edge clinical cancer research and boost Victoria's reputation as a national centre of medical research excellence.

"This is a significant coup for Victoria.

"The benefits of this collaboration will be further advancements in medical research, knowledge and discovery that will lead to better outcomes for patients."

Austin Health's Centre for Positron Emission Technology (PET) is the largest academic PET centre in Australia and has an international reputation as a leader in research into cancer and neurological disorders.

The cyclotron technology produces radioactive isotopes, which are injected into patients before they have PET scans on their brain and other parts of the body.

PET is an imaging technique that uses small amounts of radioactive tracers to locate cancers and diagnose other medical conditions.

ANSTO chief executive officer Dr Adi Paterson said the arrangement between ANSTO, Austin Health, and the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research was a ground-breaking arrangement on many fronts, the most important being the potential benefit to all Australians.

"On a practical level for ANSTO, this project will give medical researchers access to the use of long-lived isotopes that we cannot make with a nuclear reactor," Dr Paterson said.

“Of even greater significance is that the three major clinical and research organisations involved in this project each bring synergy of different areas of technical and research expertise that has great potential for discovery.

“Additionally, by having this facility in Melbourne we are effectively sharing knowledge between researchers at Lucas Heights in Sydney and those at Austin Hospital and the Ludwig Institute in Melbourne.

“This can only be a good thing for outcomes in medical research for each of these organisations.”