

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed 10:00am 27 May 2010

ACRF DRUG DISCOVERY CENTRE GIVING HOPE FOR KIDS WITH CANCER

The discovery of new and better therapies for people with cancer will now be possible with the launch of a new, specialist drug discovery centre.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd joined NSW Premier Kristina Keneally in an official tour of the ACRF Drug Discovery Centre for Childhood Cancer housed in the new world-class research facility, the Lowy Cancer Research Centre.

With the support of a \$3.1M grant from the ACRF, the Drug Discovery Centre houses important advanced equipment which makes possible rapid automated screening of very large libraries of small molecule drugs.

Professor Michelle Haber AM, Executive Director Children's Cancer Institute Australia for Medical Research said that by using this equipment, the work that used to take scientists three months to undertake can now be done in a single hour.

"Thousands of compounds can be rapidly screened to identify which ones have the potential to be developed into safer, more effective therapies that act only on aggressive cancer cells, while sparing normal tissue," Professor Haber said.

"We have already discovered a promising small molecule drug that would drastically reduce the risk of the severe side effects which are frequently seen following conventional chemotherapy treatments, especially in children," she said.

The Lowy Cancer Research Centre was officially opened by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd today.

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About Children's Cancer Institute Australia for Medical Research

Children's Cancer Institute Australia for Medical Research (CCIA) is the only independent medical research institute in Australia devoted to research into the causes, better treatments, prevention and cure of childhood cancer. Our vision is to save the lives of all children with cancer and eliminate their suffering. Founded in 1976 by a dedicated group of parents and doctors who wanted to do something more in the fight against children's cancer, CCIA opened its first laboratory in 1984. The Institute, located at the Lowy Cancer Research Centre at UNSW, now employs over 160 staff and students, including more than 120 scientists. Research at CCIA comprises a multifaceted approach to improving the outcome of childhood cancer sufferers. Our research programs focus on translational research aimed at defining and achieving improved treatment and survival rates for children with cancer.

CCIA is affiliated with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Sydney Children's Hospital.
