

Media Release

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Queensland's first Academic Health Science Centre

Eight of Queensland's top research institutes, hospitals and universities have today united to form Queensland's first Academic Health Science Centre.

Diamantina Health Partners is a significant step in harnessing the research, education, training and clinical expertise of each organisation to improve treatment for some of the sickest patients in the state.

Professor Ian Frazer, the 2006 Australian of the Year and Chief Executive Officer of the Translational Research Institute Pty Ltd at PA Hospital, said the alliance will mean the traditionally independent entities can focus on a common goal.

"Diamantina Health Partners is not a building, it is not a lab, and it is not a clinic. It is a collaboration of leading minds from all aspects of clinical innovation that will directly impact the people who need it most," Professor Frazer said.

"At the core of our mission and vision will be the concepts of better health and health care for the community.

"We will be able to take the discoveries made in Queensland biomedical research labs and translate them directly to patient care."

Medical graduates will also benefit from the improved pathways to clinical practice that the partnership provides, with a more defined focus on applying knowledge that has been shaped by industry-leading research.

"Training our world class medical graduates and academic clinicians in the highest standards of clinical care and research methods will also result in better health outcomes across all medical specialties," Prof Frazer said.

Diamantina Health Partners will ensure Queensland is able to attract the best clinical talent from all sectors to benefit the quality of life for the state's population.

The 'Smart Community' in the South Brisbane corridor – which includes University of Queensland's St Lucia campus, PA Hospital, Mater Health Services, the nearby Boggo Road Ecosciences Precinct – is growing in reality with years of investment into biotechnology able to be realised fully through the launch of this partnership.

CEO of PA Hospital's Metro South District, Dr David Theile, said the partnership will be a major step in translating extensive investment in Queensland biomedical research into clinical reality.

“Diamantina Health Partners will continue to place Queensland at the forefront of medical research developments in the world,” Dr Theile said.

“In particular, this advances the tradition of PA Hospital providing world-class clinical research and medical breakthroughs that make a difference to the lives of people every day.

“Examples of local triumphs are ‘the Brisbane Technique’ of liver resection developed at PAH to benefit multiple organ transplant recipients, world first melanoma trials over 20 years in radiation oncology and our new Queensland Prostate Cancer Research Centre,” he said.

The additional clinical scope delivered by Mater Health Services completes the full spectrum of clinical delivery by this partnership enabling the results to be realised by all Queenslanders.

“By speeding up innovation from ‘bench to bedside’, this partnership will transform the way medicine is practised in Queensland for the benefit of all,” Dr Theile said.

An important benefit in the formation of this partnership will be the reduction in bureaucracy associated with research.

“Currently, federal universities and state hospitals have their own priorities, ethics and governance. For scientists and clinical researchers coping with this across multiple entities, the result can be duplication and delay,” he said.

“Diamantina Health Partners is a logistical breakthrough for collaborative efforts, cutting paperwork by 50 per cent or more which will be a relief for researchers and will speed up innovation.”

The Academic Health Science Centre model is based on well-established centres in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore and Sweden.

For more information

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Visit the Diamantina Health Partners Website: www.diamantina.org.au

About the Partners:

University of Queensland

The University of Queensland (UQ) is one of Australia's premier teaching and research institutions, and is the oldest university in Queensland. The university's clinical schools provide training to hundreds of new health professionals each year in the fields of medicine, nursing and allied health. In addition, UQ operates the world-renowned Diamantina Institute (DI), a modern research facility based on the Princess Alexandra Hospital campus, which lays claim to global discoveries such as the world's first cervical cancer vaccine. DI is particularly focused on discovering and developing treatments for cancer and disorders of immune regulation.

Queensland University of Technology

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is a leading university with an applied emphasis on career-orientated courses and collaborative research. As a university for the real world, QUT fosters close links with industry in the development and delivery of programs which guide graduates in their chosen career path and contribute to the improvement of human health and Australia's healthcare policies. The Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) is QUT's premier research institute and is focused on finding solutions to high-priority health issues by conducting research into new technologies, techniques, devices, behaviours, and interventions. IHBI brings together a range of disciplines from across the spectrum of health, biomedical science, and biomedical engineering research.

Translational Research Institute

The Translational Research Institute (TRI) is a new, multi-million dollar research and clinical trial facility being constructed on the Princess Alexandra Hospital campus. The institute – a joint venture between the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, the Mater Medical Research Institute and the Queensland Government – is set to open in 2012. The TRI will bring together biomedical scientists and clinicians in one location, aiming to shorten the time between a laboratory discovery and its application in the clinical setting.

Princess Alexandra Hospital

Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) is one of Australia's leading tertiary and teaching hospitals. In addition to providing clinical services in all of the major adult specialties, the hospital plays a lead role in medical research and clinician training through its strong links with universities. PAH is the state-wide centre for liver and kidney transplants as well as spinal and brain injury rehabilitation, and is the trauma referral centre for southern Queensland. PAH admits over 80,000 patients each year in addition to providing nearly 500,000 outpatient appointments.

Mater Health Services

Mater Health Services is an independent, not-for-profit network of seven hospitals in South East Queensland, providing care for more than 500,000 inpatients and outpatients each year. The organisation provides a comprehensive range of services in clinical care, education, as well as research through the Mater Medical Research Institute (MMRI). The MMRI conducts world-class research into conditions affecting all ages with a focus on understanding the development of diseases from babies through to adolescence and adulthood.

Metro South Mental Health and Community Health

Metro South provides vital mental health and community health care to the south Brisbane, Logan and Redland region – a diverse geographical area with one of Queensland's highest population growth rates. The service provides integrated mental health care through hospital inpatient centres and community clinics, as well as state-wide specialist programs including the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre and the Deafness and Mental Health consultation service. Metro South's community facilities include 30 community health centres across the region in addition to a number of large residential care facilities.

UQ Health Care

UQ Health Care is a not-for-profit organisation that operates two “GP superclinics” in Annerley and Ipswich. Managed by the University of Queensland, UQ Health Care offers tailored general practice services to the local community with a particular focus on wellness and preventative care. It also works collaboratively with other health providers to link patients with complex health needs to advanced care services.

Inala Indigenous Health Service

The Inala Indigenous Health Services provides a range of services to support the health needs of members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in the Inala region. The multidisciplinary team consists of doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, community health workers and research officers. In addition to its culturally appropriate care, the service provides a comprehensive clinician training program and is increasingly involved in leading edge research.