

Media Coverage

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New Ethical Review Process Makes Medical Research Easier In Victoria

Source: The Premier of Victoria

Medical research into potentially lifesaving treatments will be easier to conduct in Victoria as a result of a Brumby Labor Government review of clinical trials.

The initiative streamlines the ethical review process for multi-site trials meaning researchers need only apply for one approval rather than separate approval for each site and their research can begin more quickly.

Announcing the new initiative as part of the opening address today at the AusBiotech 2009 Conference in Melbourne, Innovation Minister Gavin Jennings also confirmed Melbourne will again host the AusBiotech conference – the Asia-Pacific's biggest biotechnology event – in 2010 and 2012.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to make it easier for important clinical trials to take place across the State which means potentially lifesaving treatments will be available to Victorians sooner," Mr Jennings said.

"The new approach allows pharmaceutical companies to undergo one ethical review process for multi-site clinical trials rather than having to apply for separate approvals from ethics committees at each separate location.

"Simplifying and shortening the approval process for research will also generate economic benefits for Victoria and provide a strong incentive for international industry and researchers to continue high quality research all over Victoria."

Health Minister Daniel Andrews welcomed the initiative and said it would further build Victoria's reputation as a deliverer of pharmaceutical solutions to global health problems.

"Victoria is at the forefront of the fight against global illnesses such as swine flu. This initiative will further position our health system as a high quality and competitive place for clinical trials while maintaining our high quality of ethical review and patient safety," Mr Andrews said.

"Worldwide competition for attracting pharmaceutical industry investment is tough, but Victoria has a first class health system with an enviable reputation in medical research."

The streamlining initiative is part of the \$20 million Biotechnology Bridges program announced in the 2008 Victorian Innovation Statement and will start on November 16.

Mr Jennings said Melbourne was the ideal place to hold the 2010 and 2012 AusBiotech Conferences. In the past decade the Victorian Government has invested over \$3 billion in innovation-related initiatives which places Victoria at the forefront of innovation research in Australia.

He said an independent report by Deloitte, released yesterday at AusBiotech, showed Victoria's \$620 million Science, Technology and Innovation initiative over the past decade has created thousands of jobs and would produce an economic benefit to the State of \$1.7 billion.