

> New imaging centre to bring sharper focus on disease

Newcastle, Mar 24, 2014

A new Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) centre boasting the most advanced scanning technology in the Southern Hemisphere was opened today at the Hunter Medical Research Institute in Newcastle.

Professor Warwick Anderson AO, Chief Executive Officer of the National Health and Medical Research Council, officially cut the ribbon on the \$6million facility which is devoted exclusively to medical research.



Adjoining the HMRI Building on the John Hunter Hospital campus, the HMRI Imaging Centre houses a Siemens Magnetom Prisma 3T MRI unit, the first of its kind in Australia.

Mr Jeff Connolly, Chairman and CEO of Siemens Australia, said the Magnetom Prisma was the most powerful clinical research magnet in Australia, with Siemens investing around \$5billion each year on R&D.

“Siemens is unique in that we realised early on that the technology can’t reach its full potential in the factory. To really advance human health we need partnerships like this with HMRI and the Newcastle University, where the best technology is combined with Australia’s leading medical research minds and an unmatched local support network of Siemens scientists and fellows.

“This technology provides researchers with an extraordinary new weapon in their arsenal to better understand and ultimately fight diseases and their progression,” Mr Connolly said.

The University of Newcastle purchased the Siemens scanner to join an elite group of world-renowned, top-tier research institutions using the cutting-edge technology.

Hunter Medical Research Institute Director Professor Michael Nilsson said the centre will now give researchers fast access to MRI scanning, relieving pressure on hospital services and saving time.

“It can take researchers days, even months, to get MRI time because of pressing clinical needs,” he said. “With our own magnet we can now do more research, we can diversify into other areas, break new ground with publications, and we won’t have to impact on the hospital system to do so.

“As a dedicated tool for research, we think the Siemens is the best of its kind in the world. We also have world-leading expertise among the team to fully utilise its power and precision.”

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Newcastle, Professor Kevin Hall, said the University’s partnership with HMRI was key to its ambition to make research available to the community.

“We are committed that our research should drive real innovation. HMRI is the perfect partner to take our research from the bench to bed side,” Professor Hall said.

“This facility will allow the University to further develop its already extensive capabilities in priority research fields as diverse as cancer, dementia, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, pain, food addiction, sports-related concussion and stroke. With eminent researchers like Professor Carolyn Mountford, we are truly world-class in these fields.”

As Director of the University of Newcastle’s Centre for MR in Health, and Professor of Radiology at Harvard Medical School, Professor Mountford and her team have served as a world-wide development unit for Siemens Healthcare.

Her ongoing research is delving into the chemical changes associated with breast disease, through to monitoring changes to brain chemistry resulting from chronic pain, repetitive head injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Media Contacts

Communications Manager

Keith Ritchie

p: +61 3 9721 7230

m: +61 457 841 189

keith.ritchie@siemens.com

Media Relations

Ms. Krupa Uthappa

p: +61 3 9721 7681

m: +61 427 601 578

krupa.uthappa@siemens.com

All other inquiries

p: 137 222

