

**Question on Notice  
Science and Medical Research  
Budget Estimates Hearing**

**Question:**

**CHAIR:** Can you tell the Committee why a decision was made not to hypothecate that source of revenue, those funds, to this particular project?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

In 2007 Premier Iemma, as part of a major budget announcement, committed \$11.2 million over four years to spinal cord research and related neurological conditions.

This is in addition to Premier Carr's commitment in 2003 that the State Government would spend \$10.9 million over four years to establish the Spinal Fund - to promote biomedical research into spinal injury, disorders and neurological conditions.

Premier Carr's funding commitment was part of a \$35.9 million package that also included \$25 million for the establishment of extra services for people with a disability, including 100 attendant care places to help people suffering from spinal cord injury with everyday living tasks.

NSW researchers have made real progress in tackling the huge impact spinal cord injury and neurological disease has on our community. They have discovered new ways to improve movement and physical function and have identified therapies that prevent muscle wasting.

We remain absolutely committed to investing in the best possible care for spinal cord injury sufferers, as well as funding research dedicated to finding better therapies for sufferers and ultimately a cure.

**JODI McKAY MP**

Minister for Commerce

Minister for Tourism

Minister for the Hunter

Minister for Science and Medical Research

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**Question:**

**CHAIR:** Can you tell us the status of any research projects funded by that program when it was first set up?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Details on the recipients of funding allocated under the Spinal Cord Injury and Related Neurological Conditions Research Grants Program are published on the Office for Science and Medical Research website, [www.osmr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.osmr.nsw.gov.au).

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**Question:**

Chair: Are you aware of the difficulties confronting the world-renowned Pain Management Research Institute, which received funding until 2009 but which is now at risk of collapse as a statewide service because it does not have any funding?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Pain Management Research Institute is a part of the Kolling Institute at North Sydney. The Kolling Institute received over \$5 million in Medical Research Support Program funding between 2006 and 2009 and is eligible for \$1.4 million in 2009/2010.

The Pain Management Research Institute was awarded a grant under the Spinal Cord Injury and Other Neurological Conditions Fund - \$2 million over 4 years from 2005.

Grants made under the Spinal Cord Injury and Other Neurological Conditions Fund are allocated on a peer reviewed basis and are provided for a finite period. This is consistent with national and international best practice.

The Pain Management Research Institute has also been successful in gaining funding in the first round of applications for competitive funding related to the second stage of the Spinal Cord Injury and Other Neurological Conditions Fund.

I recently met with Professor Janet Keast of the Pain Management Research Institute to discuss funding for research related to spinal cord injury and other neurological conditions.

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**Question from Dr Kaye:**

**What percentage of her [Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer] time is spent on Nanotechnology issues?**

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The role of the NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer requires Professor O'Kane to provide advice on a broad range of scientific matters. It is not possible to accurately determine the amount of time given by Professor O'Kane to any one area.

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**Question from Dr Kaye:**

Is your department in any way working on that issue? [nanotechnology materials in the effluent stream] Does it have a watching brief? Is there any activity within the State Government that you would be aware of that looks at that issue?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Monitoring of effluent streams and waste water falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and the Minister for Water. This question should be directed accordingly.

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**Question from Dr Kaye:**

What are you doing to continuously identify the new area of nanotechnology, which presumably is of relevance to New South Wales?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government set up an advisory committee on Nanotechnology, which was chaired by the NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer, to inform the NSW Government's response to the NSW Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into the use and applications of Nanotechnology.

The NSW Government supported the recommendations of the Inquiry in its response.

Key reforms include the establishment of a peak body in manufactured nanomaterials and nanotechnology – the National Council for Ultrafine Particles. The NSW Government is also working to establish a Nanotechnology Policy Coordination Committee.

The Government is implementing the \$1.4 million Collaboration and Infrastructure Access Program (CIAP), designed to foster research and development within NSW and bring together public and private partnerships to drive innovation in NSW. This will allow NSW businesses using nanomaterials to use state of the art technologies and expertise from the publicly funded research sector to understand the properties, potential, risks and benefits of nanotechnologies.

The Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer and the Office for Science and Medical Research, Industry and Investment NSW have recently been in consultation with the Commonwealth Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, as part of the development of a National Enabling Technologies Strategy.

As part of this, the Department of Industry and Investment consulted key government, academic and industry representatives through August this year.

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