



*****Media release*****

Construction commences on Austin Neuroscience Facility

A \$225 million construction project to build two facilities that will house the largest neurosciences group in the Southern Hemisphere has commenced at the Austin Hospital.

The Premier of Victoria John Brumby joined Minister for Innovation Gavin Jennings and four of the world's leading experts in the neuroscience and mental health fields to turn the first sod for the \$45 million Austin Neuroscience Facility on Wednesday 5 August.

The Austin Neuroscience Facility will house more than 200 research and support staff from the Florey Neurosciences Institutes, The University of Melbourne, Mental Health Research Institute and Austin Health.

Its researchers include leading authorities in the fields of stroke, epilepsy, brain imaging and Alzheimer's disease, Professors Geoff Donnan, Sam Berkovic, Graeme Jackson and Colin Masters.

Over their combined 110 years of clinical and research experience, the four professors have discovered genes, developed new treatments for disease, published more than 1,000 papers and book chapters and received dozens of international awards.

They have also seen more than 150,000 patients and director of the Florey Neuroscience Institutes, Professor Geoff Donnan, said they would continue to pursue research with a strong clinical focus.

"The opportunity for the groups to collaborate closely will lead to exciting new discoveries and treatments for the three million Australians affected by these diseases every year," Professor Donnan said.

"The new facility will also attract leading scientists from around the world and build on the reputation of both Heidelberg and Parkville as leading centres for biomedical research," he said.

The facility is the first stage of the \$225 million Melbourne Neuroscience Project, which will see two new research facilities built over two years. Construction of the second facility will commence later this year in Parkville.