



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

28 April 2009

Shedding a New Light on Medicine

Australian medical researchers and clinicians will soon have access to the most advanced technology in the world to image the human body.

The Australian Government through the National Health and Medical Research Council, will provide \$13.2 million to develop an imaging and therapy beamline at the Australian Synchrotron in Melbourne. A supporting contribution of \$1.5m has been made by the Victorian Government.

Ms Anna Burke, Deputy Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives represented Ms Nicola Roxon, Minister for Health and Ageing, at the announcement today.

The synchrotron, which is currently being completed, is a cutting edge facility that uses synchrotron light for a range of scientific purposes. Synchrotron light is unique in its intensity and brilliance and it can be generated across the range of the electromagnetic spectrum: from infrared to X-rays. The new beamline will ensure that the synchrotron light produced is suitable for the extremely high-resolution medical imaging and therapy essential to medical research, diagnostics and treatment.

At the moment medical researchers needing access to a beamline have to travel to Japan or Europe.

The new beam will provide biomedical imaging of human tissue to sub-micron resolution. It will allow researchers and clinicians to see the structural detail of internal organs such as lung air sacs and the microcirculation of tumours – details that were previously not visible in real time.

While designed as a research tool it has the potential for promising applications in the treatment of cancers by using high energy x-rays to selectively target tumours, delivering extremely high doses of radiation whilst sparing surrounding healthy tissue.

This new facility will enable Australian researchers to be involved in world-leading research in dynamic high resolution imaging and radiation therapies with the potential for great benefits to the health of Australians now and in the future.

The new beamline should be completed within the next 12 months.

The Australian Synchrotron is an independent national research facility developed and funded by state and federal governments, research agencies, universities and medical institutes. It is located in Melbourne, Victoria.

Media contacts: Minister's office, 02 6277 7220
Carolyn Norrie NHMRC, 02 617 9190 or 0422 008 512