

MEDIA RELEASE

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Researchers uniting to fight diabetes and heart disease

Australia's expanding waistline is putting us at increased risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. The Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute has been formed from two Australian research bodies to tackle these emerging threats.

Research Australia CEO Rebecca James welcomed the launch of the merged organisation today in Melbourne.

"Diabetes costs Australia \$12.4 billion a year. Cardiovascular disease adds \$4 billion a year to health care costs alone, with billions more lost in productivity," Ms James said.

"We need more investment in research and in translating that new knowledge into better health care. The government needs to act to make sure our health care system is resourced to undertake research and to apply that research in practice."

Last week, the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, announced \$357 million in grants for health and medical research. This is the highest level of government funding to date and will support research with the potential to beat major chronic diseases.

Research Australia today launched fact sheets on diabetes and heart disease, which shows the growing burden of disease and the exciting research happening in Australia to address it. The fact sheets were produced with the support of Diabetes Australia and the Heart Foundation.

The *Health research and you* fact sheets outline the impact of major diseases on the community, leading-edge research being undertaken in Australia and the benefits of research for improving our lives.

"Research Australia's members, including the Baker IDI, are outstanding institutions and we look forward to their ongoing success," said Ms James.

The Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute's official launch includes a Gala Dinner at the Grand Hyatt in Melbourne on 23 October 2008.

The diabetes and heart disease fact sheets are available on Research Australia's website <http://www.researchaustralia.org>.

About Research Australia

Research Australia is a unique national alliance of over 180 member and donor organisations with a common mission to make health and medical research a higher national priority. For more information on Research Australia visit www.researchaustralia.org

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