



Brad Hazzard

Minister for Health

Tanya Davies

Minister for Mental Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$2.46M TO UNRAVEL GENETIC MYSTERY OF BIPOLAR DISORDER

Groundbreaking genomic research into the cause of bipolar disorder could significantly impact the way people are treated for the illness, thanks to a \$2.46 million NSW Government grant.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard and Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies today announced the grant would fund a major collaborative project to map the genetics of 1200 people in NSW with bipolar disorder.

“This grant is a real game changer. It will allow researchers to apply cutting-edge science to find answers to how this significant mental health condition is influenced by genetics,” Mr Hazzard said.

“By providing researchers with access to the latest genomics technology, the NSW Government is playing a part in establishing the state as a national and international leader in genomic medicine.”

Mrs Davies said about 250,000 people are affected by bipolar disorder in Australia.

“They face a range of issues, including reduced life expectancy due to increased risk of suicide and higher rates of severe cardiovascular disease,” Mrs Davies said.

“This project has the potential to identify the genetic makeup of people living with bipolar disorder and discover if they would benefit from personalised treatment.”

Led by Dr Janice Fullerton at Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA), researchers from multiple organisations will utilise whole genome sequencing techniques for the project.

“Bipolar disorder is most commonly treated with lithium, but this is only effective for 30 per cent of patients,” Dr Fullerton said.

The funding, from the latest round of NSW Genomics Collaborative Grants, will enable access to a sequencing facility at the Garvan Institute and involve researchers at the Sax Institute, NeuRA, Black Dog Institute, UNSW and the Prince of Wales Hospital.

The Office for Health and Medical Research will release details about future funding for genomic medicine research later this year.

For more information please visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr .

**MEDIA: Elizabeth Williams | Minister Davies | 0439 807 672
Julie Garvey | Minister Hazzard | 0448 569 746**