



Speech by
Jan Jarratt

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2007

QUEENSLAND BRAIN INSTITUTE, SYMPOSIUM

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.55 am): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry for the opportunity to represent her and the government at a recent symposium held at the Queensland Brain Institute. The public symposium was part of the 'show us your genes' community engagement strategy, which aims to give Queensland's biotechnologists the opportunity to tell the public about the exciting and amazing research that is occurring in the Smart State. I was shocked to learn that brain disorders account for 45 per cent of Australia's healthcare demand, so it was fantastic to hear about the groundbreaking research that is being undertaken right here in Brisbane that aims to address disorders and diseases of the brain.

Until very recently the scientific community believed that it was not possible for the brain to produce new cells or repair itself. This assumption has been turned on its head in research involving stem cells within the brain. We now know that the brain contains an in-built repair mechanism that generates thousands of new potentially viable nerve cells every day in a process known as neurogenesis. This research is in its infancy, and the challenge ahead is to find a way to successfully regulate and control the brain's repair mechanism. But this groundbreaking research has the potential to deliver a cure for diseases and conditions as debilitating as Huntington's disease, dementia, spinal cord injury and depression.

During the symposium we learnt that an exciting new partnership between the Queensland Brain Institute and the University of Auckland is set to combine the research power of the two facilities with a view to hastening the pace of research and bringing us closer to the ultimate goal of providing therapeutics that will help with devastating conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and stroke.

I am proud that the QBI was supported by the Beattie government through a \$20 million investment in the institute and that the Bligh government will continue to support the work of biotechnologists in this state in their quest to make discoveries that will lead to a better world for all of us.