




Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 8 September 2011

AUSTRALIAN CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION CENTRE FOR EPIGENETICS

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (3.23 pm): Cancer research in Queensland just got a major boost thanks to the opening of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation Centre for Epigenetics based at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research at Herston in my electorate. On Tuesday, 19 July I officially opened the centre and was joined by Professor Emma Whitelaw, head of epigenetics; Professor Frank Gannon, CEO of QIMR; Mr Tom Dery, chair of the ACRF Board; David Brettell, the CEO of ACRF; and Professor John Hay, chair of the QIMR Council. All of us were extremely excited about the research opportunities made possible by the ACRF \$2.7 million grant. This grant provides the centre with the very best of technology in the field of epigenetics. Epigenetics is the study of mechanisms which modify DNA structure and change gene expression, and this research will improve the ability of clinicians to identify new genes involved in a range of human cancers.

The epigenetics centre is the first of its kind in the world, cementing Queensland as a world leader in medical and cancer research. This world-class research led by Professor Emma Whitelaw and her team is vital if we are to wage the war against cancer and achieve our hope that this work will lead to improved diagnosis and prognosis for cancer patients. The Bligh government is a big supporter of research to beat cancer, which is why we have provided \$35 million towards the QIMR Smart State Medical Research Centre, which is due for completion in early 2012. This new building will enable a 50 per cent expansion from 800 to 1,200 scientists and students and, with increased funding of nearly \$14 million per year for four years, will ensure that the QIMR will be a world leader in the area of cancer research.

The statistics on cancer are chilling but hopeful. We know that one in two Australians will receive a cancer diagnosis before their 85th birthday. A cancer diagnosis is often the start of a long and difficult journey for patients, their families, friends and loved ones. The centre will do us proud as Queenslanders.