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MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIA'S FIRST VETERANS' BRAIN BANK IN NSW

Veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury and their families will benefit from a new research initiative based at Concord Hospital, the first of its kind in the country.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said the Australian Veterans' Brain Bank, officially launched today, will lead to better health outcomes for service men and women by increasing understanding of the impacts of repetitive head injuries.

"The establishment of the Australian Veterans' Brain Bank is a significant step forward in advancing the understanding of the long-term effects of head trauma among veterans," Mr Hazzard said.

"This service will be able to provide more accurate diagnoses for loved ones of late veterans who have pledged their brains to research and improve the diagnosis and treatment of brain disease during life."

The Australian Veterans' Brain Bank, the sister organisation to the Australian Sports Bank, will work in partnership with the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare (NCVH), which is located in Concord Hospital's new clinical services building built as part of the NSW Government's \$341 million redevelopment.

The brain bank is a collaboration between the NCVH and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's Neuropathology Department.

Minister for Transport, Veterans and Western Sydney David Elliott said research into the impacts of brain trauma and injury would be driven by those delivering care to veterans.

"This will help health professionals gain better insights into the long-term impacts of brain injury on veterans while also supporting healthcare workers to be better prepared in the future care of our service men and women," Mr Elliott said.

"Through this Australian-first collaboration, researchers hope to increase awareness of the potential impacts of head injury among veterans, their families and the organisations that support them."

Opened in 2019, the NCVH is the first Australian service to combine specialities to meet the complex needs of the Australian veteran community. The specialist team includes Psychiatry, Pain Medicine, Rehabilitation Medicine, Drug Health, Clinical and Neuro-Psychology, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Diversional Therapy, Social Work and peer support.

Both brain banks were founded by Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's Head of Neuropathology, Associate Professor Michael Buckland.

"The Australian Veterans' Brain Bank aims to expand our understanding of the long-term impacts of head injury, including any association with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), which is a progressive neurodegenerative disease," Associate Professor Buckland said.

"We would like to encourage veterans to pledge their brains to help us further that research."

Medical Director of the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare Dr Cameron Korb-Wells said the partnership will lead to better health outcomes for veterans.

"We work very closely with veterans and veteran organisations to ensure we continue to understand veterans' healthcare needs and provide the best possible support," Dr Korb-Wells said.

Donated brains will be stored at the Brain and Mind Centre at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital with research being carried out between there and the NCVH.

For more information or to register for brain donation, please visit www.veteransbrainbank.org.au

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