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Subject Prime Minister announces inaugural nib foundation beneficiary

Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd announced at the start of the nib Andrew Johns Walk today that the Black Dog Institute will be the inaugural funding beneficiary of the nib foundation.

The nib foundation will donate \$100,000 to the Black Dog Institute to aid mood disorder research and programs.

The announcement was made prior to the start of the nib Andrew Johns Walk.

Andrew Johns, arguably the world's greatest rugby league player in the modern era, suffers from Bipolar Disorder and is walking from Newcastle to Sydney to raise awareness and funds for the Black Dog Institute.

The nib foundation was established by nib health funds with a \$25 million donation, which was raised through the issue of new shares at the time of listing nib on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) in November 2007.

nib foundation chairman, Mr Terry Lawler said the funding commitment announced by the Prime Minister is aimed at making a real difference to a illness that afflicts so many Australians.

"It is estimated that more than 600,000 Australians suffer from Bipolar Disorder, however many of these people remain undiagnosed or keep it to themselves," Mr Lawler said.

"The nib foundation's partnership with the Black Dog Institute will fund a 12 month project to target early identification, diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders in young people to ensure they receive the help they need.

"The multi-faceted program will offer both community and clinical components and reach a continuum of young people from high school through to tertiary settings," Mr Lawler added.

Mr Lawler also commended the efforts and ambassador role of Andrew Johns, who has undoubtedly raised the profile of Bipolar Disorder amongst the community.

"I have known Andrew for more than 10 years and seen him encounter and overcome many challenges on the rugby league field.

"However, I am amazed and proud of his achievements since his admission last year that he suffers from Bipolar Disorder. His work in raising awareness of the illness and funds for the Black Dog Institute has no doubt inspired other sufferers to seek help and support to overcome the disorder."

The Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute, Professor Gordon Parker commended the nib foundation for its generosity and vision to combat mental health issues.

"Our partnership with the nib foundation will provide tangible benefits in the identification, diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders, particularly amongst young people in the Hunter region," Professor Parker said.

"The funding will allow the Black Dog Institute to open a Mood Assessment Program Centre right here in the Hunter region. The Mood Assessment Program is designed specifically as a tool to assist General Practitioners to diagnose and manage mood disorders aided by a sophisticated computer-based program.

"We will also be implementing an INSIGHT Program for secondary school students. The program will offer accurate information about mental health issues that aims to dispel the stigma associated with mental illness and encourages early help and intervention," Professor Parker added.

The nib foundation is expected to allocate approximately \$2 million annually to nominated organisations to fund programs aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians. The nib foundation will call for its first round of funding submissions in November 2008.

The nib foundation's Grant Program will include two classifications:

- National Grants (funding up to \$500,000 per annum): programs that are not generally less than three years in duration
- Community Grants (\$50,000 - \$100,000): smaller, localised programs that will be one year in duration

Further information regarding the nib foundation can be found at www.nibfoundation.com.au.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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About the Black Dog Institute nib foundation Hunter Project

The project will evolve over a period of 12 months and comprise both a community focused and clinical component. These two components are:

1. The development and implementation of an **INSIGHT** program targeting young people still in school environments, and
2. A clinical component consisting of the implementation of a program to assist in the earlier identification, diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders in learning environments in the Hunter Region, NSW. This second aspect of the project will comprise training and education of clinicians and incorporate the opening of a **Mood Assessment Program (MAP)** centre in a tertiary environment.

INSIGHT PROGRAM:

The INSIGHT Program aims to improve mental health outcomes among secondary school students through:

- Increased awareness of good mental health and how to maintain it;
- Understanding the experience of mental illness;
- Tackling the stigma and negative attitudes surrounding mental illness.

The INSIGHT Program delivers a mental health awareness program to secondary students throughout NSW in an effort to deliver accurate information about mental health issues, dispel the stigma associated with mental illness and encourage early help seeking. The program is presented by people who have experienced a mental illness and carers of people who are mentally ill.

The presenters' combined shared experiences greatly assist the students to better understand the complex issues, and the presenters are wonderful role models of surviving and managing mental illness. The INSIGHT presentation has been developed and refined over many years through consultation with mental health consumers, carers and consultants within the health and education sectors.

MOOD ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The MAP is a computerised assessment and diagnostic tool for mood disorders. It incorporates nearly a quarter of a century of sophisticated clinical expertise in assessment, diagnosis and management planning for people with mood disorders (both depressive and bipolar disorders). It has the potential to provide clinicians with the know-how of highly skilled mood disorders specialists.