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**Brain cancer patients are the first to benefit from a historic**

**$100 million mission to defeat brain cancer**

Australians with brain cancer - and all of those who are unknowingly at risk from this nearly always terminal disease - will benefit from an unprecedented initial donation of $10 million by the Minderoo Foundation. The seed funding will be used to develop an innovative “road map” that aims to double survival rates in patients with brain tumors.

The Chairman and co-founder of the Minderoo Foundation, Mr Andrew Forrest AO, together with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Mr Greg Hunt MP, today launched one of the most significant injections of funding for brain cancer ever. The “Australian Brain Cancer Mission” calls for world-wide collaboration to save over 1600 Australians diagnosed with brain cancer each year.

The Eliminate Cancer Initiative (ECI), part of the Minderoo Foundation, will combine its funding with a $50 million commitment from the Federal Government and a $20 million pledge from the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation (commencing with $1 million funding on day one and a commitment to secure the rest with support from the community).

The ECI was established to reward and encourage collaboration, particularly between governments and the primary risk takers, the philanthropists and the major medical centres that actively exchange information to benefit the patient. This initiative fits that model perfectly.

“I can’t imagine anything more devastating than being told that your child, a friend or family member not only has cancer but one of the deadliest forms of all, brain cancer – a disease that right now, claims a disproportioned and unfair number of kid’s lives across Australia every day.” Mr Forrest shared. “We are very proud to be able to commit to this collaborative effort to ensure that, in the very near future, no longer will brain cancer be the death sentence that it is now.”

Every five hours, one Australian is diagnosed with brain cancer.1 Only two patients in every ten, will survive for at least five years2 and these horribly low survival rates drive the complete lack of investment by the major pharmaceutical industries.

“This is one of the core reasons we launched the Eliminate Cancer Initiative – to step in, where the needs of cancer patients are not being met,” Mr. Forrest said. “We must – and we can – end needless suffering. Now is the time to make a difference and we are honoured to play our part.”

The first allocation of funding from all parties will be earmarked to the GBM (Glioblastoma Multiforme) AGILE (Adaptive Global Innovative Learning Environment) project – an innovative and new approach to the treatment of an aggressive form of brain cancer. Coordinated by the AGILE Research Foundation, Australian patients will benefit from a new system that will test potential brain cancer therapies, deliver better results faster and lower costs.

Dr. Ronald DePinho, Executive Director of ECI, said, “Cancer patients have longed for this moment. GBM AGILE is a powerful and innovative platform that will allow testing of multiple new drugs simultaneously in a more rapid and efficient manner. This novel design has the potential to transform clinical trials as we know it, for brain cancer and many other cancers.”

The Eliminate Cancer Initiative received the first $75 million in funding from philanthropists Andrew and Nicola Forrest, to use as planning capital to reward collaboration, accelerate and promote research breakthroughs and improve prevention, detection and treatment for cancer patients including access to clinical trials through the establishment of a global collaboration framework and a core doctrine to ensure the patient is at the center of every initiative.

“It is our collective belief that soon, when an Australian is diagnosed with brain cancer, their family can know their loved one has a real chance at life,” said Mr. Forrest. ENDS.

**Today’s launch will be held at 9:30am at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, 305 Grattan St, Melbourne Victoria. Mr Forrest and Mr Hunt will hold a press conference after meeting brain cancer patients and their families.**

***For media inquiries:***

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Please find photos of Andrew Forrest and 11 month old Thomas who has brain cancer. This was taken yesterday at the Kids Cancer Centre at the Sydney Children's Hospital

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qkarlf5jv42vuhb/AAAyxgFjV9wYJB3Txo1CPECPa/Thomas%20-%20Selects?dl=0>

Andrew Forrest meets, and plays peek-a-boo with Thomas. Mum is Jess and Dad is Daniel. Thomas was diagnosed with a brain tumour at four months of age. He is now six months into a planned 12-14 month journey of chemotherapy treatment. He is thankfully responding to treatment. The family live in Conjola Park and commutes 3.5 hours each week for chemotherapy.

The family has given their permission for these photos to be published.

References

[1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2017. Australian Cancer Incidence and Mortality (ACIM) books. Canberra: AIHW. Five- year averaged incidence (2009 – 2013).](http://www.aihw.gov.au/acim-books/)

*2*[Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Cancer in Australia 2017. Cancer series no.101. Cat. no. CAN 100. Canberra: AIHW. Table 9.5(b): Survival and prevalence of brain cancer, by sex; pg. 85, Feb 2017.](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129558547)