



Media release

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Bionic era begins

Prime Minister Julia Gillard today announced that Australia has transitioned from the bionic ear to the bionic era of health and medical research.

In a DVD introduced by Senator Kim Carr, Minister Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, the PM announced the formation of the Bionics Institute, which follows on from the outstanding success of the Bionic Ear Institute.

“The Bionics Institute is an exciting chapter in the pioneering work that will deliver new technologies to improve human health”, Prime Minister Gillard said.

The Bionics Institute will initially concentrate its research efforts on bionic vision, bionic hearing and neurobionics.

“This is a great opportunity for Australian industry – I’m confident that there will be many manufacturing opportunities arising from the research of the Bionics Institute”, Senator Carr said.

Bionics institute Chair Mr Gerry Moriarty AM said, “Australia produced a world-first with the bionic ear and now our multidisciplinary research team will conduct ground-breaking research to develop new bionic devices.

“The Bionics Institute will collaborate with the University of Melbourne, Bionic Vision Australia and commercialisation partners to produce world first devices and help progress them to market.

“Australians will have first access to new technologies to improve their health and the economy will benefit from licensing and manufacturing opportunities”.

The formation of the Institute heralds a new chapter in Australia’s pioneering bionics research.

“Our neurobionics program will be extended to include the development and evaluation of new devices to safely and effectively treat people who have severe neurological disorders and psychiatric conditions that haven’t responded to other treatments.

“We will continue to improve bionic hearing technology and will refine enabling technologies, such as diamond electrodes and nanoparticles, to develop devices we haven’t even imagined yet” Professor Shepherd said.

Mr Moriarty, Professor Shepherd and Professors Peter Blamey and Hugh McDermott are available for interview. Contact Kerren Clark 0427 559 448 to arrange interview and photo opportunities.

Photo opportunities with Sophie Li, cochlear implant recipient, and her father Li Cunxin and Kevin Murfitt, Chair of Vision Australia and Kane. A new animation of bionic devices is also available.

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