



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

11 November 2008

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENT

RESEARCH IN NEWCASTLE

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (4.28 p.m.)—I would like to share with the House the continuing success of the University of Newcastle in the field of research. It remains one of the top 10 research universities in Australia, confirmed in October this year by the awarding of more than \$9 million in new funding from the Australian Research Council. Twenty-four new projects received funding, including investigations into improving the performance of the mobile telecommunications network, unexplained chronic pain, the culture of excessive alcohol consumption in sporting clubs and steel corrosion. Amongst these research grants, Newcastle University also secured the one and only Indigenous researcher's development grant in New South Wales. It was a grant to investigate the success of workplace programs for Indigenous people and develop a benchmark for improving Indigenous workplace programs across the labour market. Engineering and science projects dominated, reflecting the great strength of Newcastle University in those areas of study and research.

I would like to congratulate the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Barney Glover, on his leadership and on his appointment as Vice-Chancellor to Charles Darwin University, an appointment he will take up next year. The Northern Territory's gain is indeed Newcastle's loss, but I wish him well in his new endeavours.

I would also like to draw attention to the record \$14.8 million received by Newcastle University from the National Health and Medical Research Council last month, supporting 18 projects, with projects on asthma, breast cancer, stroke and mental illness representing almost 50 per cent of grants. Of particular significance is one presented to Professor Peter Gibson and his team for a study to explore a new way of treating inflammation in asthma patients. Professor John Forbes, a world leader in breast cancer research, has obtained more than \$1.6 million to continue his work. Professor Schall has received more than \$1.5 million for his work on mental illness in young people, and Associate Professor Chris Levi has received \$1.1 million to study the role of genetic and environmental factors in strokes.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Peter Gibson. He was also awarded a five-year practitioner fellowship this week, one of only 15 in the nation. I would note that Professor Peter Gibson is also a conjoint professor at the University of Newcastle and a Hunter New England Health respiratory specialist. He is co-director of the

university's Priority Research Centre for Asthma and Respiratory Diseases and conducts research in collaboration with the Hunter Medical Research Institute. The Hunter Medical Research Institute is an outstanding partnership between Newcastle University, John Hunter Hospital and the Newcastle community, and I know that their bid for funding for a medical research centre is one that is sound. I strongly support it and look forward to it complementing the research efforts of Newcastle and the Hunter region.