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BREAKING NEWS

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Fast track drugs clinic opens

By Tim Clarke
08apr04

A PIONEERING drug research centre that will be the first of its kind in Australia to attempt to fast track treatments for diseases including cancer and AIDS has opened in Perth.

The new \$500,000 drug discovery and biotechnology facility at Murdoch University, to be run by Epichem, has assembled the largest group of specialised chemists in the country to work on the treatments.

The specialised facilities will allow for rapid purification of multiple drug compounds, meaning drugs can be created and tested at previously unachievable rates.

In some cases, the centre will be able to produce the same number of new drug compounds in a month that other laboratories produce in a year.

Opened by State Development Minister Clive Brown today, the facility is already attracting the attention of some of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies.

"This speed and accuracy will make Epichem extremely attractive to large international pharmaceutical companies wishing to fast-track their own drug discovery programs, meaning huge export opportunities for WA," said Dr Wayne Best, Epichem's managing director.

Mr Brown also highlighted the global

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marketing possibilities the facility created.

"WA is already home to a broad range of disease research, targeting Alzheimer's disease, cancer, diabetes, malaria and other parasitic diseases," he said.

"Global markets for this kind of research are expected to more than double over the next five years and WA's close proximity to the South-East Asian region provides an excellent opportunity for Epichem."

Epichem, which is owned by Perth-based Echo Technologies, has also reached an agreement to collaborate with the University's Parasitology Research Group to develop treatments for currently incurable parasitic diseases, including African Sleeping Sickness.

The image shows a Dell advertisement banner. At the top is the Dell logo on a blue background. Below it is a green section with the text 'BONUS OFFER' and a small Dell logo icon. Underneath is a yellow section with the text 'CLICK & SAVE' and a hand cursor icon. At the bottom right is an 'Intel Inside Pentium 4' logo. At the bottom left, there is a small orange box with white text that reads: 'Conditions apply. Price includes GST and Delivery. Price valid to 30 Apr, 2004.'

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