

**Promising New Drugs for Melanoma to be Presented at an International
Melanoma Congress in Sydney 4 – 7 November 2010**

SYDNEY, Australia – 1 November 2010. Melanoma Institute Australia today said promising new clinical trial data detailing the progress of new targeted drug therapies to address the alarming rise of deadly melanoma skin cancers would be revealed at the 7th Annual Melanoma Research Congress and 4th Melanoma and Skin Cancer Centres Meeting in Sydney this weekend.

Dr Keith Flaherty from the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Centre will deliver the keynote speech on Thursday 4th November.

He will present data from clinical studies of new drugs developed by Roche and Glaxo Smith Kline that target BRAF mutations, which occur in 50% of melanomas. These drugs show a promising ability to shrink secondary tumours, known as metastases, in patients with advanced forms of the disease.

Professor Rick Kefford from Melanoma Institute Australia and Westmead Hospital, in Sydney will report on Friday 5th November the latest results for a Phase I/II trial of a promising new oral drug called GSK2118436. The drug is being used to treat inoperable metastases in melanoma patients, which are notoriously resistant to drug therapy.

Another highlight will be a talk by Dr Jeffrey Sosman from Vanderbilt University Medical Centre who will present new data from a Phase II trial of the drug RG7204 on Friday 5th November. The trial data are highly anticipated due to encouraging results already released from Phase I trials of RG7204, which showed 70 per cent of patients with previously treated metastatic melanoma who tested positive for the BRAF mutation, responded to the drug.



Other highlights will include the release of data from clinical trials of the drug PV10 that selectively targets and destroys melanoma in transit metastases without harming surrounding healthy tissue.

Professor John Thompson from Melanoma Institute Australia will chair a session on risk factors for melanoma on Thursday 4th November.

More than 10,000 Australians are diagnosed with melanoma each year and 1,200 die from the cancer. The high prevalence of melanoma in Australia makes it our 'national cancer' and it is now the third most common cancer in both men and women in Australia. Males living in Australia have a lifetime risk of one in 18 of developing melanoma and women have a one in 23 lifetime risk.

Melanoma often affects people under 40 during the most productive years of life.

The conference will be attended by 900 international melanoma and skin cancer experts. Sponsored by the University of Sydney, the Congress will be hosted by Melanoma Institute Australia, the world's largest research and treatment facility of its kind, dedicated to finding ways to improve treatment for melanoma patients. Melanoma Institute Australia combines the latest clinical research with access to some of the best clinicians from Australia and around the world.

For a summary of the event see www.melanoma2010.com

Media wishing to attend the conference or interview key speakers should contact:

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MELANOMA INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Melanoma Institute Australia is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to minimising the impact of melanoma through innovative research, treatment and education programs. Melanoma Institute Australia is internationally renowned for its work in developing effective treatments and preventing melanoma. Melanoma Institute Australia is affiliated with the University of Sydney and St Vincents and Mater Health Sydney.

Melanoma in Australia

Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma in the world and as such can be considered Australia's national cancer. Melanoma has a disproportionate effect on Australians with around 10,000 cases diagnosed each year. Over 1,200 Australians die of melanoma each year. Melanoma is the third most common form of cancer in Australian men and women and is the most common of all cancers in individuals aged 15-39. Melanoma is the most common of all cancers in men aged 15-50 and women aged 15-35. The good news is that Australia is also leading the world in the fight against melanoma.

In the decade to 2005, Australian melanoma incidence increased by 22% in men and 17% in women, while mortality increased by 16% in men and 6% in women. Melanoma is also known as an "orphan cancer", being one of the few human cancers for which there is no drug treatment that prolongs survival of patients with metastatic disease.

Purpose of Melanoma Institute Australia

Melanoma Institute Australia's purpose is to be a global leader in melanoma treatment, research and education. It is dedicated to minimising the devastating impact of this cancer on the community. Melanoma Institute Australia relies on the generosity of individuals, organisations and government funding to continue its ground breaking work into this potentially devastating cancer.

History of Melanoma Institute Australia

Melanoma Institute Australia evolved from the Sydney Melanoma Unit. It was established as an independent charity in 2007 following a large philanthropic donation by Mr Greg Poche AO. The Institute is affiliated with The University of Sydney.

