

## News Bite

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# Medical Cannabis Trial Begins

Australia's first medical cannabis trial for terminally ill adults has begun in NSW.

The trial is part of the NSW Government's \$9 million commitment to support medical cannabis clinical trials.

NSW Premier Mike Baird said the first trial would play a critical role in helping to better understand what role medical cannabis can play in alleviating symptoms and pain in terminally ill patients.

"We do not want patients or carers having to play pharmacist - that is why it is so important to explore the safest and most effective ways we can deliver compassionate care and improve the quality of life," Mr Baird said.

"Our trials will help to position NSW at the forefront of world-class research in this area and explore how we can complement the existing palliative care treatments and therapies patients receive."

A research team led by the University of New South Wales' Chief Investigator Associate Professor Meera Agar will conduct the first trial.

The trial will evaluate two types of cannabis products - vaporised leaf cannabis and a pharmaceutical.

Professor Agar said the trial would assess the potential ability of cannabis to alleviate distressing symptoms including fatigue, low appetite, altered taste and smell for food, low mood, weight loss, nausea, insomnia and pain relief.

"This will add to the existing body of evidence based research to help better understand and evaluate the potential benefits that medical cannabis products may have for terminally ill patients."

The first part of the trial will take place at the [Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital](#) to determine: whether patients can inhale a cannabis product as vapour; if it causes unwanted side-effects and dosage requirements.

The next step will be for the research team to seek review and approval of the trial by a Human Research Ethics Committee. Patients will begin treatment in early 2016 with initial results expected by the end of 2016.

Once the results of part one are known, part two may expand the trial to a broader range of patients across metropolitan and regional hospitals.

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