MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chair: Mrs Kay Hull, MP
Deputy: Mrs Julia Irwin, MP

Australia leading research with Naltrexone implant treatment

Members of the House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee have been to Perth to observe at first hand the work being undertaken by Dr George O'Neil in regard to treatment of heroin dependence by naltrexone implants. It was a follow-up to the committee's three-year inquiry into substance abuse in Australian communities and report *Road to Recovery* released late last year.

The committee has met with a range of people, including Professor Gary Hulse from the University of Western Australia, Dr George O'Neil from the Australian Medical Procedures Research Foundation, Associate Professor Gary Jeffrey, Hepatitis C program at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Dr Colin Brewer, Research Director from the Stapleford Centre (UK).

The chair of the committee Kay Hull said "Most importantly we have had the opportunity to talk with former heroin addicts who have undergone the implant treatment".

"They all have said how this treatment has substantially changed their lives. The committee is very excited about the potential of this form of treatment for heroin addiction."

The National Health and Medical Research Council are currently funding a clinical trial to compare oral and implant naltrexone treatment.

Jennie George, Kay Hull, Harry Quick and Alan Cadman said they are convinced Australia is at the leading edge of world practice in naltrexone implants.

"As a matter of urgency, we need to move to a clinical trial of currently used pharmacotherapies (methadone and buprenorphine) and compare this directly to naltrexone implant treatment," they said.

"It has a huge potential for treatment of heroin addiction both in Australia and world-wide".

For media comment from the Chair, please contact:
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For further details about the Perth visit, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or visit the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca