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SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE PRODUCTION

The Morrison Government is safeguarding Australia's sovereign capability to produce vital nuclear medicines by launching a \$30 million project to design a new world-leading manufacturing facility to be built at Lucas Heights in Sydney.

About 80 per cent of nuclear medicine isotopes used to fight diseases like cancer are produced by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) at an existing facility at Lucas Heights that is nearing the end of its life.

Acting Minister for Industry, Science and Technology Angus Taylor said the new facility will not only help to improve health care in Australia, but will also support nearly 1000 highly-skilled jobs across the country.

"Nuclear medicine is an essential part of an advanced healthcare system and helps save lives – that's why we're acting to secure a reliable nuclear medicine supply for future generations," Minister Taylor said.

"By funding the productive infrastructure that supports the delivery of nuclear medicine services, we are also investing in future industry development and in

onshore, highly-skilled jobs such as nuclear medicine researchers, developers and practitioners.

“It will also support radiopharmaceutical research and development and contribute to research translation and medical industry collaboration, to improve health care in Australia.”

With 10,000-12,000 potential patient doses of nuclear medicine made by ANSTO each week, most Australians are estimated to benefit from these medicines at least once in their lifetime.

Minister for Health and Aged Care Greg Hunt said nuclear medicines improve health outcomes across the community, from our cities to our regions.

“These medicines support early, precise diagnosis of a range of cancers, as well as other health conditions including cardiac disease and muscular skeletal injuries,” Minister Hunt said.

“Early diagnosis saves lives and reduces longer-term demand on the health system. Importantly, there is also an increasing number of nuclear medicines with direct therapeutic applications – treating for example, a number of cancers.”

Finance Minister Simon Birmingham said there were immense opportunities for a collaborative approach and private sector involvement in this world-leading project.

“Through this \$30 million commitment, we’ve laid the foundations for this facility, with private sector collaboration important to now realise its full benefits,” Minister Birmingham said.

“There is huge potential for partnerships in this new state-of-the-art facility which will save Australian lives, support thousands of jobs and further enhance our sovereign capability in this important area of medicine.”