

13 June 2014

World first Charles Perkins Centre officially opens

Sydney Local Health District welcomed the latest addition to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital precinct last week when the University of Sydney celebrated the official opening of the Charles Perkins Centre research and education hub.

The launch events featured performances by the Ltyentye Apurte Santa Teresa Aboriginal men's dance group and singer Megan Washington.

While teaching has been conducted at the \$385 million research and education hub for most of this year, the launch was an opportunity to celebrate one of the University of Sydney's most ambitious projects to date, and to thank the generous donors, clinicians and people who have made it possible.



Ltyentye Apurte Santa Teresa Aboriginal men's dance group performing at the Charles Perkins Centre official opening.

A \$3 million donation from prominent University supporters Judith and David Coffey, to support early career researchers at the centre's Life Lab and Integrative Systems Laboratory, was also announced at the launch. The generous gift brings the donation amount for the centre to more than \$58 million.

"We are immensely excited to launch the Charles Perkins Centre research and education hub, which will play home to an initiative that is already changing the way we think about some of the most destructive health issues in the world," said Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Dr Michael Spence.

"The Charles Perkins Centre represents a completely new way of conducting research. The breadth and depth of multidisciplinary research conducted by the centre is unparalleled both in Australia and internationally."

The centre features an advanced clinical research facility, operated in conjunction with the Sydney Local Health District, used to treat patients, test new models of clinical care, and conduct research trials, with a metabolic kitchen, overnight stay rooms, gym equipment, and associated clinical facilities.

It is named after the University of Sydney's first-recorded Aboriginal alumnus, Charles Perkins, a visionary Australian who challenged societal attitudes and worked across boundaries to create opportunities and find novel solutions.

He showed that new ways, partnerships and ideas could change the way Australians think and act. He sought to lead collaborations in situations where a single person or agency could not deliver. In the same way, the Charles Perkins Centre looks beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to improve the health of individuals, communities and the nation.

Along with finding real-world, big-picture solutions to obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, the multidisciplinary structure of the centre has the potential to revolutionise the way research and teaching is conducted, both in Australia and internationally.