



Research looks at the alternatives

RESEARCH will be boosted into complementary therapies and alternative medicines as they become increasingly accepted in managing health and treating ailments.

The University of Western Sydney plans to establish the National Institute for Complementary Medicine.

The Federal Government had already committed \$4 million to the institute, with the State Government adding \$600,000 last month.

Science and Medical Research Minister Verity Firth said the institute would broaden the scientific community's understanding of complementary therapies and alternative medicines.

Ms Firth said Australians spent up to \$2 billion a year on complementary medicines as part of a worldwide trend to embrace herbal and natural treatments.

"With so many people turning to complementary and alternative medicines, the development of a rigorous scientific basis for their ongoing use is absolutely essential," Ms Firth said.

"There is a strong public interest in establishing the safety and effectiveness of complementary medicines, and determining how best to integrate those products that work with modern medicine to achieve better public health outcomes."