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TAMWORTH TRIAL OF VIRTUAL REALITY REHAB TECHNOLOGY

Tamworth residents will be recruited to help trial the world's first clinically proven virtual reality (VR) therapy for stroke patients with the support of the NSW Government.

NSW Minister for Jobs Stuart Ayres said Sydney startup company Neuromersiv has received a \$25,000 Minimum Viable Product grant from the NSW Government to develop its technology.

"Neuromersiv has developed a virtual reality program which aims to provide more effective rehabilitation and training exercises for stroke patients and those with brain injuries and neurodegenerative conditions," Mr Ayres said.

"Neuromersiv is a prime example of how the NSW Government can enable clever startups to succeed and ultimately benefit the wider community."

The NSW Government grant helped Neuromersiv develop its technology to a point where it could be further market-tested. The company is now gearing up to enlist about 10 patients from the Tamworth area in a trial to further prove its effectiveness. Trials are also planned on the Central Coast.

Neuromersiv co-founders Anshul Dayal and Rohan O'Reilly say the VR technology has the potential to put NSW and Australia on the map for market-leading medtech.

"Our VR system enables neurotherapists and other medical professionals to make rehab exercises more fun and emotionally engaging for patients," Mr Dayal said.

"People who have suffered strokes or other brain trauma can use a VR headset to perform rehab exercises in a range of virtual settings – from climbing a mountain to carefully designed daily living tasks in realistic home-based VR environments – helping motivate treatment and recovery efforts."

Mr O'Reilly said the VR rehab and training system aimed to achieve up to a three-fold improvement in outcomes which would be fantastic result for many thousands of people.

"With over 1,000 hospitals, 25,000 physiotherapists and 18,000 occupational therapists across Australia there is a large domestic market but our system has global potential and we aim to be the world's first clinically proven VR therapy."

Dr Luke Wakely, lecturer in physiotherapy at the University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health, will coordinate the local trial with Hunter New England Health.

"It is anticipated that this technology will improve patient engagement and provide a more 'real-world' rehabilitation experience," Dr Wakely said.

"The Tamworth trial will test the technology with about 10 patients and local therapists to get patient feedback on the technology and therapist feedback on how feasible it would be to incorporate into their clinical practice.

"I think it is a great thing for rural health because often distance can be a barrier to healthcare for many people and in future this technology could be set up remotely."

Tamworth Hospital Physiotherapist in Charge Julia Greaves said the hospital's rehabilitation team is pleased to be participating in the trial.

“Engaging patients to drive their recovery after stroke and serious accidents is so important,” Ms Greaves said. “This new approach is quite novel, so we’re looking forward to seeing how our patients respond to it and whether the technology helps achieve better patient outcomes.”

For further information on Minimum Viable Product grants which are available to assist innovative businesses to develop new technology products, visit <https://www.jobsforNSW.com.au/our-products/minimum-viable-product>

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