

EDITORIAL

Conducting Clinical Trials in Queensland, Australia

Until recently, when thinking of clinical trial locations, Queensland would have rarely been given a thought

Today, controlled costs coupled with world-standard practice make conducting clinical trials in Queensland very attractive. Queensland is nationally dubbed 'the Smart State' as it is experiencing the most sustained period of growth and prosperity ever recorded in the State's history.

While Queensland continues to boom, it has established a position with the best in the world in pharmaceutical and biotechnology research and development. The Smart State vision has created a State where knowledge, creativity and innovation have improved the prosperity and the quality of life enjoyed by Queenslanders.

Currently, two-thirds of all clinical research in Australia is being publicly funded by entities such as the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC). A large section of Australia's research community come together to continue to build on the world-class infrastructure in order to develop a diverse range of biotechnology and research projects that aim to find cures and save lives.

As outlined in the latest census documentation released 27 June 2007; and for more than a decade, the Queensland economy has been growing faster than the rest of Australia. Queensland's economic growth, highly skilled workforce, world-class infrastructure, low business taxes and easy lifestyle make it a perfect investment choice.

Overview of Australia and Queensland

Australia has a population of about 21 million. Of Australia's numerous states, Queensland, located in the northeast comprises about 22.5% of Australia's landmass and is two times the size of Texas.

75 per cent of Queensland's four million residents are located in the southeast corner of the state and enjoy a subtropical climate whilst northern cities, such as Cairns and Townsville, enjoy a tropical climate. Australia's high standard of living is reflected by key economic indicators. These factors combine to make Queensland a very desirable place to live and conduct business.

The Queensland State Government is responsible for delivering many services including health. Clinical trials regulation, however, is managed at a national level by the Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

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Starting a clinical trial in Australia

In Australia, clinical trials (in any phase) can be conducted under either the Clinical Trial Exemption (CTX) scheme or the Clinical Trial Notification (CTN) scheme. CTN is the preferred option, with 99% of trials being conducted under this scheme. Under this scheme, a study can commence in seven to 14 days following ethics approval.

In an independent study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Australia was benchmarked against USA, UK, Germany, Japan, Singapore and India and was found to be the 'number one site to conduct clinical trials'.

This high performance is driven by a number of key indicators such as:

- low average cost per patient;
- high availability of research sites;
- good participation and high on-time completion rates;
- quick clinical trial application review;
- a fast start as most trials are undertaken via the CTN process;
- good clinical practice knowledge is very high;
- English language;
- good logistics infrastructure;
- a quality workforce; and
- significant potential for more clinical trials.

Together with the above factors, it is important to remember that Australia is a politically stable, safe, legal and regulatory robust country with high quality and experienced western medical expertise. Australia can be used as a 'stepping-stone' to US and European markets or could be considered for bridging trials for the Asian market due to the large population of immigrants with Asian background.

With QCTN available to assist with the implementation of clinical and preclinical research; and ready access to comparator drugs, background therapy, standards of care, disease tracking programs for notifiable disease outbreaks and a flu monitoring network; Queensland is not only a smart option, but also a fun place to visit. For further information about doing clinical trials in Australia, please visit www.qctn.com.au

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