

Parkinson's treatment for North

By EMILY BAKER

A PARKINSON'S disease treatment touted as a "game changer" will be launched in Tasmania on Friday.

Australian treatment program PD Warrior uses intensive physical activity and mental challenges

in an attempt to rewire the brain. It was designed to specifically combat the symptoms of the degenerative mobility disorder, which affects one in every 350 Australians.

West Tamar Physiotherapy principal physiotherapist Maggie McKenzie and exercise physiologist Kathryn Kohler were trained to conduct PD Warrior circuit classes and individual sessions.

Research has shown that purposeful movement can help battle the loss of motor control seen in Parkinson's Disease.

Previously, treatment relied on

medication and, in the later stages of the disease, the introduction of movement strategies and fall prevention techniques.

"The initial results have been very impressive, as are results being obtained in Sydney, which is why West Tamar Physiotherapy have purchased a license

to bring PD Warrior to Tasmania," Ms McKenzie said.

A doctor referral is not required for the PD Warrior program but a full neurological assessment and program prescription is necessary before entering the circuit class.

West Tamar Physiotherapy has rooms in Launceston, Exeter and Beaconsfield.

Red wine derivative at heart of artery research

TASMANIA will combine two of its greatest selling points in a world-first research project to be undertaken in Launceston.

The Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust has approved a \$112,000 grant to fund research into the effects of red wine derivative resveratrol on the function of coronary arteries.

Thirty-six Launceston General Hospital patients who have suffered a heart attack or angina and had their blocked arteries opened with a stent will participate in the pilot study.

Interventional cardiologist Brian Herman will lead the study, which will measure the function of the lining of the blood vessels (the endothelium) to see how it dilates under stress and allows blood to

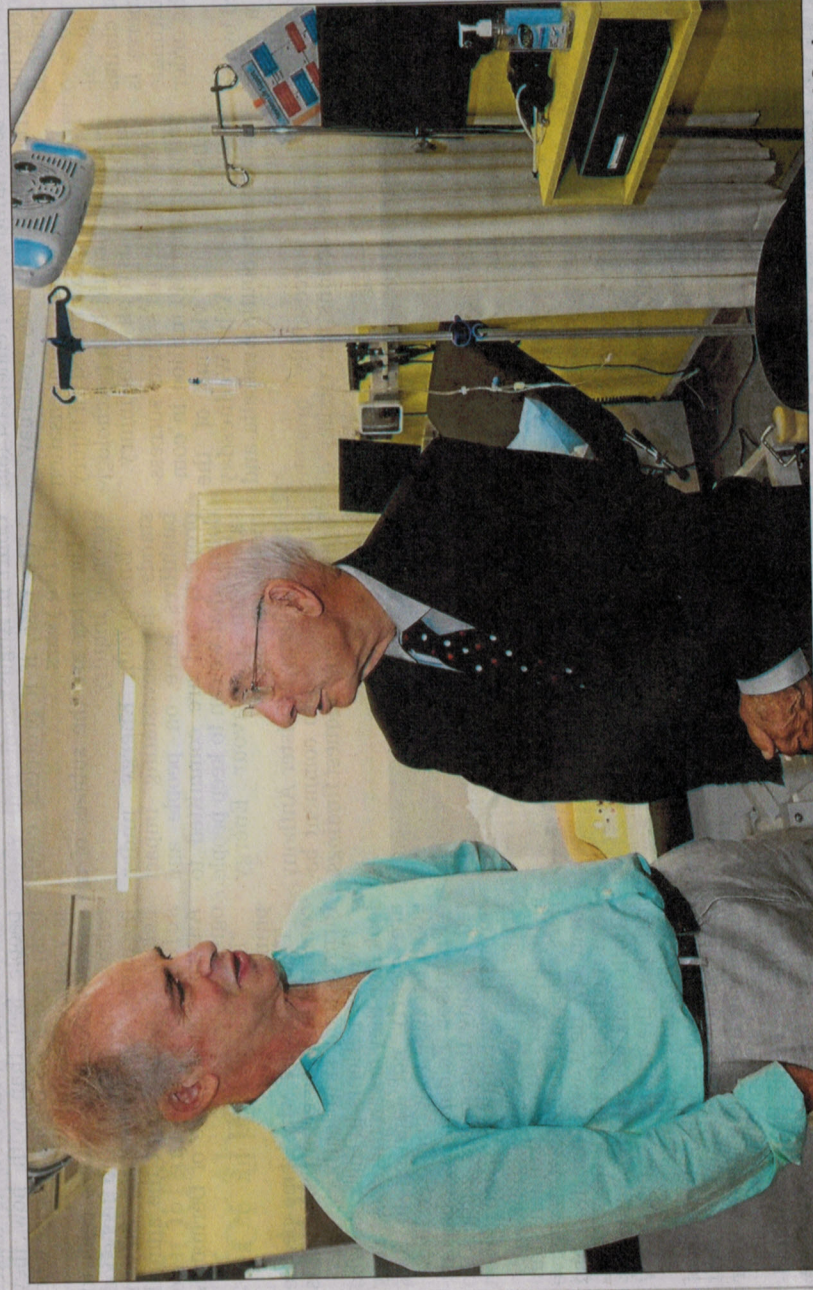
pass through to the heart muscle.

For the next 12 weeks half of the participants will be given a daily dose of a tablet called Resveratrol. The other half will be given a placebo.

After 12 weeks, the blood vessel lining function will be tested again to see if the arteries perform better under stress.

"This would be the first direct study of its kind on human coronary arteries," Professor Herman said.

"If this pilot study yields positive results, it may clearly pave the way for a much larger trial looking at long-term clinical outcomes for patients, which could lead to Resveratrol becoming a new medical management tool for patients with heart disease."



The LGH's interventional cardiologist Dr Brian Herman and Associate Professor Don McTaggart, of the Clifford Craig Trust, at the research announcement.
Picture: GEOFF ROBSON