



MEDIA STATEMENT

Verity Firth

**Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister for Women
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)**

15 April 2008

NSW COMPANY DEVELOPS NANOCELL TECHNOLOGY TO FIGHT CANCER

State Plan Priority P1: Increased Business Investment

The debilitating side-effects of cancer treatments could be dramatically reduced thanks to new “nanocell” technology being developed by a Sydney company.

The company is one of six to share in more than \$500,000 worth of biotechnology innovation grants announced today by NSW Minister for Science and Medical Research, Verity Firth.

The promising cancer research is being developed by North Ryde company EnGeneIC Pty Ltd, which has received a \$100,000 grant under the program.

“EnGeneIC’s nanocell technology offers hope for a new weapon in the fight against many different types of solid tumours, such as breast, colorectal, lymphoma and liver cancers,” Ms Firth said.

“The technology uses bacteria to create microscopic shells called “nanocells”, 1/100,000th the width of a human hair.

“These tiny nanocells would carry anti-cancer drugs into tumours so they can attack cancer cells directly, without harming other healthy parts of a patient’s body.

“Better targeted treatment means more effective doses can be used and the side-effects for patients can be minimised.”

Ms Firth said EnGeneIC now plans to develop manufacturing methods for specific doses of the nanocells and to conduct further tests to prove the technology works.

“Cancer is the leading cause of death in Australia with an estimated 106,000 new cases diagnosed each year, so EnGeneIC’s efforts have the potential to make a difference for many.”

Comment from EnGeneIC can be sought from Dr Jennifer MacDiarmid on (02) 9878 6631.

Ms Firth said the \$100,000 grant was part of the NSW Government’s Proof of Concept program, which aims to help emerging, innovative NSW biotechnology companies take their research discoveries from the laboratory to the multi-billion dollar medical device market.

“The grant to EnGeneIC is one of 10 Proof of Concept grants that have recently been awarded to NSW biotechnology or medical device companies, with further funding rounds to follow,” she said.

Other recently awarded grants include:

- A \$69,865 grant to Bondi Junction company Seagull Technology to further test a non-invasive method to treat macular degeneration, Australia’s leading cause of blindness. Seagull’s technology could replace the current treatment method of injections to the back of the eye with a far safer and more comfortable process using gels, ultrasound and electrical stimulation. For further information on Seagull, contact Dr Shanny Dyer on 8223 2405.
- A \$100,000 grant to Acu Rate Pty Ltd, a Mosman company that has invented a simple, physics-based model for controlling flow on intravenous drips. Acu Rate devices are expected to cost as little as \$1-\$2 each and will do away with the need for expensive IV electric pump systems that can cost up to \$1,000. For further information on Acu Rate, contact CEO Dr Abby Bloom on 9968 4307.
- A \$100,000 grant to Ablantenn Pty Ltd, a Westmead company that has invented a new surgical tool to treat irregular heart rhythm. The tool is a manoeuvrable catheter that emits microwave radiation to clear scar tissue in the heart that causes irregular heart beats. Ablantenn Pty Ltd will use the grant to refine and test a patented prototype that will eventually be targeted for United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. For further information on Ablantenn, contact Dr Russell Carrington on 9926 5670.
- A \$96,949 grant to Rosebery company TeleMedCare Pty Ltd to develop a monitoring device that warns frail users when they are in danger of a fall and allows them to talk instantly to a carer at the touch of a button. The technology is aimed to assist the third of people over the age of 65 who suffer falls each year. For further information, contact TeleMedCare CEO Professor Branko Celler on 9313 8136.
- A \$71,038 grant to Brookvale company Special Phage Holdings Pty Ltd (SPH) to develop cocktails of bacteria-eating viruses (bacteriophages) that preliminary tests suggest are effective against antibiotic-resistant bacteria. For further information on SPH, contact Dr Anthony Smithyman on 9905 0133.

“This is about turning clever NSW science and innovation into solid business propositions that will create jobs, benefits and export value for this State,” Ms Firth said.

NSW is the centre of advanced medical device manufacture in Australia, being home to 45% of Australia’s companies and generating 62% of Australia’s exports in this field.

For further information on the NSW Proof of Concept program visit the Department of State and Regional Development website at www.business.nsw.gov.au or telephone (02) 9338 6622.

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