

Benitec Patent Re-examination Update

16 March 2007, Melbourne, Australia: Gene silencing biotech company Benitec Limited (ASX:BLT) has requested a two month extension for the preparation of a response to the US Patent and Trademarks Office (USPTO). The response relates to the continuing patent re-examination of US gene silencing patent 6573099 (the '099 Patent).

Benitec reached its decision after very co-operative discussions with members of the USPTO's Re-examination Unit and Office of Patent Legal Administration. Additionally the two month extension will permit Benitec to acquire certain documents and also consider the most expedient legal and commercial outcomes.

Benitec has reviewed the material and prepared a response to the USPTO's 24 January 2007 Office Action. Benitec believes the new art does not raise any issues that would preclude patentability of the invention disclosed in the '099 Patent. Benitec also believes it has strong arguments for overcoming the art of record.

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About Benitec

Benitec is an Australian biotechnology company focused on licensing its extensive intellectual property portfolio and developing therapeutics to treat serious diseases using its proprietary ddRNAi technology. Its current therapeutic program is focused on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Benitec's RNA-based HIV therapeutic, co-developed with the Center for Biomedicine & Genetics at the City of Hope in Los Angeles, California, will enter Phase I clinical trials in early 2007. For additional information, please visit www.benitec.com.