

## Benitec appoints new Scientific Advisory Board *Renowned worldwide experts in gene silencing*

**20 June 2007, Melbourne, Australia:** Melbourne-based gene silencing company Benitec Limited (ASX:BLT) has appointed a new Scientific Advisory Board to monitor scientific developments in gene silencing and assist with decisions on commercial opportunities.

This new board is part of Benitec's re-building under a new management team.

Benitec, which is recognised for securing the world's first patent grant for RNAi-mediated gene silencing, has welcomed four new members all of whom have extensive academic, clinical and industry experience. Dr John Rossi, Professor Cy Stein, Professor Bryan Williams and Dr David Crump have all provided pertinent research and key discoveries in the RNA field including the fight against autoimmune diseases including HIV and cancer.

"To have such a distinguished board of expert advisors is undoubtedly a privilege and an advantage. All four SAB members will play an integral role in the pipeline of Benitec's RNAi therapies while further cementing our position as the pioneers in RNAi technologies," said Sue MacLeman, CEO of Benitec.

### **The Scientific Advisory Board members:**

#### **Dr John Rossi**

Dr. Rossi is the Lidow Family Research Chair and Professor, Division of Molecular Biology, Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope, and Dean, Graduate School of Biological Sciences, Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope. Dr. Rossi received his doctoral training in genetics at the University of Connecticut in Storrs and postdoctoral training in molecular genetics at Brown University. His research has focused on RNA biology and clinical applications of small RNAs. His group was the first to demonstrate that hammerhead ribozymes could be used for inhibition of HIV replication. This research program led to two clinical trials in which ribozyme genes have been transduced into hematopoietic stem cells for autologous transplant in HIV infected individuals. He is the recipient of an NIH Merit award for his work on ribozymes and HIV. Work in the laboratory continues to focus upon mechanisms of small RNA mediated inhibition of gene expression and RNA based therapeutics, with recent emphasis on function and applications of RNA interference and expressed short hairpin RNAs for therapeutic treatment of HIV and cancers. He has published over 200 peer reviewed articles and numerous reviews and commentaries on RNAi based therapeutics.

## **Professor Cy Stein**

Professor Stein's distinguished career has been in research and treatment of cancers. For the past 15 years his responsibilities have focused on leading preclinical and clinical trials of nucleic acid therapies for cancers with increasing emphasis in recent years on RNA interference. He is Head of Medical Genitourinary Oncology and Professor of Medicine, Urology and Molecular Pharmacology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York. He also serves as an Attending Physician at the Montefiore Medical Center and is a Diplomate of nearly 20 years' standing of both the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Oncology.

## **Professor Bryan Williams**

Professor Williams was appointed the Director of the Monash Institute of Medical Research on January 1 2006 and also heads up the Centre for Cancer Research at the Institute. Prior to this appointment, Professor Williams was the Chairman of the Department of Cancer Biology at the Lerner Research Institute of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, a position he had held since 1991. He was also an Associate Director of the Case Comprehensive Cancer Centre at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He has previously worked in New Zealand, England, Canada and America. His research interests have included molecular biology of tumour suppression and focusing on the role tumour suppressor genes may play in regulating cell growth, differentiation and apoptosis. His research on Wilms Tumour (a cancer of the kidney that primarily affects children) continues, as does his work on protein kinase R, an important cellular signalling molecule and other projects on innate immunity. In 1990 Bryan was the recipient of the Milstein Award from the International Society for Interferon Research in recognition for his outstanding contributions to advancing interferons for treatment of human disease.

## **Dr David Crump**

Dr Crump is an experienced drug development expert capable of effectively leading multidisciplinary drug development teams. He has been responsible for successfully guiding and progressing drug candidates from clinical trials through to commercialisation in Australia, Europe and North America. He has experience in a diverse range of therapeutic areas including inflammatory diseases, oncology, neurology, pain medicine and virology. Dr Crump was previously Head of Development Projects and Medical Advisor with Amrad Corporation Ltd (subsequently Zenyth Therapeutics Ltd) for over 15 years. He holds a Medical degree (MBBS) from the University of Melbourne as well as a Graduate Diploma of Business Administration from Swinburne University of Technology. Dr Crump has also served on the board of AusBiotech as a Director since 2005.

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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, is in Phase I clinical trials. For additional information, please visit [www.benitec.com](http://www.benitec.com).

**Forward-looking Statements**

*This press release may contain forward-looking statements that reflect the Company's current expectations regarding future events. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. Actual events could differ materially from those projected herein and depend on a number of factors including the success of the Company's research strategy, the applicability of the discoveries made therein, the successful and timely completion of clinical studies and the uncertainties related to the regulatory process.*