



## **CRUISE MISSILE OF GENE TECHNOLOGY IS BIGGEST BIOTECH BREAKTHROUGH FOR DECADE**

Premier Peter Beattie has congratulated another Queensland company for taking a global lead in a biotechnology breakthrough.

"Benitec, headquartered in Brisbane, has unveiled technology which selectively shuts down, or silences, target genes in any organism - human, animal, plant or pest," said Mr Beattie.

"It sounds like the gene equivalent of a super-accurate cruise missile, able to seek out and eliminate rogue genes -- genes that cause terrible and debilitating diseases.

"This is exciting news which has the potential to eventually result in far-reaching positive effects for millions of people.

"And I am proud to say that Benitec is in partnership with the Smart State's Department of Primary Industries.

"Benitec and the DPI jointly own the core technology, with Benitec having exclusive worldwide rights of commercialisation.

"This is exactly the sort of result we are seeking to encourage with our Smart State strategy."

Executive chairman John McKinley, said: "The company's commanding position in the field of gene silencing is evidenced by wide recognition that this is the most important technology to be developed in biotech in the past decade."

Professor John Mattick, a non-executive director of Benitec Ltd, said: "Its potential human applications include treatments for diseases such as cancers, psoriasis, HIV, AIDS, hepatitis C and Alzheimer's disease and major Third World parasitic diseases, including malaria and sleeping sickness."

The company is now moving into a global commercialisation phase, targeted initially at the North American market.

For animal health, the technology offers the opportunity to produce livestock resistant to major infectious diseases such as foot and mouth and swine fever and without the capability to act as carriers of these diseases.

"Once again Queensland is holding up its reputation as the Smart State, being first to recognise and capture the value of gene silencing technology for the biotech industry.

"It is a shining example of the excellent partnerships between public and private entities in Australia - taking leading research through to its commercial potential."

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