



## ASX/Media Release

### More patents granted in Europe and the US Significantly Strengthen Benitec's Dominant Global Intellectual Property Position in Gene Silencing

4 May 2011, Melbourne, Australia: Benitec Ltd (ASX:BLT), a world leader in gene silencing for human therapeutics, is very pleased to announce that two further patents owned or licensed exclusively by Benitec have been granted or allowed in Europe and the US respectively.

The CSIRO-owned patent EP1068311-B1 ("*Methods and Means for Obtaining Modified Phenotypes*"), for which Benitec is the exclusive licensee in the field of human therapeutics, has been granted in Europe. The grant of EP1068311 was published on 27 April 2011. The patent includes key claims to silencing of genes by using either a hairpin RNA having a double-stranded RNA portion, or a DNA molecule which forms the hairpin RNA, and which targets the coding region of a gene incorporated in a cell. The double-stranded RNA portion is composed of a sense and an antisense nucleotide sequence, each of which are at least 10 consecutive nucleotides long, and which are 75 to 100% identical to a region of the target gene sequence.

The European patent provides broad protection for Benitec's gene silencing technology using DNA directed RNA interference (ddRNAi). This patent granting is timely as Dr French will be presenting Benitec's investment case at the BioEquity Conference in Paris on 23 May 2011, as announced earlier.

In addition, the USPTO has recently issued a Notice of Allowance (on 14 April 2011) for the Benitec-owned patent application No. 11/355516 entitled "RNAi expression constructs with liver-specific enhancer/promoter", with a patent term adjustment of 81 days. The claims cover a ddRNAi therapeutic capable of producing three or more gene silencing molecules specifically targeting the Hepatitis C Virus. The construct comprises one or more liver specific DNA machinery elements. Methods of using the construct are also included. Benitec have licensed the use of ddRNAi for targeting Hepatitis C to Tacere Therapeutics Inc., who in turn have sub-licensed the technology to Pfizer for clinical development of a ddRNAi therapeutic for Hepatitis C, a disease that affects up to 200 million people worldwide.

With the granting of the CSIRO European patent, which covers the broad use of ddRNAi, and allowance of the US patent covering the use of a multi ddRNAi approach for the treatment of hepatitis C, Benitec's owned and exclusively licensed patent estate continues to reinforce Benitec's dominant position in the field of gene silencing. Benitec is focusing on demonstrating the power and the potential of these and the other (more than 100) patents and patent applications to be the basis of a new generation of transformational human therapeutics to treat and cure a wide range of medical conditions.

**About Benitec** [www.benitec.com](http://www.benitec.com)

Benitec Limited is developing new novel treatments for chronic and life-threatening conditions based on a transformational technology, DNA-directed RNA interference (ddRNAi) - sometimes called expressed RNAi. The technology's potential to address unmet medical needs and, potentially, to cure disease results from its demonstrated ability to permanently silence genes which cause the condition.

Benitec now either owns or exclusively licences from CSIRO more than 40 granted or allowed patents in the field of RNA interference for human therapeutic applications. Patents have been granted in key territories such as the USA, the UK, Japan, Europe, Canada and Australia. In addition, Benitec has almost 50 patent applications pending for which it is the owner or exclusive licensee from CSIRO, and has further intellectual property under development as a result of its pipeline program.

Benitec trades on the Australian stock exchange under the symbol "BLT". The Company was founded in 1997 and has been publicly held since 2001. The Company aims to deliver a range of novel ddRNAi-based therapeutics to the clinic in partnership with the pharmaceutical industry. In-house it is pursuing a focused R&D strategy in infectious diseases, cancer and chronic cancer-associated pain, as well as programs with licensees that have advanced to pre-clinical and/or clinical trials.

**For Further Information**

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