

ASX RELEASE

Benitec Biopharma comments on CSIRO recently granted patents for RNAi gene silencing technology

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Benitec Biopharma Ltd congratulates CSIRO on their recent announcement on the granting of their patents in the US and Europe for a modification of hairpin RNAi gene silencing technology.

Benitec Biopharma is aware of these patents, which are directed to quite specific (unpolyadenylated) types of shRNA that arose from work undertaken in plants after the filing of the exclusively licensed Benitec Graham patents. The key points for Benitec Biopharma's investors and sub-licensees to be aware of are:

- the Graham patents for which Benitec Biopharma are exclusive licensees are earlier filed so pre-date these more recent patents
- the claims of the Graham patents are not limited to the shRNAs being polyadenylated or unpolyadenylated, so are broader in scope.
- the CSIRO US patent claims are quite specific – being limited to methods of silencing animal cells in culture, not *in vivo*.
- the shRNAs which are the focus of Benitec Biopharma's current and planned commercialisation projects are not affected by the scope of the claims of these CSIRO patents
- the patents are not an alternative technology to the Graham and Waterhouse patents which are the foundation shRNA patents in the field.

Benitec Biopharma's CEO, Dr Peter French said, "These patents are potentially an 'optional extra' for groups interested in gene silencing and are not an alternative strategy to the technology covered by Benitec Biopharma's exclusive licensed patents in the Graham and Waterhouse families, and have no impact on current in-house or externally licensed programs.

Nevertheless, given the strength of the relationship between CSIRO and Benitec Biopharma, the parties are in discussions as to how to best optimise the potential of these patents to strengthen Benitec Biopharma's position."

For further information

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About Benitec Biopharma

Benitec Biopharma Ltd is developing novel treatments for chronic and life-threatening conditions based on targeted gene silencing activity using a transformational technology: DNA-directed RNA interference (ddRNAi) - sometimes called expressed RNAi. The technology's potential to address unmet medical needs and to cure disease results from its demonstrated ability to permanently silence genes which cause the condition. Importantly, this technology's target gene and related gene pathways will rarely have presented as a therapeutic avenue for research for the traditional small molecule agents, currently accounting for the majority of today's pharmaceutical products.

Founded in 1997 and trading publicly since 2001, Benitec Biopharma is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) under the symbol "BLT". Benitec Biopharma aims to deliver a range of novel ddRNAi-based therapeutics to the clinic in partnership with the pharmaceutical industry. Besides a focused R&D strategy in infectious diseases, cancer and chronic cancer-associated pain, Benitec Biopharma is pursuing programs with licensees that have advanced to pre-clinical and/or clinical trials.