

## ASX RELEASE

### Australian biotech company Benitec Biopharma teams up with Stanford University

**Sydney Australia 13 August 2012:** Benitec Biopharma Limited (ASX:BLT), a world leader in RNA-based gene silencing for human therapeutics, today announced it had entered into a research agreement with Stanford University in California USA.

Stanford University researchers will undertake final pre-clinical work using a well-validated delivery model of Benitec's chronic neuropathic pain ddRNAi therapy.

According to Benitec's CEO Dr Peter French, this program sits at the cutting edge of pain therapy. "Our program to develop an RNAi therapy for chronic neuropathic pain is making excellent progress. Benitec Biopharma is fortunate to have engaged with one of the world's leading pain specialists to provide vital data that, if successful, will support the entry of the program into the clinic in 2013. Furthermore, the data generated by Stanford University researchers in the next few months will be used by Benitec Biopharma's business development efforts to support ongoing discussions with potential partners in the global pharmaceutical industry."

The global market for cancer-associated pain treatments is estimated at US\$2 billion per year. This is expected to increase to over US\$2.9 billion by 2016.

The research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr David Yeomans, associate professor of anesthesia at the Stanford School of Medicine and director of pain research. Dr Yeomans is an international leader in pain research and is interested in understanding the physiology of pain as well as better strategies for managing and treating it.

Dr Yeomans will use a spared-nerve model to undertake proof-of-concept studies in his laboratory in California. He will be testing newly manufactured constructs from Benitec Biopharma's GMP provider.

Chronic neuropathic pain is a common and difficult to treat condition in cancer and frequently results from compression on the central nervous system by a tumour or as a side effect of chemotherapy, radiation or surgery. Opioids are currently the main therapeutic but they have severe side-effects and many patients become resistant.

Benitec Biopharma has an extensive program of collaboration with leading institutions worldwide to rapidly advance several promising therapeutic programs using its patented ddRNAi gene silencing technology to develop new therapies for common and rare human diseases. This agreement with Stanford University brings to four the number of associations that Benitec Biopharma has with companies and universities in California. In addition to Stanford, Benitec Biopharma has relationships with the City of Hope (HIV), Tacere Therapeutics (HCV) and Calimmune (HIV).



### **About Benitec Biopharma**

Benitec Biopharma Limited 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.

Benitec Biopharma videos can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/user/BenitecNews](http://www.youtube.com/user/BenitecNews)

#### **Benitec Biopharma Contacts:**

Dr Peter French

Chief Executive Officer, Benitec Biopharma Limited

Phone: +61 (02) 9555 6986 | [pfrench@benitec.com](mailto:pfrench@benitec.com) | [www.benitec.com](http://www.benitec.com)

Andrew Geddes

Seed Media Pty Ltd

Phone: +61 (02) 9555 4453 | [Andrew@seedmedia.com.au](mailto:Andrew@seedmedia.com.au)