



MEDIA RELEASE

February 10, 2010

ADVANCED CANCER RESEARCH FACILITY OPENS AT UQ

University of Queensland researchers will have access to some of the world's leading cancer imaging equipment with today's opening of a \$2.5 million facility funded by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF).

The ACRF Cancer Biology Imaging Facility, the most advanced of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, was officially opened by the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO.

The Facility is located at UQ's Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) and will allow IMB researchers to unravel the molecular reasons why healthy cells turn into cancerous cells and spread through the body.

"Our sole focus is to provide these scientists with state-of-the-art facilities and technology capable of exploring new approaches to achieve better results for cancer patients in Australia and around the globe," ACRF Chairman Tom Dery said.

"The hallmark of top-quality science is to have a team of people with a huge variety of skills working on a problem. The most exciting thing about the work being done by the IMB team is that it brings together a stellar team of specialists with different perspectives who are really committed to making cancer breakthroughs."

The facility is an expansion of a \$1.2 million facility at IMB funded by the ACRF in 2003. The new facility will add three advanced imaging microscopes to conduct fluorescence imaging, the fastest-growing area of cancer research.

"Today we celebrate a vote of confidence from one of UQ's crucial partners in cancer research: the Australian Cancer Research Foundation," UQ Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Greenfield AO said. "This grant brings ACRF commitments to IMB to almost \$4 million."

"It is a moral tonic for researchers of the original facility as it signals they are producing a return on earlier investment."

Discoveries made using the first facility include the origin of medulloblastomas, a type of often-fatal brain tumours, and the identification of a gene critical for the development of the lymphatic system, the route through which tumours spread.

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“The Institute for Molecular Bioscience team is an outstanding research team with a track record of high achievement in research,” ACRF Chief Executive David Brettell said.

“They have developed special expertise and a worldwide reputation for use of imaging, and I am confident that this grant will enable them to uncover important information that will further increase our understanding of cancer.”

The Australian Cancer Research Foundation supports excellence in Australian cancer research and has awarded grants totalling more than \$62 million, \$14 million of which has been awarded to Queensland cancer research centres. In the last five years alone, ACRF has awarded grants in excess of \$40 million. It provides funds for major projects throughout Australia at the leading edge in global cancer research, with the potential to produce real breakthroughs for cancer patients.

Institute for Molecular Bioscience scientists investigate the basis of growth and development at the genetic, molecular, cellular and organ levels. Their discoveries have applications in a range of areas, from biomedicine to bioinformatics to biofuels.

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