



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Verity Firth MP**

**Minister for Women**

**Minister for Science and Medical Research**

**Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)**

**Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water**

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EMBARGOED until 5am on Thursday, 27 September 2007

### **SYDNEY TO HOST GATHERING OF THE WORLD'S BEST MINDS**

STATE PLAN TARGET P1: Continue to increase business through making NSW a more attractive place to do business

More than 2,000 of the world's leading scientists will gather in Sydney to assess progress in a field of science that is unravelling the mysteries still surrounding proteins – one of the basic 'building blocks' of human beings and likely key to ending the suffering caused by diseases such as cancer.

Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth today confirmed that the Sydney's efforts to lure the 2010 Annual World Congress of the Human Proteome Organisation (HUPO) to NSW had been successful.

"This five day event is expected to pump \$10 million into the NSW economy and ensure local scientists and researchers remain at the cutting edge of proteomics," said Ms Firth.

"I'm delighted Sydney has won the bid to host such a significant scientific gathering."

The event was secured in a bidding process that began in 2004 and by team working with the NSW Government and the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Proteomics evolved from genomics as the next stage in the scientific community's attempts to understand the genetic and cellular make-up of living things including humans, plants, animals and bacteria.

"Put simply, the goal of proteomics is to identify and determine the purpose of the many different types of proteins that make our bodies work, an endeavour that could one day pave the way for innovations such as personalised drugs, and faster, more accurate diagnostic tools," said Ms Firth.

"However given estimates that there are at least half a million proteins in the human body, each having a different function, the challenge confronting scientists is significant – much greater than the Human Genome Project which set out to map the entire human DNA sequence.

“Responsibility for coordinating this massive international cataloging effort lies with HUPO.

“Interestingly, Australian and NSW researchers have played a leading role in the development of proteomics.

“In fact, our very own Macquarie University holds the honour of being home to the world’s first labs dedicated to proteomics – the Australian Proteome Analysis Facility (APAF) – and birthplace of the term ‘proteomics’ itself (1995).

“Since then, and with the help of modern computer technology, proteomics both here and overseas has grown into an exciting and promising field of scientific exploration and has already contributed to breakthroughs in the areas of agriculture, biotechnology and the treatment of disease.”

The practical spin-offs of proteomics include more effective washing powders, treatments that slow the progress of Alzheimer’s and diagnostic tools for the early detection of heart disease and cancer.

Sydney’s selection ahead of other Asia-Oceania cities was carried unanimously by the HUPO’s Executive Council when it met last month in Buenos Aires.

The 2010 HUPO World Congress will be jointly hosted by the Australasian Proteomics Society, Macquarie University’s Australian Proteome Analysis Facility and Proteomics Australia – a consortium funded by both the NSW and Commonwealth governments.

Professor Mark Baker, Chief Executive of APAF and chair of the successful Sydney bid team, said the event will provide a unique chance to demonstrate the breakthroughs proteomics is delivering and the important role Australia has played in the field’s growth.

Ms Firth said the 2010 HUPO World Congress is just the latest high-profile science and medical conference wooed to the State by the NSW Government and the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“Sydney is now recognised as an ideal location for major, international medical and scientific events including, for example, last month’s International AIDS Society Conference which attracted more than 5,000 delegates,” said Ms Firth.

“The lemma Government’s aggressive international marketing strategy is helping to ensure NSW remains a magnet for scientific endeavour and home to the world’s leading researchers.”

Already this financial year the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau has played vital roles in securing seven international events for NSW, including the International Congress of the Society of The Fetus as a Patient in 2009 (500 delegates expected) and the World Spine Congress also in 2009 (1,000 delegates expected).

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