



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Verity Firth

**Minister for Women  
Minister for Science and Medical Research  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, Environment & Water**

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Thursday, 29 November 2007

### **WORLD'S 'BEST AND BRIGHTEST' MINDS HEAD TO NSW**

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

STATE PLAN TARGET S2: Reduce the number of potentially avoidable deaths for people under 75 to 150 per 100,000 population by 2016.

The State Government has been successful at encouraging some of the world's 'best and brightest' minds to relocate to NSW, build international research teams and continue their promising research.

Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth said the NSW Government's two flagship 'brain gain' programs – the *Life Science Research Awards* and *Cancer Research Leaders Program* – are fulfilling their missions of attracting leading international researchers to the State.

"This week NSW is not only rolling out the red carpet for David Beckham, but also four world-class researchers," said Ms Firth.

"I am pleased to confirm that the scientists we've successfully recruited are recognised leaders in their respective fields of research, and their relocation to NSW is a major scientific coup.

"Specifically, the appointments I'm announcing today will cement NSW at the leading-edge of scientific research into climate change, cancer, cardiovascular disease and natural herbicides."

The recipients of the *NSW Life Science Research Awards* are:

- **Dr Graham Hillis** – a world-leader in cardiovascular research relocating from the United Kingdom to Sydney's George Institute to focus on translating laboratory breakthroughs into practical treatment options for patients;
- **Professor Leslie Weston** of Cornell University – one of the US's premier research universities – will relocate to the Centre for Agricultural Innovation at Charles Sturt University to work on the development of natural herbicides;
- **Dr Ian Anderson** from the United Kingdom will continue his research into 'carbon accounting' for forests at the University of Western Sydney.

The appointments made as part of the *Cancer Research Leaders Program* are:

- **Professor Ariel Altaba**, currently at the University of Geneva, will become the inaugural Medical Foundation Chair of Cancer Biology at the Centenary Institute and assemble a team to investigate the self-renewal mechanisms of cancer stem cells to assist developed drugs that will prevent the spread of cancers.

Ms Firth said the NSW Government aims to boost the State's knowledge base and research capability by attracting top scientists and researchers from the US, Europe and Asia.

"Having world class researchers working in NSW helps to attract more talent to the State, contributes to the expansion of our research facilities and adds to our collective intellectual capital," said Ms Firth.

"The longer term aim is to see breakthrough research translated into economic, health, environmental and social benefits for NSW."

The *NSW Life Science Research Awards* builds on the success of the former BioFirst Awards, which were established by the NSW Government in 2001 and attracted 13 researchers back to NSW, as well as a further 39 people to take part in new research teams.

"Between 2001 and 2006, the research groups resulting from the BioFirst Awards produced 62 published papers and leveraged \$6.7 million in research funding from the Commonwealth Government – a major achievement for NSW," said Ms Firth.

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