



MEDIA STATEMENT

THE HON VERITY FIRTH MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister for Women / Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)

25 June 2008

NSW TO APPOINT CHIEF SCIENTIST AND SCIENTIFIC ENGINEER

The lemma Government will appoint a NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer to build on the State's strengths in science, engineering, medical research and innovation, Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth announced today.

The Government will also invest in a world-first academic position in Engineering Innovation at the University of Sydney, to ensure our best and brightest young engineers can develop and apply their talents right here in NSW.

"The lemma Government is finding new ways to accelerate scientific research and make sure it is translated into high-skill, high-value jobs and industries for NSW," Ms Firth said.

"The NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer will be a champion for the excellent science undertaken in NSW and a strategic adviser on the best ways it can be used to benefit business, society and the environment.

"This will be a position unique to NSW and one that incorporates an important dual role.

"A key focus of the NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer's work will be to foster the quality and level of scientific activity in NSW.

"But an equally important role will be to help target research and development capabilities so they effectively support industry and skills growth in our State."

The NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer will:

- champion science and scientific education in the community;
- provide expert advice to the Government on scientific and innovation policy matters;
- establish a new channel of engagement between the Government and research groups, including universities; and
- be a key figure in advancing NSW interests in the National Innovation Review.

Ms Firth said the unique engineering aspect of the position highlighted the critical role played by applied science in turning research into new technologies, applications and products.

"Engineering skills will be fundamental to the future success of the State's economy, including the manufacturing, logistics, IT, medical device and creative sectors," she said.

The role will be supported by a Ministerial Advisory Council for Science Engineering and Medical Research, and that an appointment would be made following further consultations with peak bodies, universities and medical research institute.

"This will ensure we not only choose an individual who is held in the highest possible esteem by their peers but one who is also able to put NSW at the forefront of the innovation agenda both nationally and globally."

Ms Firth also announced today that the lemma Government would provide \$250,000 to establish a world-first Chair of Engineering Innovation at the Warren Centre of Advanced Engineering at the University of Sydney. The funding will be matched by the University.

“The Warren Centre will create a unique academic space for the best and brightest young engineers to advance their careers right here in NSW.

“The Government’s support for this initiative reflects our determination to see the best science turned into innovative new solutions for NSW businesses and public works.”

Ms Firth said the two initiatives follow other recent lemma Government contributions to the State’s research sector:

- a program of major investments in the capital development of medical research institutes, including \$20 million announced by the Premier today to build an Institute for Virology at the Darlinghurst research precinct;
- the establishment of the \$40 million Science Leveraging Fund to fund critical research equipment in NSW;
- initiatives to attract a greater share of the global \$11 billion per annum clinical trials market to NSW, including the establishment of the \$1 million NSW Clinical Trials Business Development Centre; and
- strategic support to make NSW a leading centre for stem cell technologies, including legislative certainty for the work and a \$500,000 boost to encourage the State’s scientists to expand stem cell research.

“The lemma Government believes in the NSW research sector and is investing to ensure our researchers have every opportunity to realise their potential in this State.”

Media contact: David Boyd 0404 944 550