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IMPORTANT BACTERIAL INFECTION TREATMENT WINS BIOTECHNOLOGY AWARD

A Sydney company that has developed an innovative medical treatment for antibiotic resistant infections has won the NSW Government's 2008 BioFirst Commercialisation Award.

Minister for Science and Medical Research, Verity Firth said the company, Special Phage Holdings (SPH) of Brookvale, has successfully used its technology to treat a patient suffering a multi-resistant bacterial infection in a trial at a major Sydney teaching hospital.

"This is an Australian first. The medical trial uses bacteria-eating viruses – phages – and after six months of monitoring, the patient remains free and clear of the infection," Ms Firth said.

"One of the world's greatest medical challenges is the increasing resistance of different strains of bacteria to antibiotics.

"In Australia the annual cost of antibiotic resistance to the community is estimated to be over one billion dollars – so the benefits are potentially enormous.

"Phage therapy is set to address this growing problem, and SPH's work in this field places it in strong position to become a leading player in this important market.

"Phages have use not only in medicine but in veterinary medicine, agriculture, aquaculture and the environment.

"SPH will receive \$8,000 for a business development trip to North America from Merck Sharpe and Dohme as well as in-kind services up to the value of \$10,000 each from other award sponsors PricewaterhouseCoopers, Allens Arthur Robinson, Invetech and Buchan.

"They are a very worthy recipient of the 2008 BioFirst Award and I believe it will greatly enhance the company's profile and assist in its future success."

The Minister said the annual BioFirst Commercialisation awards acknowledge outstanding business success achieved by life science companies and assisted by the Department of State and Regional Development's BioBusiness programs.

"The lemma Government continues to support science in NSW, and the Budget includes more than \$190 million over four years to fund scientific research, provide modern research facilities and support commercialisation efforts," Ms Firth said.

"The judges had a difficult job choosing the winner from six high class finalists."

The finalists were extremely varied and, in addition to **SPH**, are:

- **Biotron** - developing new drug for Hepatitis C,
- **Fermiscan** - commercialising a revolutionary diagnosis for breast cancer,
- **ASP Healthcare** - manufacturing innovative needle and syringe storage systems,
- **BMDiTUTA/Yeescope** – developing an innovative one-piece laryngoscope, and
- **Cryosite Limited** - a provider of specialised services to the medical research, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

"The quality of the finalists emphasises the strength of the NSW biotechnology research industry.

"I congratulate all finalists, and in particular Special Phage Holdings, for their continued dedication to improve our health, while supporting the growth of the NSW economy."

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