

MEDIA RELEASE

QLD GOVERNMENT GRANTS IMB OVER \$2.5 MILLION IN FUNDING

11 April 2006

The Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) at The University of Queensland has been awarded \$2.7 million in Smart State grants, Deputy Premier Anna Bligh announced today.

Professor Mark Ragan from IMB and Dr Anthony Maeder from e-Health Research Centre will receive \$1.9 million to establish the Queensland Facility for Advanced Bioinformatics (QFAB).

Bioinformatics is a rapidly emerging field that involves the collection, management and analysis of large amounts of biological data using networks of computers and databases.

"Enormous amounts of biological information are being generated every day, through techniques such as genome sequencing, microarrays and imaging, and bioinformatics allows researchers to manage these data, retrieve the information they need and analyse it to support biological research and development," Professor Ragan said.

QFAB will be a leader in supporting the bioinformatics requirements of research-intensive universities, institutions and companies, beyond the capability of any single institution or company in Australia or the Asia-Pacific region.

It will do this by providing secure access to very large databases, specialist software, high-performance computing, terabyte storage, data integration technologies and expert services, as well as a public but controlled-access component.

The initial partners in QFAB are IMB, the ARC Centre in Bioinformatics, and the ARC Special Research Centre in Functional and Applied Genomics at The University of Queensland, Australian Partnership in Advanced Computing, e-Health Research Centre, Griffith University, Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, Queensland Parallel Supercomputing Foundation and Queensland University of Technology.

An \$800 000 Research-Industry Partnerships Program was awarded to the Institute for Molecular Bioscience and Bio-Layer Pty Ltd, Brisbane.

It will foster local development and international commercialisation of new biotechnology products for the detection and treatment of human diseases.

"Innovative research such as this at the interface of chemistry, biology and materials science has enormous potential for increasing international competitiveness of local industry while improving the health of Queenslanders and Australians," Professor David Fairlie of the IMB said.

"This is a good example of how researchers from university and industry can complement each other to produce innovative solutions to medically important problems and market needs," Dr Joe Maeji, Bio-Layer Pty Ltd Chief Scientific Officer, said.

Deputy Premier Bligh announced the grants from Chicago, where she is attending Bio 2006, the world's largest biotechnology expo.

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