

Company: AusBiotech
Date: 22 October 2009
Publication: The Australian
Page: 32

CITY BEAT

ANDREW MAIN



New name, old body

LAST week this column was bemused to note that the federal government was going to be only lightly represented at the **AusBiotech** conference in Melbourne starting next Tuesday. Victorian Premier **John Brumby's** cutting the ribbon but the heaviest federal presence will be **Anthony Byrne**, parliamentary secretary for trade and parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. Is there some awkwardness between the industry and Canberra?

Yesterday's announcement of Commercialisation Australia by Innovation Minister **Kim Carr** might have a bit to do with it. Biotech sources say that although it's described as a "a radical new program", it's just a new name for the previously proposed **Commonwealth Commercialisation Institute**.

David Langsam, editor of online blatt **Biotech Daily**, said: "Applicants will have access to case managers, advice and support, and up to \$250,000 for proof of concept studies and repayable funding of up to \$2 million for early stage commercialisation." Which sounds good so far.

"But there is no mention of continuing royalty streams to allow the organisation to grow and become self-sufficient nor any mention of a Intellectual Property Clearing House returning revenue, as proposed by the Biotechnology and Related Industries Leadership Group. It appears that it will be a unit within the federal Department of Innovation Industry Science and Research." Which suggests that Carr would get a bit of heckling if he turned up, at least from the people who weren't getting grants.