

## Media Coverage

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### Biotech booms in Adelaide

[Nandita Singh](#)

**Adelaide, Oct 17, 2011:** AusBiotech 2011 opened in Adelaide, South Australia, to an audience of about 750, drawn from biotech industry across Australia and rest of the world. South Australia (SA) has been working towards gaining mindshare as the biotech destination, since at least last 10 years, and is now set to follow the growth path Queensland and Victoria are onto with their sharp industry focus.

The four-day conference (October 16-19, 2011) more than demonstrates it. The South Australian bioscience sector growth model has been engineered by Bio Innovation SA (BioSA), a government funded statutory body, which was established by the state government in 2001, with a mandate to develop the local biotech industry. It is led by Dr Jurgen Michaelis, in the capacity of its CEO.

Over the past 10 years, BioSA has returned nearly \$4 for every \$1 invested by the state government, according to a government performance study. It has also contributed to boosting the company numbers and employment potential along with a tenfold increase in venture capital investment in SA since 2001. Today, the state boasts of at least 75 new companies, and in 2010 over \$550 million was raised in capital funding.

Dr Michaelis who moved base from Germany to take over the responsibility of CEO at BioSA in 2001 reflects on the progress achieved. "The BioSA strategy is based on providing tailor-made assistance and solutions. The focus is on creating a commercial and financial environment that facilitates a product's bench-to-bedside journey," he elaborates. In fact, under his leadership BioSA is working towards broadening its area of interest to include other advanced technology innovations that will benefit from bioscience input. "Areas such as medical devices, bioinformatics and clean technologies will likely leverage on this bioscience input," he says.

The four key elements to the BioSA model include: access to finance, access to infrastructure, access to management expertise and intellectual property protection. In the local state economy, biotech is the tenth largest sector, according to 2010 data. In the global context, the investor interest in Australia is at a high and South Australia is also set to leverage it along with counterparts—Queensland and Victoria.

The conference was officially opened by Mr Jay Weatherill, Minister for Science & Information Economy, South Australia along with Dr Anna Lavelle, CEO of AusBiotech on October 17, 2011.

Dr Lavelle and Dr Michaelis, CEO of BioSA also hosted the welcome reception for the delegates of AusBiotech 2011 at Adelaide Oval, the previous evening. Prof Geoff Fincher, Director and Founder of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Biology at Adelaide University, was conferred with the Industry Leader Award.