

Media Information
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ACT Government confirms Commitment to Biotechnology Industry

AusBiotech, Australia's peak Biotechnology Industry Organisation, today welcomed the ACT Government's continued commitment to supporting and facilitating the burgeoning biotechnology industry in the Australian Capital Territory.

Giving the Keynote address at AusBiotech's *Canberra & Region Biotechnology Summit*, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, acknowledged biotechnology as 'one of the world's great emerging industries full of promise and potential to revolutionise the way we live.'

Chief Minister Stanhope said that in Canberra it was exciting to be part of one of the most influential scientifically based phenomena facing the 21st Century.

"The ACT Government is committed to the development of knowledge-based industries in the ACT and has identified biotechnology as an important focus within this commitment," he said.

"We have demonstrated, and will continue to demonstrate our commitment to biotechnology in many ways – not least of all through our support of this exciting showcasing event.

"We have Australia's most highly educated workforce and world leading bioscience institutions. The ACT is in an excellent position to capitalise on the benefits from this industry of the future," Chief Minister Stanhope said.

The Chief Minister also said that in addition to providing significant financial support to facilitate research and development opportunities and encourage commercialisation, the ACT Government was determined to provide a fertile policy environment to attract biotechnology industries to the Territory and allow them to prosper.

"There are key policy challenges ahead including GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and stem cells," he said.

"We are not going to achieve these changes in policy by ourselves. This AusBiotech event highlights the need for dialogue between the science, business and policy communities working in biotechnology."

AusBiotech CEO, Dr Anna Lavelle, welcomed Chief Minister Stanhope's on-going support for the biotechnology industry in the ACT.

"For a relatively small player in the Australian market, the ACT has certainly made a huge impact by pursuing a combination of good, progressive policy with strategic investment decisions," Dr Lavelle said.

"I would like to congratulate the ACT Government on its commitment and its on-going support for the industry and for AusBiotech as the industry representative," she said.

Chairman of the Canberra Region Branch of AusBiotech, Professor Arthur Brandwood, said that the ACT Government's sponsorship of the second ***Canberra & Region Biotechnology Summit*** was an excellent example of its strategic support for the industry.

"This annual AusBiotech Summit provides both a showcase for the world-class capability of the Canberra Region biotechnology entrepreneurs, and a vital opportunity for scientists, businesses and policy makers to network," Professor Brandwood said.

"In addition, the Summit program itself includes presentations that will outline information on funding acquisition, business partnering and other skills that are fundamental to the successful commercialisation of biotechnology discoveries," he said.

AusBiotech's ***Canberra & Region Biotechnology Summit*** is being held on 15-16 March at Old Parliament House and CSIRO Discovery Centre, Black Mountain Canberra.

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