

Media Release

10 September 2008



AusBiotech welcomes release of Innovation Green Paper

AusBiotech, the national biotechnology organisation, has today welcomed the release of the Green Paper following Dr Terry Cutler's Review of the National Innovation System.

The review provides a comprehensive snapshot of Australia's innovation system and contains a range of worthy recommendations for Government action.

AusBiotech CEO, Dr Anna Lavelle, particularly welcomed recommendations in Chapters 8 and 9 in relation to tax reform and the retention of effective programs such as COMET, as a positive step forward for the industry.

"First impressions are that the report offers the government significant opportunities to build a strong innovation base for Australia," Dr Lavelle said.

However, she said she was "disappointed to not see more emphasis on export support for small Australian companies, such as medical device companies."

"AusBiotech will be consulting our 3,000 strong membership and providing feedback to government regarding the likely impact of the recommendations," Dr Lavelle said.

Dr Lavelle said the biotechnology industry was now anticipating the Government's response to the Green Paper, due before the end of the year.

"AusBiotech is looking for the Government to take a holistic approach when drawing up its innovation policy directions. It is vital that the entire value chain is recognised from discovery to market." Dr Lavelle said.

"For example, the commercialisation process undertaken by smaller innovative Australian companies with limited resources requires support as well as research in universities."

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Dr Lavelle said she spoke on behalf of the majority of AusBiotech's 3000 members in calling for the introduction of a program similar to the Commercial Ready program, which was axed in the Rudd Government's May budget.

"Since this decision, many small innovative biotech companies have been left in limbo, without the policy certainty they need to plan for growth and attract investment," Dr Lavelle said.

"We need the Government to address the policy gap between R&D and commercialisation. Investment in commercialisation delivers on the public investment in the research stage.

AusBiotech was pleased to note the recommendation for a new competitive grants scheme for industry and said this was very positive but remains keenly interested in the detail of such a program.

Dr Lavelle invited AusBiotech members and other interested parties to provide their comments and feedback on the Green Paper to the organisation.

"Industry feedback is important for us to be able to represent our members most effectively," she said.

To download AusBiotech's submissions to the Innovation Review, see

www.ausbiotech.org/downloads

***** To download the Innovation Green Paper, 'venturousaustralia – building strength in innovation', see***

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/innovationreview/Pages/home.aspx>

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