

NEWS

Industry backs new IP law

AUSTRALIA: Reforms to intellectual property laws introduced into the Australian Parliament yesterday will benefit medical innovation and researchers, pharma industry representatives say.

The key reforms of *The Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2011* include raising patent standards, increasing penalties for trade mark counterfeiters, providing free access to patented inventions for researchers and cutting red tape and delays when seeking an IP right.

Medicines Australia's acting chief executive Andrew Bruce said the Bill would bring Australia's IP system into line with other OECD countries and addresses concerns in some quarters that patents on biological materials can potentially stifle scientific research.

"This Bill makes it absolutely clear that scientists are free to conduct research on patented inventions, so long as the purpose of that research is investigation and not the infringement of valid patents," Mr Bruce said. "Robust IP laws that encourage the development of new technologies are extremely important to innovative industries such as the Australian medicines industry."

Both Medicines Australia and Ausbiotech said they favoured the 'Raising the Bar' Bill over the Patent Amendment (Human Genes & Biological Materials) Bill 2010, also under consideration by the Parliament, because it was more balanced and constructive. Ausbiotech said the Patent Amendment Bill, which would prevent biological materials from being patented, threatens scientific research and development of biological materials. Both organisations urged Parliament to pass the 'Raising the Bar' Bill without delay.