UQ Communications
Ph: 61 7 3365 3367
Fax: 61 7 3365 1488
E-mail: communications@uq.edu.au

MEDIA RELEASE

UQ leads new biomaterials alliance for improved health outcomes
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A University of Queensland scientist will lead an International Biomaterials Research Alliance which has attracted $1.2 million funding announced today by the Queensland Government.

The Alliance brings together an international team of biomaterials synthesis experts to develop medical applications such as in bone repair, vascular regeneration, vision and medical imaging.

Professor Andrew Whittaker of UQ's Centre for Magnetic Resonance and the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology leads the $4 million project.

Queensland Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation Anna Bligh made the announcement of the Queensland Government's commitment from its Smart State National and International Research Alliances Program, at the BIO conference in Chicago.

The University of Queensland has provided cash and in-kind support of over $1 million to develop the Alliance. The project has also attracted funding and support from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Washington University in St Louis, (both in the U.S.) and the University of Warwick and Queen Mary, University of London, in the U.K.

University of Queensland Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor David Siddle said the International Biomaterials Research Alliance would establish an excellent team of international scientists and Queensland-based researchers and clinicians with expertise in biomaterials synthesis and biomedical applications.

“The collaboration will bring together fundamental chemical scientists in research institutes and clinical researchers in Queensland hospitals to provide a “bench-top to bed-side” path for biomaterials,” he said.

Professor Siddle said the International Biomaterials Research Alliance would be a world-leader in the development of biomaterials for medical applications.

Its programs would provide a path to market for a number of key technologies developed in Queensland laboratories.

Professor Whittaker said, in the short term, the International Biomaterials Research Alliance would employ an additional six full time researchers and attract additional research expenditure to Queensland in the order of $6-7 million over the next five years.

In the long term, the project would translate into improved health and healthcare for Queenslanders, reducing the burden on the hospital system.

Specific projects would result in more effective delivery of drugs to the body through imaging technologies; effective repair of jaw bone and dental defects; improved outcomes for patients suffering cardiovascular disease; and new technologies for remediation of defective eye sight.

Media: Further information: Professor Andrew Whittaker, telephone 07 3365 4100, email: Andrew.whittaker@cmr.uq.edu.au or Jan King 0413 601 248