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17 AUG 2009

Ms Alison Hemmings
Manager
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Pharmaceuticals, Health Industries and Enabling Technologies Branch
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Dear Ms Hemmings

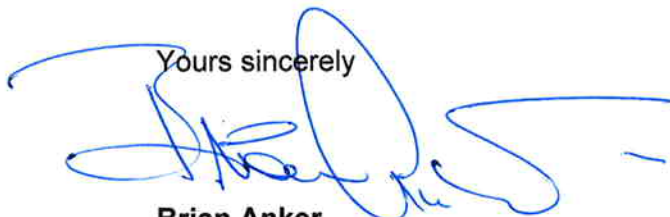
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Enabling Technologies Strategy (NETS) discussion paper. Comments from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation are enclosed for your consideration.

The group fully supports the development of this important strategy which will guide the future development of biotechnologies and nanotechnologies in Australia and improve the adoption of these technologies in traditional industries. However, the use of the term 'enabling technologies' typically extends beyond both biotechnologies and nanotechnologies to include other emerging technologies such as information and communication technologies, photonics and optoelectronics. The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation would welcome further discussions with you on the coverage of the NETS.

This department looks forward to working closely with the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research on the further development of this strategy.

Should you have any queries regarding the attached comments, please contact Mr Paul Russell, Director, Enabling Technologies on (07) 3227 7223 or via email paul.russell@qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Brian Anker
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NATIONAL ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES STRATEGY – DISCUSSION PAPER

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION COMMENTS

QUEENSLAND

August 2009

The Queensland Government, through its *Smart State* strategy, the *Q-Tropics* strategy and the new *Toward Q2; Tomorrow's Queensland* strategy has placed support for research, development, commercialisation and industry uptake of enabling technologies including biotechnology, nanotechnology, and information and communication technology as priority areas. Enabling technologies will increasingly play a fundamental role in contributing to new (skilled) jobs, economic development, prosperity and improved lifestyles both nationally and internationally.

Queensland Government initiatives

In recognition of transformational potential of enabling technologies on Queensland's economy, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) Innovation Group has developed an Enabling Technologies Framework which seeks to:

- Build the supply side of enabling technologies – by boosting the capability of Queensland's enabling technologies and design businesses to work with the State's established industry base.
- Build collaboration between industries – by providing information and skills to facilitate interaction and partnerships within and between Queensland's enabling and established industries.
- Build demand for enabling technologies – by increasing the awareness of the benefits of collaborating with enabling technology and design businesses within the State's established industry sector.

In addition, the Queensland Government's Smart Industry Policy (SIP), managed by DEEDI, is the Government's primary industry development policy vehicle for achieving the objectives and aspirations of the *Toward Q2* strategy.

Through the SIP's five key "drivers" of Connecting Industry with Ideas; Boosting Incentives for Productivity; Developing Skilled People; Building Markets For Smart Products and Promoting an Innovative Business Environment; the Queensland Government works closely with business and industry across 15 priority industry sectors to enhance productivity growth, with wider benefits for all Queenslanders.

Biotechnology and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are both nominated as priority sectors for Queensland. Nanotechnology is also recognised as an enabling technology and is being supported through a Nano-discovery Program.

The Queensland Government promotes and supports these three core platform technologies, not only for their own potential to generate wealth and skilled jobs but also, through encouraging other priority industry sectors to adopt these technologies in order to boost productivity, become more resilient and supply world class products.

The Queensland Government has adopted four core strategies to underpin the development of enabling technologies:

- Support for research and development, including funding for world-class research infrastructure (e.g. Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB), the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (AIBN) and the Institute for Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI)). Additionally the Queensland Government has committed \$290M in partnership with CSIRO, which has committed \$87.9M to develop the Ecosciences Precinct and the Health and Food Sciences Precinct. The Ecosciences Precinct will co-locate a critical mass of scientists focussed on climate change, water and sustainable growth of Queensland's industries while the Health and Food Sciences Precinct will create a world-class centre of excellence focussed on helping people live longer, healthier lives through advances in healthcare, medicine, food and nutrition.
- Direct business and industry assistance such as the provision of grants to companies, business mentoring programs, advice on capital raising, facilitation of networking, and funding of joint marketing activities (e.g. Queensland attendance at international events such as BIO, AusBiotech, Nano-Japan, ICONN and CeBit)
- Promoting the uptake and adoption of enabling technologies by traditional industries through mechanisms such as industry workshops, the conduct of R&D Forums and Tech Clinics, the preparation of capability directories and case studies, and promoting Government procurement of enabling technology products and services.
- Creating public awareness through a number of community engagement initiatives including the website www.science.qld.gov.au, the annual Science in Parliament and the Talking Scientists program. This latter program is designed to provide Queensland scientists with effective communication training and then organising these scientists to speak at public events in regional and rural Queensland about their research. Scientists in the program include scientists involved in the development of enabling technologies.

It is against this context that the following comments are provided:

Introduction

1. **Vision Statement** - While the purpose of the Strategy is stated in the first paragraph of the discussion paper, the final Strategy could be enhanced by the inclusion of a vision statement that clearly enunciates how enabling technologies will contribute to Australia's future economic development and prosperity over the next 10-20 years.
2. **Purpose of the Strategy** – the final Strategy should clearly outline the need for the Strategy, particularly the economic, social and environmental benefits stemming from the Strategy and how it will contribute to Australia's scientific and industrial standing. This is important as the discussion paper is somewhat negatively framed with a heavy emphasis on the risks, regulation and costs associated with enabling technologies. This is important, but the potential benefits from the technologies need to be equally addressed. Similarly, the final Strategy should include strong targets on what is trying to be achieved from the Strategy.