

MEDIA RELEASE

Leading cancer researcher is new bioscience boss

Monday, January 15, 2007

A leading cancer and cystic fibrosis researcher is the new director of an Australian bioscience flagship, the [Institute for Molecular Bioscience](#) (IMB) at The University of Queensland (UQ).

[Professor Brandon Wainwright](#) has begun a five-year term as IMB Director, UQ Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the IMB Board, [Professor John Hay, AC](#), announced today.

"Professor Wainwright is an internationally-respected researcher who has detailed knowledge of the IMB and a clear view of its future priorities," Professor Hay said.

"In only six years of operation the IMB has become a leading Australian bioscience research institute, with global recognition.

"I am confident that it will continue to flourish under Professor Wainwright's guidance, producing outstanding research outcomes of tangible benefit to the national and international communities," Professor Hay said.

Professor Wainwright became Acting Director of the IMB at the start of 2006, having served as Deputy Director (Research) from 2002. He joined UQ in 1990 from the University of London, and was appointed to the IMB when it was founded in 2000.

Professor Wainwright said he was delighted to have been chosen to lead the Institute, which examines the nature of genetic information, primarily in mammals, in order to discover what goes awry in disease states such as cancer, and to develop potential therapies for these diseases.

"The IMB has an outstanding group of researchers, supported by some of the most advanced facilities in the Southern Hemisphere," Professor Wainwright said.

"I plan to build upon that foundation established by the previous Director, [Professor John Mattick, AO](#), to ensure that the IMB produces world-leading research, and to work closely with IMBcom, the commercialisation company for the IMB, to ensure that this research is translated into tangible benefits for the community."

Professor Wainwright's own research program focuses on the triggers of common genetic diseases, particularly cystic fibrosis and basal cell carcinoma of the skin.

His discovery of the basal cell carcinoma gene, patched, indicated that the genetic pathway that leads to basal cell carcinoma, as well as to a number of other common tumour types, is required for normal embryonic development, and that the disturbance of these pathways can result in cancer.

The aim of Professor Wainwright's work is to discover the genes that, when altered, cause tumour cells to grow uncontrollably, and ultimately to develop therapeutics targeting these genes.

The IMB has about 400 research staff, who work with cutting-edge infrastructure in the \$105 million Queensland Bioscience Precinct (QBP). The QBP, which is shared by [CSIRO](#) scientists, was built with funding from [The Atlantic Philanthropies](#), the [Queensland Government](#), the [Australian Government](#) and [UQ](#). The IMB also receives recurrent operational funding from the Queensland Government.

Media inquiries: Bronwyn Allan (07 3346 2134 or 0418 575 247).