

MEDIA RELEASE

Dr Megan Munsie joins Australian Stem Cell Centre

Monday 22 January 2007. Melbourne, Australia:

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC), Professor Stephen Livesey, today announced the appointment of Dr Megan Munsie as Director, Scientific Affairs and Policy.

Dr Munsie's role is a newly created position that will provide significant support for the rapid development and maturation of the scientific focus of the ASCC.

The ASCC identified a need to have an experienced stem cell scientist to help direct scientific development at the Centre, as well as translate and report on the achievements and challenges the organisation faced in its scientific program.

Interaction with the research programs of the ASCC, advice on strategy, oversight of ethics procedures and policy, facilitating new collaborative ventures and providing scientific liaison both internal and external to the organisation will be the major focus for Dr Munsie at the ASCC.

"I am delighted to welcome Megan to the Australian Stem Cell Centre", said Professor Stephen Livesey. "She's a valuable scientist with a wealth of experience in science, development and business that will be of enormous benefit to the Centre as we move into a new rapid growth phase".

Dr Munsie's appointment follows on from the recent appointment of Professor Joe Sambrook as Executive Scientific Director late last year, in a major recruitment drive for the ASCC.

"One of the highest priorities of the ASCC right now is to identify, attract and retain the best talent in this field that will help us achieve our goals, commented Professor Livesey. "Having the best people to achieve realistic goals is a big part of our blueprint for success."

"We have now established a very dynamic and highly skilled senior management team at the ASCC. This is a committed team, driven to achieve success in delivering on the potential of stem cell technology and personally complement each other's capabilities beautifully. It is a real pleasure to work with such a talented group of people, said Professor Livesey. I expect to be able to make further senior recruitment announcements in the near future," he predicted.

Dr Munsie brings to the ASCC extensive technical expertise in embryonic stem cells together with a comprehensive knowledge of the ethical and mandatory regulatory requirements involved in responsible use of stem cells in research. Dr Munsie has worked as a clinical embryologist in IVF clinics, has a Masters Degree in reproductive sciences and doctorate focused on therapeutic cloning technology.

Most recently, Dr Munsie has been involved in the development and management of the scientific programs in the Australian operation of the UK listed biotechnology company, Stem Cell Sciences.

Dr Munsie was the first scientist in the world to produce stem cells from a cloned mouse embryo providing the proof-of-principle for therapeutic cloning. This work was published in 2000 in the prestigious scientific journal *Current Biology*.

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For further information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Michelle Singe
Public Affairs Director
Australian Stem Cell Centre
+613 9271 1115 or 0423 056 952
michelle.singe@stemcellcentre.edu.au
www.stemcellcentre.edu.au

Background on Dr Megan Munsie

- Initial project leader of Stem Cell Sciences' successful team that derived the MEL series of human embryonic stem cell lines in an NH&MRC licensed project with Melbourne IVF and the Australian Stem Cell Centre.
- Extensive knowledge of all State and Commonwealth legislative requirements and key regulations governing the use of stem cells in research within Australia.
- Key advisory role with Parliamentarians, media, biotechnology industry and community groups for general stem cell information.
- Expertise in derivation, genetic modification and *in vitro* differentiation of mouse embryonic stem cell lines and the phenotypic and functional characterization of generated neuronal cell types.
- Expertise in micromanipulation techniques used to generate mouse nuclear transfer embryos.
- Clinical Embryologist, within an IVF clinical setting, in oocyte (egg) retrieval, embryo transfers and cryopreservation of embryos.

Background to the Australian Stem Cell Centre

The **Australian Stem Cell Centre** is Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence. The Centre has partnered with nine leading Australian universities and research institutions and brings together a critical mass of outstanding Australian stem cell research that is internationally competitive and recognised.

The Centre's principal objective is to integrate a national multi-institutional research and discovery program to develop treatments for serious disease through the application of stem cells and related technologies.

The Australian Stem Cell Centre is funded by the Australian Government's Australian Research Council and Department of Industry Tourism and Resources through Backing Australia's Ability and the Biotechnology Centre of Excellence program and the Victorian Government.