

Introduction

The first year of the Australian Associate Membership of EMBL has seen significant progress on a number of fronts.

The creation of EMBL Australia as a result of an agreement between the participant organisations has been integral to establishing an appropriate structure that will allow the original objectives of the initiative to be achieved.

The EMBL Australia Scientific Program, developed with widespread input from the scientific community, sets the agenda for all activities for the period of the membership and consistent with the EMBL philosophy focuses on driving improved scientific outcomes.

The appointment of Dr Marcus Heisler as the first Group Leader in the Faculty Development Program was a major milestone in providing opportunities for Australia scientists to participate in EMBL research and culture.

More details on these and other achievements are included in this report.

For the coming year, a number of equally significant milestones will be reached.

Underpinning the proposed research objectives, a scientist led governance arrangement for EMBL Australia will be modelled along EMBL lines. Recognising the rich Australian scientific environment, the EMBL Australia Council will include representatives from all participant organisations and will be an influential group to ensure that Australian researchers capitalise on the benefits of EMBL Associate Membership.

The formation of the EMBL Australia Council will provide the necessary leadership structure to secure funding for the Partner Laboratory Network. The challenge is to establish a national network of young research groups benefitting from the EMBL model of secured funding during a fixed term contract, which will accelerate the career path of Australia's best and brightest scientists. The Partner Laboratory Network will also support an integrated system of state-of-the-art core facilities and services, which will enrich the productivity of all Australian researchers and students in the life sciences.

The proposed central provision of financial support for the EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network has been favourably received; but there is still a long way to go.

That so much has been achieved in the first year of membership is a testament to the collaborative spirit shown by a large number of individuals and organisations. The contributions made by members of the EMBL Australia Working Group have been significant and all should be congratulated. The leadership shown by Monash University in accepting the responsibility of Lead Institute until the formation of EMBL Australia is to be applauded. Much of this progress would not have been possible without the continued organisational support of the EMBL Australia Secretariat Office, allowing the Working Group to focus on the issues at hand.

The encouragement from the Minister of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and his cabinet is deeply appreciated. The Department of Industry, Innovation, Science and Research has played a vital role in the formation of EMBL Australia and we are grateful for their continued assistance.

The critical initial support from the Group of 8 in securing the Associate Membership, and contributions made by members of the EMBL Australia Working Group have been significant and all should be congratulated.

If the first year of EMBL Associate Membership is indicative of progress to come, we can all look forward to a busy but exciting and productive second year.



**Professor Nadia Rosenthal
on behalf of EMBL Australia**

Contents

Introduction	3
What is EMBL Australia?	5
Objectives	5
Key achievements	6
Outlook for 2009	7
Funding and stakeholders	8
EMBL Australia foundation stakeholders	8
Funders	8
Associate Membership	8
Operational costs	8
Faculty Development Program	8
Key activities for 2008	9
Commencement of Associate Membership of EMBL	9
Foundation stakeholders form EMBL Australia	9
First Faculty Development Program appointments	9
EMBL Australia Scientific Program	9
Partner Laboratory Network Investment Proposal	9
Establishment of the EMBL Australia Secretariat office	9
Visit of key EMBL personnel	10
Nomination of Australia observers to EMBL Council	10
Governance	11
EMBL Australia Deed of Agreement	11
EMBL Australia Working Group	11
Members	11
Meetings	11
People	12
Nadia Rosenthal	12
Silvio Tiziani, Executive Director	12
Rachel Taylor, Communications and Development Officer	12
Laura Crilley, Executive Officer	12
Janine Halls, Administrative Officer	12
Financial report	13
Documents and media releases	14
Contact details	15

What is EMBL Australia?

In March 2008 Australia accepted an invitation to partner with Europe's pre-eminent research institute, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). This partnership saw Australia granted Associate Member status (the first ever offered) for a period of seven years and created EMBL Australia. This invitation was extended to Australia due to our scientific strengths in cell biology, clinical research, stem cells and regenerative medicine, chemical biology and genetic epidemiology.

EMBL Australia aims to foster and enhance Australian research quality through the development of world-class scientific leaders.

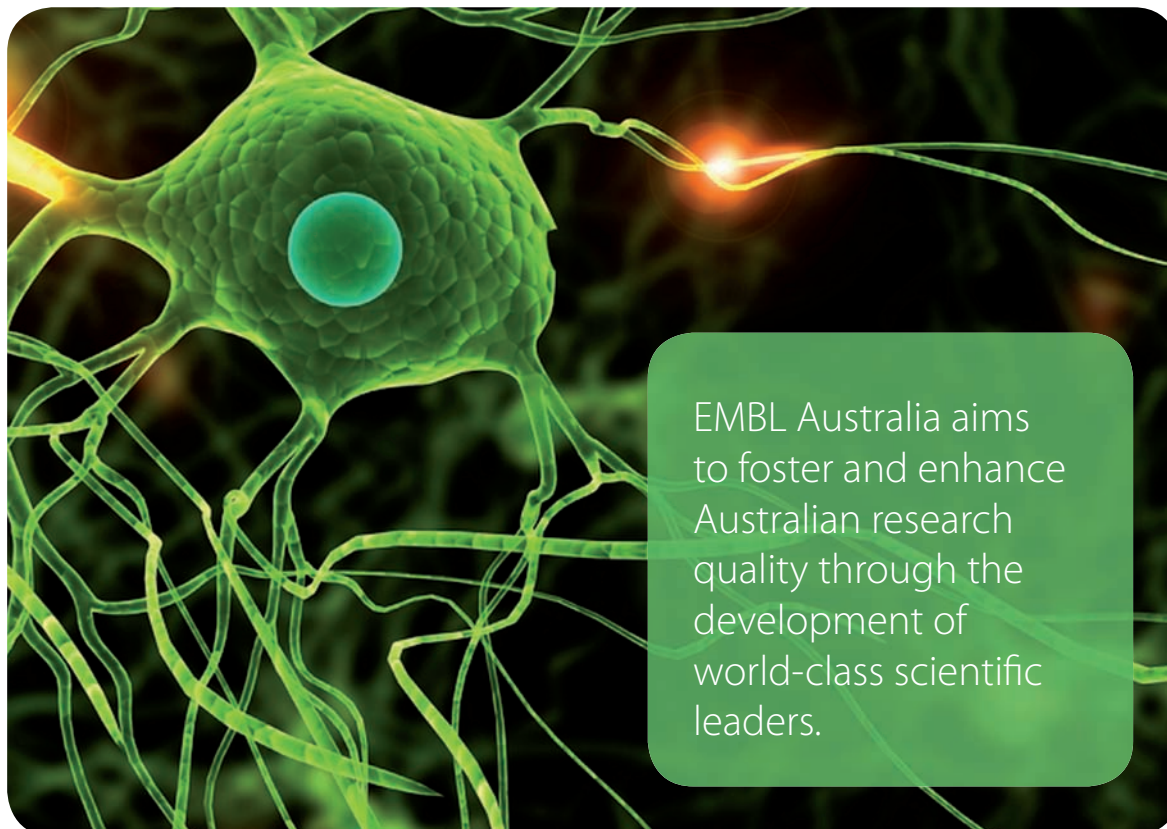
Its primary activities are:

- First-class scientific training and collaboration
- Establishing an EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network (PLN)
- Exchanging infrastructure, services, resources, and expertise between Europe and Australia
- Pursuing new opportunities in co-funding research

Objectives

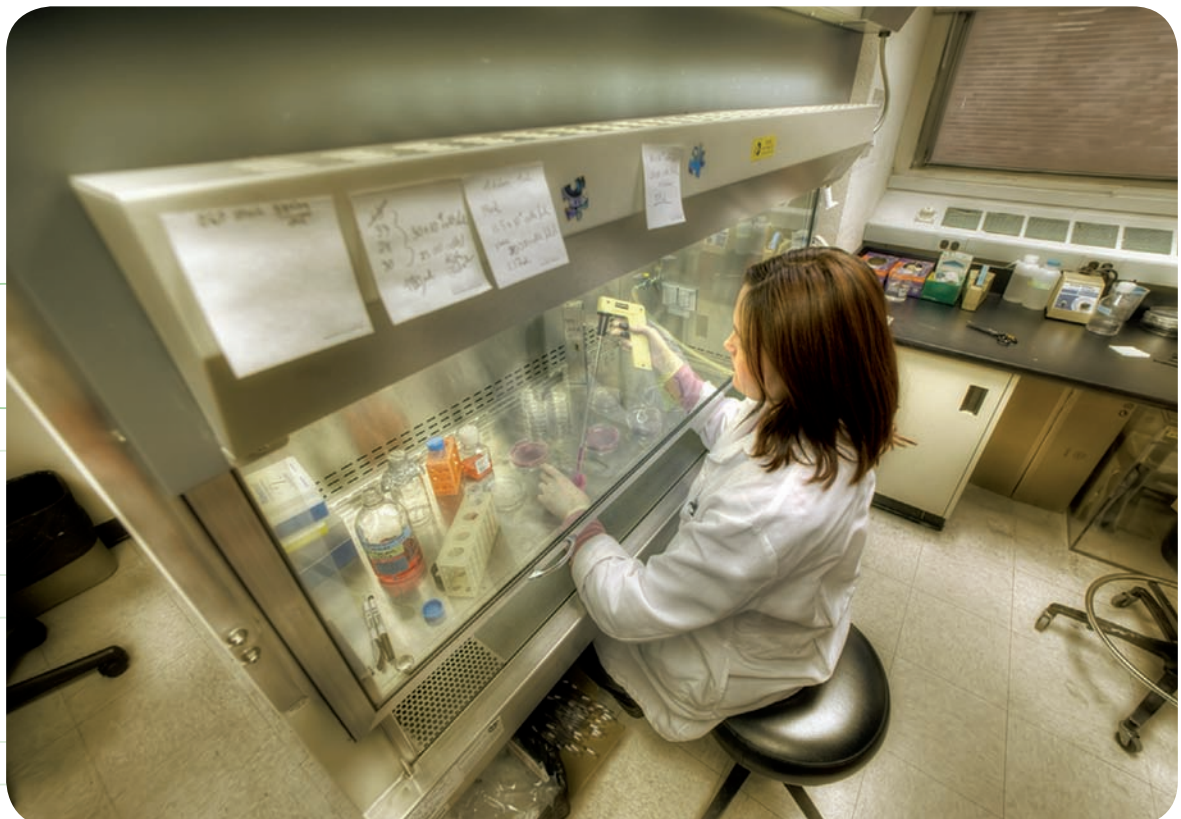
EMBL Australia aims to:

- Develop and implement collaborative research activities between Australian institutions and EMBL
- Establish EMBL partner laboratories within Australia
- Source and provide research funding to EMBL and collaborating Australian universities for Faculty Development Program groups
- Encourage and facilitate interaction between EMBL member states and Australia through new links, creating a greater integration of Australian and European research.



Key achievements

- > Formation of the consortium
- > Securing funding for the Associate Membership of EMBL
- > Acceptance of Associate Member status by EMBL
- > Appointment of Monash University as lead institute
- > Creation of EMBL Australia via deed of agreement between consortium members
- > Support from NH&MRC and ARC
- > Appointment of first Faculty Development Program Group Leader position
- > Completion of laboratory space for EMBL Australia headquarters/research groups at Monash University
- > Development of Partner Laboratory Network investment proposal
- > Visit of key personnel from EMBL
- > Award of a \$95 million grant to The University of Sydney for a building which will incorporate the Sydney node of the EMBL Partner Laboratory network



Outlook for 2009

Key developments expected in 2009 include:

1. Appointment of EMBL Australia Chairperson
2. Formation of the EMBL Australia Council
3. Appointment of Scientific Director
4. Appointment of second Faculty Development Program Group Leader position
5. Development of funding proposal for the Commonwealth Government
6. Launch of EMBL Australia Scientific Program
7. Establishment of EMBL Australia International PhD Program



Funding and stakeholders

EMBL Australia foundation stakeholders

- Monash University
- The University of Sydney
- The University of Western Australia
- The University of Queensland
- CSIRO

Funders

EMBL Australia acknowledges the financial contribution of the following organisations:

Associate Membership

- Monash University
- The University of Sydney
- The University of Western Australia
- The University of Queensland
- CSIRO
- National Science Collaborative Investment Scheme (NCRIS)

Operational costs

- Australian Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR)
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Victoria

Faculty Development Program

- ARC
- NH&MRC
- University of Sydney



Key activities for 2008

Commencement of Associate Membership of EMBL

With the first tranche of the membership payment forwarded to EMBL the associate membership officially commenced on 1 March 2008. This was the culmination of the work of a number of scientists from both Australia and EMBL which saw Australia become the first Associate Member of the EMBL.

Foundation stakeholders form EMBL Australia

A deed of agreement to create EMBL Australia with representation from the foundation stakeholders was finalised in December 2008. The parties entered into this agreement to establish EMBL Australia and the EMBL Australia Council as the governing body of EMBL Australia, in order to facilitate the development of collaborative activities, research activities concerning the establishment of the EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory and the funding of Faculty Development Programme teams.

Faculty Development Program

Dr Marcus Heisler was selected to be the first of two group leaders recruited to EMBL as part of the Faculty Development Program (FDP). His position is partially funded by the ARC. It will see Dr Heisler at the EMBL's Heidelberg laboratory for five years, followed by another four years in Australia at a suitable research institution. The secretariat office arranged for his tour of interested organisations throughout the latter half of 2008. The University of Sydney was successful in recruiting Dr Heisler for his final four years as a group leader in the FDP.

The recruitment of an NH&MRC funded group leader will follow from an international selection process later in 2009.

We are indebted to the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council for their significant contribution to the Faculty Development Program. Both Prof Margaret Shiel and Prof Warwick Anderson, in their capacity as Chief Executive Officers of the ARC and the NH&MRC respectively have been instrumental in ensuring this unique program is supported by the country's key research funding agencies. Securing partial funding for two Faculty Development Program Group Leaders has ensured this unique opportunity for Australian scientists to become EMBL Group Leaders can be realised.

EMBL Australia Scientific Program

The secretariat office, in conjunction with the EMBL Australia Working Group coordinated the development of a Scientific Program for the EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network.

Workshops in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney were convened to discuss and develop a set of broad research themes designed to be predictive and inclusive rather than proscriptive or restrictive. These workshops were attended by a wide cross section of local scientific community representatives as well as Prof Nadia Rosenthal and representatives from the CSIRO.

The Scientific Program for the EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network will build on the strategic alliance with EMBL and its activities in systems biology, whilst capitalising on the specific strengths of Australian life and health sciences. This document outlines the scientific program proposed for the Partner Laboratory Network and will form a key component of the request for funding of the Partner Laboratory Network.

The final consultation draft of the Scientific Program was circulated for discussion to all stakeholders during December and approved by the Working Group at the February 2009 meeting.

Partner Laboratory Network Investment Proposal

The development of an investment proposal for the Partner Laboratory Network was a key activity during the year. The proposal, which outlines the investment required to implement the Partner Laboratory Network was finalised after widespread consultation with the scientific community.

The structure of the EMBL Australia Partner Laboratory Network will be based on the successful EMBL model, with distributed, tightly integrated research centres focused on complementary aspects of biological research. The Network will be headquartered at Monash University with potential nodes developed at the collaborating universities.

Establishment of the EMBL Australia Secretariat office

The last twelve months has seen significant progress in establishing the EMBL Australia secretariat office and progression of a number of activities

associated with the governance and organisational requirements for EMBL Australia. The recruitment of an Administrative Officer and a Communications and Development Officer was made possible through the financial support of DIISR and DIIRD.

The secretariat office was relocated to the ARMI executive area with the completion of the Institute laboratory space on Level 1 of the Scientific, Technology and Research Innovation Precinct (STRIP) Building 75 at Monash University.

This will be continued over the next year with a number of activities including the formal constitution of the EMBL Australia Council including the election of Chair and the development of a funding proposal seeking financial support that will allow the secretariat office to continue.

Visit of key EMBL personnel

In March 2008 Professor Iain Mattaj, Director General EMBL and Dr Silke Schumacher, Coordinator International Relations & Communications, EMBL were invited by Monash University to visit Australia.

During the visit, Prof Mattaj and Dr Schumacher toured the under construction Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute, the future hub of the EMBL Partner Laboratory Network and home of the EMBL Australia secretariat.

Prof Mattaj and Dr Schumacher met with the Hon Kim Carr, Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research to discuss the EMBL model and its introduction to Australia. Minister Carr indicated

that he felt the model was an excellent mechanism to internationalise Australian research and to build capability and innovation in Australian science.

Prof Mattaj and Dr Schumacher also met with Professor Warwick Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AC and Mrs Jan de Kretser, Professor Richard Larkins, Vice-Chancellor & President Monash University and key staff from the Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

The visit strengthened the relationship between EMBL and EMBL Australia and reconfirmed Australia's intention to further develop the associate membership of EMBL.

Nomination of Australia observers to EMBL Council

The Working Group nominated Prof Edwina Cornish to represent Australia as an observer to EMBL Council meetings. The other observer, nominated by DIISR, was Ms Jessie Borthwick, Head, Science & Research Division, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science & Research. Prof Cornish and Ms Borthwick attended the June 2008 meeting of the EMBL Council. Ms Katherine Campbell, Counsellor (Science, Research & Innovation) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade subsequently replaced Ms Borthwick as Australia's representative and attended the November meeting of Council along with Prof Cornish.



Prof Nadia Rosenthal, Dr Silke Schumacher, The Hon. Kim Carr, Prof Iain Mattaj.

Governance

EMBL Australia Deed of Agreement

In January 2008, the Deed of Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia, as represented by DIISR, and Monash University regarding funding for Australia's Associate Membership of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory provided for Monash as the lead Institute to ensure that Australia's obligations under the Membership Principles were followed. This agreement also specified that Monash would as a matter of priority work with other Fee Contributors to establish EMBL Australia to take over from Monash as the lead Institution.

The Agreement relating to the "Establishment of EMBL Australia and the EMBL Australia Council" was finalised in December 2008. This agreement, which creates EMBL Australia as the responsible body for overseeing EMBL Australia activities, was approved and signed by all participants, including the Universities of Sydney, Western Australia and Queensland, Monash University and the CSIRO. The agreement specifies that Monash will be the hub (and therefore the headquarters) of the Partner Laboratory Network to be established by EMBL Australia.

A deed of Variation to the original Deed of Agreement between Monash University and the Australia Government as represented by DIISR is currently being finalised. This Deed of Variation will recognise EMBL Australia as the responsible body for EMBL Australia related activities with Monash University lead status being maintained in so far as its actions are subject to the terms of the "Agreement relating to the establishment of EMBL Australia and the EMBL Australia Council".

EMBL Australia Working Group

Members

- Alex Aitkin, Assistant Director at Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, DIISR
- Ms Julie Burke, Assistant Director Australian Research Council
- Professor Edwina Cornish, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Monash University
- Professor David Day, Dean, Faculty of Science, The University of Sydney
- Professor Trevor Hambley, Professor of Chemistry, The University of Sydney
- Professor Peter Leedman, Head of the Laboratory for Cancer Medicine, The University of Western

Australia and Deputy Director of Western Australian Institute for Medical Research

- Professor Iain Mattaj, Director-General, European Molecular Biology Laboratory
- Professor Doug McEachern, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), The University of Western Australia
- Vaun Peate, Acting Director, Research Activity, NHMRC
- Professor Mark Ragan, Professorial Research Fellow, The University of Queensland
- Professor Nadia Rosenthal, Acting Director, EMBL Australia
- Dr Louise Ryan, Chief, Mathematical and Information Sciences CSIRO
- Dr Silke Schumacher, Coordinator International Relations & Communications, EMBL
- Silvio Tiziani, Chief Operating Officer, ARMI
- Professor Jill Trehwella, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, The University of Sydney
- Professor Steve Wesselingh, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University
- Dr Graeme Woodrow, Chief, Molecular and Health Technologies CSIRO

Meetings

Regular meetings of the EMBL Australia Working Group were arranged through the EMBL Australia secretariat office located at Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute at Monash University.

During 2008, meetings were held via teleconference on:

- 12 March 2008
- 1 May 2008
- 3 June 2008
- 1 July 2008
- 5 August 2008
- 2 September 2008
- 7 October 2008
- 5 November 2008
- 2 December 2008
- 3 February 2009

Representatives from EMBL in Europe also participated in most meetings.

People



Nadia Rosenthal

Nadia has exceptional scientific credentials, including 16 years working at Harvard Medical School. She is the Scientific Director of the Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute at Monash University and Director of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) Outstation in Monterotondo, Italy, one of five EMBL campuses with over 1500 employees across Europe. She also serves as scientific director of the Heart Science Centre at Imperial College London.

Nadia's research concentrates on embryonic heart development, ageing mechanisms and stem cell-driven regeneration of neuromuscular and cardiac tissue, using the mouse as a model for human response to disease.



Silvio Tiziani, Executive Director

As Executive Director of EMBL Australia, Silvio is the Convener of the EMBL Australia Working Group and Chief Operating Officer of the Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute. A member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and the Institute of Management (AIM) Silvio has extensive experience in financial analysis and budget management, business development, strategic planning and corporate governance along with the interpersonal skills to effectively lead staff.



Rachel Taylor, Communications and Development Officer

Ms Rachel Taylor was appointed to the position of the EMBL Australia Communications and Development Officer, a two day per week, 12 month position. Rachel will be involved in a number of EMBL Australia activities, including the development of a communications strategy, a website and related information material. Rachel has recently left a similar position with the Australian Synchrotron where (among other things) she was responsible for the Synchrotron's website and the organisation of the very successful official launch of the facility. Rachel commenced in December 2008.



Laura Crilley, Executive Officer

Laura joined ARMI in September 2007 as Executive Officer. In this capacity she acts as executive assistant to the Director, Deputy Director and COO. Initially graduating to become a teacher, Laura spent time travelling and returned from overseas to work in the medical field. She has over 25 years' experience working as an executive assistant, including 12 years working with Professor Carl Wood, IVF pioneer. She has also worked in the fields of plastic and reconstructive surgery and oncology.

Janine Halls, Administrative Officer

Janine commenced on 1 July 2008. Her role is critical to the coordination of office arrangements and the support of clerical activities within the secretariat office. The role became vacant when Janine left due to family reasons and Ms Laura Crilley has provided administrative support subsequently.

Financial report

for 2008 Financial Year (as at 31-12-2008)

	DIISR	DIIRD	Actual at 31-12-2008	2008 Budget
Income				
Membership Fee				
Initial Collection of Membership Fees from other Institutions				
Monash University			517,100	517,100
University of Queensland			250,575	250,575
University of Sydney			250,575	250,575
University of Western Australia			340,842	340,842
CSIRO			400,000	400,000
Commonwealth (DIISR)			3,000,000	3,000,000
additional collection (exchange rate variation)				
Monash University			66,011	66,011
University of Queensland			31,987	31,987
University of Sydney			31,987	31,987
University of Western Australia			43,510	43,510
Grant Funding				
DIISR 2008 Contribution – EMBL ASCC Membership Agreement Costs	100,000		100,000	100,000
DIIRD Contribution – EMBL Secretariat		45,000	45,000	75,000
Total Income	100,000	45,000	5,077,587	5,107,587
Expenditure				
Membership Fee			4,932,587	4,932,587
Salary Expenses				
Communications and Development Officer (part time)				36,000
Administrative Officer (Part time)		19,214	19,214	37,736
Non Salary Expenses				
Building Expenses				
Motor Vehicle				
Staff Related				
Student Related				
Laboratory				
Equipment				
Communications (inc web development)				30,000
Computer				
Printing & Stationery & Books	4,680		4,680	
Travel & meeting cost		15,614	15,614	25,000
Finance & Admin	45,946		45,946	45,975
Other Expenses				
Capital Expenditure				
Total Expenses	50,626	34,828	5,018,042	5,107,298
Funds Available / (In Deficit)	49,374	10,172	59,545	289
Balance CF (carried forward) at 1-1-08			Nil	Nil
Projected Surplus for 2008			59,545	289
Projected CF Surplus at 31-12-08			59,545	289

Notes

HEW 5 3
days/week for
12 months
commencing
1st July

Investment
Proposal, Briefing
document and
initial business
plan

Documents and media releases



The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

MEDIA RELEASE

4 July 2007

Australia joins world-leading European research organisation

The Minister for Education Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, today announced that Australia is to become an associate member of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

EMBL is a pre-eminent international research institution in the area of molecular biology, and the leading such institution in Europe. It is supported by 19 European member states, has laboratories located in Germany, France, Italy and the UK, and a staff of more than 1400 researchers from 60 nations.

"EMBL is a central hub for molecular biology in Europe. Australia is the first country to be granted associate membership, which demonstrates the high regard that the international research community holds for Australian life scientists," Minister Bishop said.

"Associate membership will provide Australian researchers with access to faculty positions and research infrastructure within EMBL laboratories in Europe. It will also allow Australian research institutions to become EMBL Partner Laboratories and will encourage EMBL's world-leading scientists to work collaboratively with these laboratories.

"This new relationship between Australia and EMBL will facilitate interaction and exchange between the Australian and European molecular biology communities. It will further integrate and strengthen Australian and European research by combining Australia's special expertise in the fields of medical epidemiology and stem cell research with EMBL's focus on basic research in molecular biology."

Funding for Australia's associate membership will be provided through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and through contributions from Monash University, The University of Western Australia, The University of Queensland, The University of Sydney and CSIRO.

The EMBL Council agreed to Australia's request to become an associate member on 3 July, with associate membership formally commencing from January 2008.

Further information on EMBL may be found at: www.embl.org

Media Contacts:
Minister Bishop's Office: **Tory Vidler** 0414 228 727
Dept of Education, Science & Training:

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600 Australia • Tel: (02) 6277 7460 Fax: (02) 6273 4116

THE AUSTRALIAN WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 2008 — 33



'Flying start' for the next science stars

By Bernard Lane

FOLLOW your curiosity and forget the frantic cycle of grant applications: that's the seductive command of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory.

"We have a very, very strong record of developing our scientists," says Ian Martin, EMBL's visiting director general.

Australia is the first country with associate membership of the laboratory; the hope is that more Australians will be among the next career researchers to benefit from EMBL's training and collaborative ethos.

"What we do is give people a flying start," Martin says.

EMBL offers its trainees, rigorously selected, the money to set up a small lab and the freedom not to have to reapply for a new grant every two or three years.

"They can choose to do something that will have no tangible, published reward for four or five years. We give them the chance to tackle something long-term."

That happens to be the recipe prescribed for Australian science by Elizabeth Blackburn, the eponymous biologist whose latest honour is a UNESCO award for women in science.

Researchers need "the freedom and support to ask and address major innovative scientific questions, rather than constant distractions of writing frequent reports on short-term, incremental steps", she told the ABC this month.

EMBL has five centres in Europe and most trainees take their skills back to their home countries. Under the unique arrangement with Australia, scientists of any nation will be eligible for training.

These first five years will be spent in Europe; the next four years will bring them to Australia, assuming that a good proportion is likely to stay, bringing new expertise and talent to science in this country.

Martin says the genomic mapping of Bora and Bona, such as sheep and grapes, is an example of a project likely to benefit from the Australian tie-up.

Scientists here will get the kind of access to the EMBL necessary to fashion "bio-informatic tools" from its vast DNA repository.

No doubt this is the kind of pitch Martin made last week when he met Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The previous government agreed to pay \$1 million of the \$8 million price of associate membership, a handful of universities and the CSIRO paid the rest.

"In the long term the Commonwealth should be taking care of the membership fees," Martin says. "That's the way all our other member states operate."

There's a more immediate constraint, according to Silvio Tassan of the EMBL, Australia working group.

"The first step was to become a member of EMBL, now the real hard work comes in identifying the leading research groups to realise the potential value of membership," he says.

Ian Martin says the Commonwealth should pay the laboratory membership fee.

Picture: Michael Palmer

Contact details

EMBL Australia
c/- Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute
Level 1, Building 75
Monash University
Clayton VIC 3800



Participants



Secretariat



Printed on Revive Silk using vegetable inks.

