

MEDIA RELEASE

EarGenie™: Personalised management of hearing impairment for infants receives funding to boost health innovations in Australia

One of 11 projects selected for \$10 million BioMedTech Horizons program investment

AEST, Tuesday 17 April, Melbourne, Australia – MTPConnect – the Medical Technology, Biotechnology, and Pharmaceutical (MTP) Industry Growth Centre – and the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, today announced that EarGenie™: Personalised management of hearing impairment for infants and 10 other projects are successful recipients of investment from the Australian Government’s \$35 million BioMedTech Horizons program. The program aims to help Australia move more cutting edge-ideas and breakthrough discoveries towards proof-of-concept and commercialisation, and stimulate collaboration across disciplines between the research, industry and technology sectors to maximize entrepreneurship and idea potential.

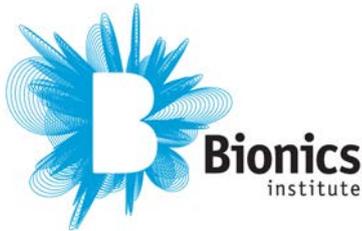
The EarGenie™ project, led by Professor Colette McKay from the Bionics Institute is focused on developing an innovative system for personalized management of hearing impairment. Over 8,000 Australian babies and young children under 5 years have a permanent hearing loss that could severely impair language development with life-long impacts on their education, employment, and social participation. Unfortunately, there are often significant delays between diagnosis and the selection and accurate adjustment of hearing devices (cochlear implants or hearing aids). The introduction of EarGenie™ into audiology clinics will significantly reduce the delay between diagnosis and optimal access to sound, leading to improved language outcomes for each child. This project will ultimately provide social and economic benefits to the community by decreasing the educational, employment and healthcare burdens associated with early-onset hearing loss.

Professor Colette McKay said, “The ability to communicate is what makes us human. Unfortunately, infants who are born with a hearing impairment face a challenge to develop spoken language. It is crucial that optimal access to sound with a hearing aid or cochlear implant is provided as early as possible. The BioMedTech Horizons grant will enable the Bionics Institute’s development of an innovative system that accurately assesses hearing in infants to ensure every child obtains the best hearing and language outcomes possible. This funding will foster our relationships with industry and clinical partners, and accelerate the translation of our research towards a new clinical product.”

Sue MacLeman, Managing Director and CEO of MTPConnect, said the BioMedTech Horizons program is providing the necessary support to boost investment, commercialisation and success of health innovations in Australia.

“These first investments from the BioMedTech Horizons program are set to fuel ongoing innovation in Australia, in line with MTPConnect’s priorities for growth of the medical technology, biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector. EarGenie™: Personalised management of hearing impairment for infants and the other 10 outstanding projects address identified global megatrends including precision healthcare and the digital evolution, as well as forecasted areas of unmet clinical need, such as immunology and advanced prosthetics.”

Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, said, “The Turnbull Government is committed to improving the



health services for all Australians and will continue to invest in better treatment, care and medical research. Our researchers are innovators and this investment will speed up the journey from idea to reality. These technologies have the potential to create better health outcomes for Australians, while driving investment and strengthening our economy. All Australians benefit from investment in health and medical research.”

The BioMedTech Horizons program is being delivered as a part of the Australian Government’s \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund, which aims to transform health and medical research to improve lives, build the economy and contribute to health system sustainability through targeted strategic investment.

For more information on the BioMedTech Horizons program and first round recipients, please visit: www.mtpconnect.org.au/biomedtechhorizons

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About The Bionics Institute

The Bionics Institute is an independent medical research institute, passionate about translating multidisciplinary research and product development into clinical outcomes that improve lives. Our vision is to lead the world in innovative bionic health solutions through research and development.

EarGenie™ project partners

The EarGenie™ project is a multidisciplinary effort: Bionics Institute hearing scientists and engineers are working with an experienced medical device development company, Hydrix, and clinicians who have identified the healthcare need and would use EarGenie™ in their clinics.

Hydrix Pty Ltd: Medical device development company

Plunkett Consulting Pty Ltd: Regulatory consultants

Australian Hearing: Provider of hearing aid services to all Australian children with hearing impairment

Taralye: Early intervention centre for deaf children, focusing on oral language development

About MTPConnect

MTPConnect was formed as a not-for-profit organisation in November 2015 as part of the Australian Government’s Industry Growth Centres Initiative to accelerate the rate of growth of the MTP sector to achieve greater commercialisation and establish Australia as an Asia-Pacific hub for MTP companies.

The MTPConnect Head Office is located at the New Horizons Building at Monash University, co-located with CSIRO and industry. There are also key hubs at the University of Sydney’s Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Technology and the Medical Device Research Institute at Flinders University at Tonsley in Adelaide.





Industry Growth Centres

The Industry Growth Centres Initiative is an industry-led approach driving innovation, productivity and competitiveness by focusing on areas of competitive strength and strategic priority. This will help Australia transition into smart, high value and export focused industries.

The Initiative enables national action on key issues such as collaboration, commercialisation, international engagement, skills and regulation reform. It drives excellence, not dependence, and will create an economy that ensures Australia's ongoing prosperity. For more information: www.industry.gov.au/industrygrowthcentres

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