



Joint Media Release

Australia's Wealth of Offshore Talent Targeted for New National Expatriate Database

Australia takes an unprecedented and important step towards recognising and utilising the considerable talents and skills of the almost one million Australians who live abroad with the launch on Wednesday 9 June of **ExpatriateConnect.com**.

ExpatriateConnect is Australia's new national expatriate database. Overseas Australians everywhere are being invited to participate by registering themselves online, providing a secure profile of their expertise and qualifications. Businesses, entrepreneurs, researchers and others in Australia wanting to commercialise their innovative ideas and enter foreign markets will be able to be "matched" with relevant expatriate Australians who can lend a helping hand in a multitude of ways.

Nobel Laureate and former Australian of the Year, Professor Peter C. Doherty, will kick start the project at a special event at Australia House in London, which some 400 expatriate Australians are expected to attend. In the same week, Queensland Premier Peter Beattie will give ExpatriateConnect his endorsement in his address to the Bio 2004 Convention in San Francisco.

Professor Doherty, who recently made Melbourne his home base after a number of years in the United States, said, "I'm very pleased to get behind ExpatriateConnect. This timely initiative should provide Australia with enormous benefits going forward. It's foolish to think that we should or can prevent our skilled and talented professionals from going abroad in this era of globalisation. Although some government funding has been made available over the last few years to attract a handful of high profile individuals back to Australia, those initiatives are by definition limited to a privileged few. The real challenge is to tap into the resource that our hundreds of thousands of overseas Australians represent even while they remain abroad. By networking our expats back into Australia, giving them a concrete way to contribute to the country, and helping them to feel valued while they are away, we can start to build bridges home that should soften the landing if and when they do decide to return to Australia. At the same time, those at home who use ExpatriateConnect will be expanding their horizons internationally through our expats."

ExpatriateConnect is an initiative of the Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC), an independent not-for-profit company established in 2002 as a \$10 million Queensland Smart State initiative to improve the commercialisation of Australian research. ExpatriateConnect has been funded principally by the Queensland Government, with generous financial and in-kind support from a number of other Australian State Governments.

The Southern Cross Group (SCG) is ExpatriateConnect's founding partner. The SCG is an international non-profit volunteer-run advocacy and support organisation for the Australian diaspora.

www.ExpatriateConnect.com

www.usicom.com

www.southern-cross-group.org

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Peter Doherty will be available in London all day on Wednesday 9 June 2004 for interviews concerning ExpatriateConnect. Please contact Anne MacGregor for scheduling.

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