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Statement

Announcement of Follow On Funding for Australian Stem Cell Research

2 June 2010, Melbourne Australia:

The Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC) welcomes the announcement made on 31 May 2010 from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to establish a stem cell research fund. The ARC has announced a call for applications for the \$21 million *Special Research Initiative in Stem Cell Science* and the NHRMC has foreshadowed a future call for applications under the new *Centres for Research Excellence in Regenerative Medicine*.

The ASCC has been successful since its inception in 2002 in developing and supporting stem cell research, a recognised Australian scientific strength. Through its innovative funding mechanisms the ASCC supports a critical mass of Australian stem cell science which is underpinned by specialist research translation knowledge, infrastructure, skills and public education programs.

The ASCC is funded to a total of \$100 million under the Biotechnology Centre of Excellence (BCE) program which was established in 2002 as part of the *Backing Australia's Ability* innovation statement. The ASCC's funding is due to reach completion in June 2011.

The ASCC believes that stem cell research should ultimately be supported within the mainstream research funding mechanisms. The funding schemes from the ARC and NHMRC announced on 31 May 2010 provide an important means of moving from the current dedicated funding source channelled through the ASCC to this long term mainstream support mechanism.

The Centre will endeavour to work closely with the recipients of the new funding to ensure a smooth transition and minimise disruption to research.

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Rebecca Skinner
Senior Manager – Communications and Networking
Australian Stem Cell Centre
Phone + 613 92711180 Mobile +61 (0)400684993
Email rebecca.skinner@stemcellcentre.edu.au
www.stemcellcentre.edu.au

About the ASCC

The Australian Stem Cell Centre was founded to capitalise on Australia's significant strengths in the field of stem cell research. The ASCC was selected in 2002, in a



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competitive bid process, as Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence, an initiative of the Australian Government. The Centre provides a unique national resource for stem cell researchers to deliver outcomes that benefit the wider Australian biotechnology industry and will ultimately contribute innovative solutions to human health challenges.

The Centre was established with the financial and in-kind support of a number of institutions of which the current voting Members, who retain ultimate oversight of the Centre, are: Monash University, University of Queensland, Howard Florey Institute and University of Adelaide. The additional Stakeholder institutes are: University of Melbourne, Baker IDI, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Mater Medical Research Institute.

The ASCC is governed by a Board of Directors with independent scientific oversight and support from an eminent Scientific Advisory Board.

Total funding of \$100 million has been awarded to the ASCC by the Australian Government and is administered by the Australian Research Council and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. The funding is provided in instalments from 2002 to 2011. To complement Australian Government funding, the State Government of Victoria's Science Technology and Innovation program awarded the Australian Stem Cell Centre a further \$11 million to support key infrastructure in Victoria.

Together the ASCC and partnering organisations support a critical mass of Australian stem cell research that is internationally competitive. The ASCC currently funds research at leading institutes and universities in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales with the major hubs of activity centred in Victoria and Queensland.