

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



***MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY & FISHERIES
MICK PALMER
CSIRO CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DR GEOFF GARRETT***



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Plans have been unveiled today for CSIRO's new Plant Industry laboratory in Darwin.

Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister, Mick Palmer, and the CSIRO's new Chief Executive, Dr Geoff Garrett, toured the site of the new laboratory this afternoon.

Mr Palmer said the NT Government had provided capital assistance to CSIRO for the construction of the facility.

"The Territory Government, NT University and CSIRO have a vision to make Darwin the world centre for tropical horticulture research.

"We believe it is extremely important to have leading edge research being undertaken into tropical horticulture in Darwin.

"By providing a \$1 million capital grant for this facility, the NT Government ensured the CSIRO chose Darwin as its centre for tropical excellence," Mr Palmer said.

The new \$2.5 million building, located at the CSIRO Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre in Berrimah, will be a modern scientific laboratory to allow the use of the latest advances in research for both whole plants and the newest sciences of molecular genetics.

"Tenders for the new facility are being called now and completion is expected in the middle of next year.

"The Territory Government recognises the importance of innovation and research, and we are delighted to be assisting with the new facility," Mr Palmer said.

CSIRO's new Chief Executive Officer, Dr Geoff Garrett, is in Darwin as part of CSIRO's 75th Anniversary celebrations.

Dr Garrett said the CSIRO's Plant Industry division in the Territory had increased its staffing from four to ten, and increased its funding commitment by \$500,000 per year to more than \$1 million per year, over the past three years.

"The DPIF and CSIRO have joint research projects involving NT growers who provide direct support to their research projects through Horticultural Australia Limited," Dr Garrett said.

"CSIRO has introduced the new sciences of molecular genetics to horticultural research in the Territory and created linkages to other Centres of Excellence, both in Australia and overseas."

CSIRO is celebrating its 75th Anniversary with a public seminar entitled *CSIRO: Reflections on the Past and Challenges for the Future*, to be held at the Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre at 3pm today.

MEDIA ALERT: Mr Palmer and Dr Garrett will be available for interviews and photo opportunities at 2.15 pm Friday March 16 at CSIRO, Vanderlin Drive (formerly McMillans Rd), Berrimah. Turn right after you come in the front entry.

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