

## Canterbury Scientific's New Biotech Lab Set For Expansion

*Press release, 18 February 2011, Canterbury Scientific, Christchurch, New Zealand:*  
**Biotech firm, Canterbury Scientific, has invested significantly in new world-class laboratories in Addington Christchurch with the aim to expand the innovation and production of its globally recognised haemoglobin controls. The Minister for Science and Innovation, Hon Dr Wayne Mapp, opened the new facility on 18 February, 2011.**

Canterbury Scientific, founded by Prof Robin Carrell and Bryce Hawkins in 1985, manufactures and exports freeze-dried and ready-to-use liquid controls for haematology and biochemistry diagnostic laboratory tests, blended to strategic target values.

The controls are prized by clinical labs around the world for being highly reliable and ethical with enhanced stability and shelf life. They are used for monitoring blood tests such as diabetic management, and calibrating equipment and processes on medical laboratory diagnostic analysers.

With customers that include some of the world's top medical and diagnostics companies, sales of its haemoglobin HbA1c controls have escalated. Canterbury Scientific estimates it has captured almost 40% of the US market and at least 10% of the European market. The company employs 12 full time staff plus contractors and earns its NZ\$3m revenue from 100% export sales. New contracts are being signed and sales are predicted to increase to \$5m by 2013.

Haemoglobin, the red pigment of blood, readily deteriorates on exposure, even within a matter of hours at room temperature. Prof Carrell, a leading haematologist and fellow at Cambridge's Trinity College in the UK, had worked on the stabilisation of haemoglobin and the preparation of a haemoglobin A2 standard. Together with Scientific Director at Canterbury Scientific, Dr Maurice Owen - who at the time worked at the CDHB, they pioneered a reliable and stable haemoglobin A1c control (HbA1c) using technology that allows blood samples to be stored and used under ordinary lab conditions for months on end.

Dr Owen says, "There was very much a Kiwi 'can do' attitude about making the HbA1c controls. We starting looking at the commercial opportunities within the science areas we were researching and it occurred to us that developing an HbA1c control could be a natural extension to the Haemoglobin A2 controls. Developing the idea proved a very successful exercise, and has resulted in a control that is now helping diabetics around the world."

Over 7% of the world's population is affected by diabetes (more than 200,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes in New Zealand alone), and WHO predicts that diabetes will rise by 'epidemic' proportions within 20 years. Consequentially, there is likely to be an increasing reliance on Canterbury Scientific's HbA1c controls in the coming years. Also, as diagnostic technology advances, more and more doctors and diabetics will be able to conduct diabetes monitoring tests in house instead of waiting on clinical laboratories for test results.

Canterbury Scientific attributes the increasing supply contracts to attendance at international trade expos, such as AACC and Medica, with assistance from New Zealand Trade & Enterprise. It has been a conscious decision by the company to keep production in New Zealand and move to new expansive and specially fitted-out production and research facilities in Addington, Christchurch.

“Ours could be considered a philanthropic approach,” says Dr Neil Pattinson, CEO of Canterbury Scientific. “Having emerged from the CDHB, and with close relations with the University of Otago Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the company’s ethos is to encourage the continued success of science in New Zealand. Our goal is for Canterbury Scientific to be a sustainable company, with high potential and growth opportunities. To support that endeavour we put aside twenty percent of our profit to new research initiatives, summer studentships and grants, in addition to our own internal R&D commitment to further product development.”

Twenty five years since it was founded, Canterbury Scientific today is a thriving company as a result of its quality products that compare favourably against the top competing products in the world. It has excellent product sales, individual technical service and supply, knowledgeable support, a first-class research and development team headed by internationally respected scientists, and now state-of-the-art laboratories designed to meet the most stringent of international quality standards.

The company’s new \$1.2m facility at 71 Whiteleigh Avenue, Addington, Christchurch has been specially furnished with modern sophisticated systems, including temperature and humidity control, to provide an advanced and sustainable environment comparable to world class manufacturing practices.

Prof Carrell says, “The new premises are an indication of a watershed in the life of Canterbury Scientific as the company moves ahead into the wider field of medical biotechnology. This is a challenging field with the potential to provide novel approaches to the diagnosis and management of a wide range of diseases. With this will come the need to compete in the future not only with Europe and the US but also increasingly with China, Singapore and India.”

### **About Canterbury Scientific**

Canterbury Scientific Ltd is a biotechnology company that specialises in the development and production of quality HbA1c controls for haematology and clinical biochemistry tests. The company emerged out of the CDHB in 1985 and was founded by Prof Robin Carrell and Bryce Hawkins to provide haemoglobin controls for haematology diagnostic laboratory tests.

Canterbury Scientific manufactures freeze-dried and ready-to-use liquid controls for haematology and biochemistry diagnostic tests, blended to strategic target values. These are used for monitoring blood tests and calibrating equipment and processes on in vitro diagnostic analysers.

Canterbury Scientific is the only company to make haemoglobin A1c control in a test tube by in vitro glycation instead of using blood from diabetics whose glucose levels are not well controlled. This has many advantages and avoids any ethical issues. The procedure also enables Canterbury Scientific to produce large batches, as there is no volume restriction.

Canterbury Scientific’s HbA1c controls have the same concentration as whole blood with minimal or no preparation needed before use on an instrument. The company has developed liquid controls that are stable at standard refrigeration temperatures, eliminating the need to aliquot out into little containers and freeze control samples, as is common practice in laboratories with controls with less stability.

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