



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

NSW sets biosecurity benchmark for laboratory testing

Laboratory scientists from around Australia and New Zealand converged on Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute recently to learn how to implement innovative virus testing techniques developed during the devastating 2007 equine influenza outbreak, NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, said.

“Dr Peter Kirkland and his virology lab team at Menangle developed testing techniques during the EI crisis that enabled a fast turnaround of the thousands of samples submitted daily,” Minister Macdonald said.

“Up to 3000 real time PCR tests and 2,500 ELISA tests were processed at EMAI each day.

“Such a high throughput is unsurpassed in any veterinary laboratory worldwide.”

A recent two day workshop attended by 26 laboratory scientists and technicians provided participants the opportunity to experience first hand the equipment and procedures developed and used so successfully during EI.

“These techniques can be used for other emergency animal diseases requiring high throughput diagnostic assays,” Mr Macdonald said.

“Participants at the workshop have returned to their States and already begun equipping their laboratories to be in a position to deliver an optimal response to emergency animal disease threats.

“Successful innovations developed in NSW in the midst of a crisis have set the standard and are now helping our nation be better prepared against future disease incursions.

“Not only is the national biosecurity capacity of Australia’s veterinary laboratory network being enhanced, but these innovations will also bring significant efficiencies to routine diagnostic work.”

Minister Macdonald said the workshop was supported by the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre.

“Dr Kirkland and his team thoroughly deserve this recognition from their peers. I congratulate them on their dedication and hard work,” he said.