



14 February 2005

## MEDIA RELEASE

### How to Get High on Life – Research Challenge to Find the Metabolic Key to Happiness.

Five leading universities across the nation will work together to find the most effective ways of improving the health and happiness of Australians, using innovative combinations of diet and lifestyle changes.

**Curtin University  
of Technology**

The **Australian Technology Network of Universities** today announced funding of almost \$2 million for the new Australian Centre for Metabolic Fitness, one of more than 25 bids for the ATN's inaugural Research Challenge.

**University of  
South Australia**

ATN Chair, Professor Denise Bradley, says the Research Challenge was designed to promote collaboration between Australia's leading universities and to demonstrate the value of the relevant and applied research conducted by the universities.

**RMIT University**

**University of  
Technology  
Sydney**

"The selected proposal will harness in a unique way the vast complementary expertise of the ATN Universities and their numerous disciplines covering bio-sciences, behavioural research and public health," Professor Bradley said.

**Queensland  
University  
of Technology**

"This project epitomises the strength of the Australian Technology Network. It is a clear demonstration that we have the capacity to engage in what is an international, as well as a national priority. It strengthens partnerships across disciplines and ATN campuses, and expedites research for mutual goals.

"In undertaking this research project, the ATN is demonstrating the value that it can bring to national innovation by working to bring many disciplines together from outside the more traditional medical research disciplines which tend to focus more on reactive than preventive health care.

Chancellery  
GPO Box 2471  
Adelaide  
SA 5001

Tel +61 8 8302 9132  
Fax +61 8 8302 0943

"Most importantly, the Centre for Metabolic Fitness represents a long-term commitment by ATN Universities to the National Research Priority determined by the Federal Government as 'Promoting and Maintaining the Good Health of Australians'."

[www.atn.edu.au](http://www.atn.edu.au)

With a budget of more than \$6 million for its first five years, the ATN Centre is being supported enthusiastically by the food industry, the CSIRO and other public health agencies.

As the Lead Chief Investigator, University of South Australia nutritionist Professor Peter Howe will coordinate the inputs of more than 30 research teams working across the

**BUILDING  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FINDING  
SOLUTIONS**

network at the University of South Australia, Queensland University of Technology, Curtin of Technology, University, RMIT and University of Technology, Sydney.

Professor Howe says a project of this scale is unprecedented, and yet essential to the success of preventative health measures.

Health authorities determined years ago that widespread community adoption of preventative health measures – like diet and exercise – is the only sustainable way for the health system to cope with rising demand from an ageing populace.

Professor Howe says a distinctive part of the new Centre’s research is its focus on improving mental health as the key to motivating people to protect themselves from lifestyle-related disease.

“Depression and lack of motivation are obvious barriers to people actually adopting the healthy lifestyles promoted by public health campaigns.”

Professor Howe says food manufacturers also recognise the potential for bio-active nutrients to elevate mood and enhance cognitive function.

“The food industry can see the marketing potential of presenting their products as part of a healthy lifestyle ‘package’ including regular exercise.”

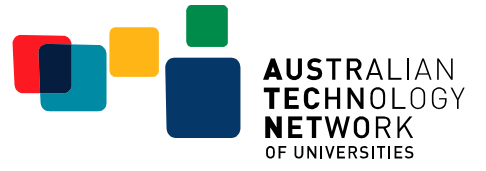
Professor Howe says there’s been a tremendous surge of public interest in what are being called ‘functional foods’ – like Omega 3 enriched products – and their role in self-management of health.

“In recent years, Australians have demonstrated a new willingness to strive for healthier lifestyles by managing their diet and exercise.”

Public health campaigns are a regular feature of modern life, but Professor Howe says there is surprisingly little scientific evidence to gauge what will be effective in the community.

The Centre for Metabolic Fitness will try to address that with the first ‘holistic approach’ to public health research, evaluating various combinations of diet and exercise in demonstration trials involving whole communities.

*Further Information: Vicki Thomson 0417 808 472*



**BUILDING  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FINDING  
SOLUTIONS**