



## ***EvoGenix in-licenses cancer antibody***

*10 April 2006*

Antibody therapeutics company EvoGenix Limited (ASX: EGX) today announced the in-licensing of an anti-cancer antibody discovered by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS).

The hamster antibody, DMF10, which was developed by Kenneth L. Rock, MD, Professor and Chair of Pathology at UMMS, has shown strong evidence of activity against lung cancer and melanoma but may also destroy other cancer types. The antibody attacks a structure on the surface of cancer cells that is not found on normal cells. This means that a cancer therapy developed from the antibody is expected to be both effective and devoid of side effects.

The terms of the agreement with the UMMS include an upfront payment, milestone payments and a small royalty on future product sales.

Research to date at the UMMS has shown DMF10 to be unusual among anti-cancer antibodies in that it kills cancer cells directly. Many anti-cancer antibodies require a toxic payload to help them kill the tumour, while some reduce cancer growth by starving the tumour of an effective blood supply. The direct anti-cancer property of DMF10 distinguishes it from antibodies against similar targets that have been investigated by some other researchers.

EvoGenix will apply its proprietary technologies to rapidly advance the antibody to the stage where it can be tested in patients, humanising the antibody to eliminate rejection and optimising its cancer killing activity. EvoGenix has assessed DMF10 as a product of high potential, and will explore means of fast tracking its development over the coming 12 months.

"Our scientific advisors have assessed this opportunity as extremely favourable for EvoGenix because DMF10 has already undergone extensive testing by its inventor. The questions we would normally explore when we first evaluate an antibody for our pipeline have already been answered. It is perfectly placed for immediate application of our technology platform to create what we expect to be a valuable cancer treatment," said Dr Merylyn Sleight, Chief Executive Officer of EvoGenix.

EvoGenix aims to out-license its antibodies once a humanised and optimised product has been generated. "Based on the size of antibody deals being done in the industry, its large potential market and the success of cancer antibodies such as Avastin, which achieved sales of more than US\$1 billion in 2005 after only 2 years on the market, we believe that DMF10 will attract very strong attention as a licensing prospect and should yield very attractive terms," Dr Sleight noted.

The inventor of the antibody, Dr Rock, will work with EvoGenix on the project in the roles of consultant and scientific advisor. Dr Rock commented: "While we have important work still to do, I believe that this antibody has excellent prospects to be developed as a new cancer therapy. I welcome the opportunity to participate in the project with EvoGenix. Application of their humanising and optimising technology should enable us to quickly advance to the next stage in the development process."

### **Antibodies and EvoGenix Technology**

EvoGenix has established a proprietary technology platform to facilitate the development of antibodies and other protein therapeutics of high potency, suitable for long term administration to patients. Antibodies are natural proteins designed to attack, block and remove unwanted materials from the body. Antibodies are usually first made in mice, rats (or sometimes hamsters) and are unsuitable for use in patients because this foreign protein is rapidly rejected by the human immune system. Antibodies need to be made more human-like before they can be administered effectively. The components of the EvoGenix technology platform are:

- Superhumanisation™, a superior approach for modifying antibodies generated in animals so that they retain their essential therapeutic properties but appear "human-like" and will not be rejected by the immune system of patients receiving them.
- EvoGene™ Optimisation, a highly efficient, novel process for fine-tuning antibodies and other proteins to increase their activity. The process involves making billions of copies of the antibody, each with one or two small changes compared with the original. The copies are then tested to find those with improved properties, for example more powerful attachment to a target to improve potency, and more effective cancer cell killing.

### **About EvoGenix**

EvoGenix was incorporated in August 2001 and listed on the ASX in August 2005, under the code EGX. The company has established proprietary technology and industry expertise in the identification and development of protein and antibody-based drugs. EvoGenix is exploiting this know-how through technology collaborations with partner companies and the development in-house of wholly-owned products.

EvoGenix recently entered a significant technology collaboration with pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline and expects to form further such technology alliances over the next 12 months. OVP (EGX-010) is a potential osteoporosis treatment and the first product to be developed by the company. Two antibody products targeting viral disease and cancer, respectively, are at an earlier stage of development, while a third directed at the treatment of leukaemia is under evaluation. EvoGenix aims to introduce one new antibody into its pipeline each year.

### **About UMMS**

The University of Massachusetts Medical School, one of the fastest growing academic health centres in the United States, has built a reputation as a world class research institution, consistently producing noteworthy advances in clinical and basic research. The Medical School attracts more than US\$174 million in research funding annually, 80% of which comes from US federal government sources. UMMS is the academic partner of UMass Memorial Health Care, the largest health care provider in Central Massachusetts. For more information visit [www.umassmed.edu](http://www.umassmed.edu).

### **For further information:**

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