



Australian Government

IP Australia

5 November 2004

04/248

PLANT BREEDER'S RIGHTS JOINS IP AUSTRALIA

IP Australia, the government agency that administers patents, trade marks and designs is now responsible for another form of intellectual property, the Plant Breeder's Rights Scheme (PBR).

The move, announced as part of the new Government's Administrative Arrangements Order published on the 27 October 2004, made the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (of which IP Australia is a division) responsible for the *Plant Breeder's Rights Act 1994*. As a consequence, the Plant Breeder's Rights Office (PBRO) will be transferred to IP Australia from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry.

The Government's decision to transfer PBR reflects a desire to bring together registered intellectual property (IP) rights into a single organisation to provide a more strategic and coordinated approach to IP policy development in Australia. The move will also provide an opportunity for improved coordination of IP processing for users of the IP systems.

The PBRO currently receives around 350 applications a year, each one seeking to protect a variety of plant, fungi, or algae.

Dr Ian Heath, Director General of IP Australia, welcomed the decision, "IP Australia looks forward to providing high quality examination and customer service to existing and future plant breeders seeking to register their plant varieties."

"We will aim to continue the good work that the Plant Breeder's Rights Office has been doing within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry and ensure that service levels and examination quality are sustained during and beyond the transfer."

PBR Registrar, Doug Waterhouse, was also optimistic that the move would provide greater opportunities afforded by IP Australia's "critical mass" and expertise to advance the understanding of PBR issues by breeders and consumers while fostering the best possible investment environment for plant improvement. "Operationally, it will be business as usual and clients should continue to work with the PBRO as they have before".

Plans to physically co-locate the PBRO are being finalised and while this may take several months, a smooth transition is anticipated as the staff and current application procedures will be transferred as a complete unit to IP Australia.

Further media enquiries:

Mr Gary Kichenside, IP Australia, (02) 6283 2042

CMR 04-297

IP Australia, Discovery House, Phillip, ACT 2606.

Ph: +61-2 6283 2999 Fax: +61-2 6283 7999 Email: assist@ipaustralia.gov.au