

Media Release

The Hon Ian Macfarlane, MP

11 July 2006

WA INVENTORS HEARD LOUD AND CLEAR IN FUNDING ROUND

Innovative technology that allows people working noisy environments to hear without removing their earplugs has earned its Western Australian inventors a \$64,000 Australian Government *Commercialising Emerging Technologies* grant.

Australian Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane today announced Perth-based Sensear Pty Ltd as one of two Western Australian companies sharing in \$128,000 following the latest round of Australian Government innovation funding.

Across Australia, the Government today announced more than \$8.3 million in grants for 30 projects under the *Commercial Ready* and *COMET* innovation programs.

"Sensear's project incorporates tiny microphones into hard hats and earplugs, allowing workers to hear nearby voices while still wearing their ear protection," Mr Macfarlane said.

"It's a clever Western Australian project with particular potential for the thousands of workers employed in the state's booming mining industry – and Australian Government is pleased to help bring the product to the marketplace."

Trials of the equipment in an iron ore mine, an alumina refinery and a cement manufacturing plant in Western Australian are complete and the company is confident there will be demand for the technology here and overseas.

In addition to the \$64,000 grant, the *COMET* program also provides access to a *COMET* business adviser who has helped the company with management team development, intellectual property and working prototype finalisation.

Contact: Sensear Pty Ltd, Mr Justin Miller, 08 6488 4647

The second WA company, FreeCargo Australia, received its \$64,000 *COMET* grant to develop web-based software solutions that improve collaboration between supply chain trading partners and enhance the operational procedures of transport companies.

With the help of a *COMET* business adviser, the company will use the funding to create a management team, develop a business plan, undertake overseas market research, secure intellectual property and finalise a working prototype for Optus technology.

Contact: FreeCargo Australia Pty Ltd, Mr John Hulme, 08 9250 6631

A list of the latest innovation grants and information on the *Commercial Ready* and *COMET* programs can be found at www.ausindustry.gov.au, or phone the AusIndustry hotline 13 28 46, or email hotline@ausindustry.gov.au