



**MEDIA RELEASE - 30 June 2016**

**\$1 million grant to accelerate Australia's algal omega-3 output.**

Queensland-based omega-3 algae farming company, Qponics, has been awarded a \$1 million grant to construct a commercial-sized algae farm in South East Queensland.

The project, funded through the federal government's Cooperative Research Centre Project programme, will include co-participants The University of Queensland and Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals, a Melbourne-based global marketer of nutraceuticals and pharmaceuticals.

Dr Graeme Barnett, Managing Director and CEO of Qponics, said algae farming investment for omega-3 fatty acids has just begun in earnest in South East Queensland in Australia.

"Our goal is to produce omega-3 oils for human health, so that we do not impact on global stocks of marine animals such as fish and krill," Dr Barnett said.

"The grant project, titled 'Translational R&D to accelerate sustainable omega-3 production' will allow Qponics to more resourcefully construct a commercial-sized algae farm commencing this year.

"The Qponics algae farm on a site in South-East Queensland, will integrate a suite of innovative and sustainable technologies developed by Professor Peer Schenk and his research team at The University of Queensland over the past decade.

"We are very pleased to be working closely with The University of Queensland and Melbourne-based Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals."

The innovative technologies demonstrated to significantly increase algae productivity and the yield of omega-3 fatty acids include:

- An EPA<sup>1</sup> omega-3 rich strain of algae
- Innovative pond design and CO<sub>2</sub> delivery and mixing
- Accelerated omega-3 lipid induction process
- Effective algae grazer-control process, nutrient-recycling and solvent-free oil extraction
- Off-grid electricity generation using solar panels and a biogas plant with battery storage.

These technologies have been deployed and further improved at the University of Queensland's research algae farm for the past two years.

Professor Schenk said his team is pleased to be working closely with Qponics to produce a safe, natural and vegetarian-friendly source of DHA<sup>2</sup> and/or EPA omega-3 oils.

"Studies indicate that most of the world's population is deficient in these essential fatty acids, which contributes to a wide spectrum of health disorders," Professor Schenk said.

South East Queensland is an ideal location for a commercial-scale farm for the production of omega-3 oils and other high-value products from algae. The University of Queensland offers world-class expertise in algae science, algae biotechnology and algae farm design; the region's subtropical climate is ideal for the production of algae; and the region has plenty of agricultural land close to urban centres that is suitable for large-scale algae farming.

"We anticipate that construction of our algae farm will commence in 2016 on a near-urban site in South East Queensland," Dr Barnett said.

“Initially, we plan to build a 1-hectare farm before scaling-up to a 10-hectare farm in 2017, which will become the standard module design for further expansion of production.”

Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals has a well-established reputation for the filling and packaging of premium grade nutritional and herbal products, often referred to as nutraceuticals.

Professor Ian Brighthope, founder of Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals said there is extraordinary demand for quality Australian-made nutraceutical products in the Asia/Pacific region, particularly for omega-3 oil manufactured from algae.

“We are very confident that Qponics’ EPA omega-3 oil will be in high demand in a variety of new formulations for use as therapeutic products, dietary supplements and functional foods,” Professor Brighthope said.

Dr Barnett said that Qponics’ projected annual revenues and earnings per hectare for its farm were very attractive.

“Global wholesale prices for high quality algal omega-3 oil are high and expected to rise further, and demand for these products continues to exceed supply,” Dr Barnett said.

## **ENDS**

<sup>1</sup>EPA is *Eicosapentaenoic acid*. <sup>2</sup>DHA is *Docosahexaenoic acid*

### **About Qponics Limited:**

Qponics Limited is a Brisbane-based unlisted public Australian company incorporated in Queensland. The Company’s business philosophy is centred on the concept of sustainable production from algae of high quality nutraceutical products including omega-3 oils in near-urban settings to ensure proximity to markets and distribution channels. Its aim is to construct and operate an ecologically responsible algae farm that integrates state-of-the-art technologies developed at the University of Queensland. The Company will sustainably produce omega-3 oils while ensuring operations eliminate environmental pollution and carbon emissions and minimize water consumption.

**Contact:** *Dr Graeme Barnett, CEO and Managing Director:*  
T: +61 7 3188 9086  
E: [graeme.barnett@qponics.com](mailto:graeme.barnett@qponics.com)  
Level 1, 7 Clunies Ross Ct, Brisbane Technology Park, Eight Mile Plains,  
Brisbane, QLD 4113, Queensland, Australia  
[www.qponics.com](http://www.qponics.com)

### **About The University of Queensland:**

Through his role at the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences at The University of Queensland, Australia, Professor Peer Schenk heads laboratories in both Algae Biotechnology and the Plant-Microbe Interactions. Professor Schenk is internationally recognised for his expertise in plant biotechnology, including the development of new disease resistant plants and his extensive knowledge of algae cultivation and harvesting. He is active in the sustainable production of biodiesel, protein-rich animal feed and other high value products from microalgae including omega-3 fatty acids.

### **About Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd:**

Nutrition Care Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd (NCP) is a Melbourne-based Australian owned and operated company that specializes in the fields of nutritional, herbal and complementary medicines. NCP manufactures the highest quality supplements here in Australia, and distributes within Australia and to many parts of the world, including New Zealand, South East Asia, China and India. The company is committed to providing drug-free, inexpensive, safe and effective health care products to people all over the world. It strives to promote health research and education, disease prevention, and truthful information about medical alternatives.