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MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 17 February 2009

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST DONATIONS TO MEDICAL RESEARCH TO BE ANNOUNCED AT CP FOUNDATION DINNER TONIGHT

One of Australia's largest donations to medical research in recent years will be announced tonight (**Tuesday 17 February 2009**) at the inaugural Cerebral Palsy Foundation dinner at Sydney's **Museum of Contemporary Art**.

Avant has donated \$2 million to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation which focuses on **finding the prevention and cure for the most common of all childhood physical disabilities – cerebral palsy.**

Avant is a mutual, not-for-profit organisation and Australia's largest medical defense organisation. Avant provides indemnity insurance and support over 40,000 Australian doctors.

The funds are used to support research in this area. Currently seventeen researchers have been funded in Australia and overseas.

'It is only with the support of government, business, individuals and the community that we can achieve our vision – a future without cerebral palsy,' said Mr Bill Bartlett – Chairman Council of Governors Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Dr Stuart Boland, Chairman of Avant Mutual Group said, 'If we are successful in supporting the Foundation's vision we will achieve significant personal and social benefits for many Australian families and also help relieve the stress from our member doctors who have been impacted by cerebral palsy.'

Mr Bartlett said, 'With a long-term approach, creating funding working in perpetuity, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation believes the answers for the prevention and cure of cerebral palsy can be found, changing the futures for generations of children world-wide.'

In addition to Avant's significant contribution other organisations will pledge their support to the Foundation.

Supporters of the dinner, **Trust** will be acknowledged for the Trust Research Grant.

State and Federal Governments will also be acknowledged for their considerable support.

The dinner will be held on the **eve of the 3rd International Cerebral Palsy Conference – the largest of its kind in the world, bringing top researchers in cerebral palsy from around the globe.**

‘There is real potential for a global, medical breakthrough. Australia has a stunning record of success in medical research and is well placed to make significant breakthroughs in this area,’ concluded Mr Bartlett.

At the **star-studded event**, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation will announce **ten celebrity Ambassadors**. In addition, nine former Miss Australias will be announced as Goodwill Ambassadors.

Ambassadors to be announced include:

- **Natasha Garrity** - 9 year old girl who has cerebral palsy
- **Phil Waugh** - Australian Wallaby and Captain of the NSW Waratahs
- **Peter Fitzsimons** - Author, journalist and media personality
- **Thomas Keneally AO** - one of our most successful modern authors
- **Jimmy Barnes** - Rock Legend
- **Elly-May Barnes** - Singer who has cerebral palsy, and daughter of Jimmy Barnes
- **Tim Webster** - Television and radio personality
- **General Peter Cosgrove AC, MC** - Former Chief of the Australian Defence Force
- **Simon Katich** - Captain of the NSW Blues Cricket Team
- **Julia Wilson** - Australian Olympic Rower

Goodwill Ambassadors and Former Miss Australias:

- Miss Australia 1969 Suzanne Maple-Brown (nee McClelland)
- Miss Australia 1975 Kerry Harfield (nee Doyle)
- Miss Australia 1980 Eleanor Morton-Duff (nee Morton)
- Miss Australia 1982 Jennifer Martin (nee Coupland)
- Miss Australia 1984 Mary-Ann Lewis (nee Koznjak)
- Miss Australia 1988 Caroline Lumley
- Miss Australia 1989 Lea Wilson (nee Dickson)
- Miss Australia 1995 Margaret Dowling (nee Tierney)
- Miss Australia 2000 Sheree Primmer-Dell (nee Primmer)

Attending on the night:

- **Bill Shorten** MP, Federal Member for Maribyrnong and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services
- Many of the **CP Foundation's Ambassadors and Goodwill Ambassadors**
- **Professor Fiona Stanley AC**, researcher and former Australian of the year who discovered the link between folate and spina bifida
- **Sally Loane** will MC the evening. Ms Loane is the Director of Media and Public Affairs, Coca-Cola Amatil Limited and a member of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation Council of Governors.

For further information, visit www.cpfoundation.com.au

ENDS

Media are invited to cover the event:

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www.cpfoundation.com.au

What: Inaugural Cerebral Palsy Foundation Dinner
Where: Museum of Contemporary Art Foundation Hall
140 George Street, The Rocks, Sydney
When: Tuesday, 17 February 2009
6:00pm to 10:30pm
RSVP: Jo Wallace
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MEDIA CONTACTS

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About the Cerebral Palsy Foundation

The Cerebral Palsy Foundation was established to take on the global challenge of finding the prevention and cure for cerebral palsy.

This will be achieved by:

- Funding research
- Expanding a grants program
- Encouraging researchers to adopt cerebral palsy as their area of study
- Bringing together research from around the world and sharing the information globally
- Building partnerships