Bioinformatics Australia (BA) was created in 2004 by the merger of AusBiotech’s Bioinformatics Special Interest Group (ABSIG) and the Australian Association for Bioinformatics (AAB). Bioinformatics Australia was created under the auspices of AusBiotech, the peak industry body, to steer and advise bioinformatics in Australia and to provide leadership in bioinformatics research, education, and commercialization. BA was formally launched at the AusBiotech National Conference in November 2004.

The development of Bioinformatics Australia was driven by a caretaker committee in the leadup to the national elections in July 2005. Out of 17 candidates, 9 were elected to the committee and announced in August 2005. The inaugural meeting of Bioinformatics Australia was held in Adelaide one month later, with Professor Philip Bourne as the plenary speaker. It was a great success. Bioinformatics Australia has also cohosted several workshops, and will continue to organize similar local events. It will also continue to monitor and report on matters of interest to the bioinformatics community, such as the recently published National Bioinformatics Strategy.

Advisory Committee: (Top L-R) Dominique Gorse, Mark Crowe, Rohan Teasdale, Jonathan Arthur, (Bottom L-R) Catherine Abbott, Anna Lavelle, Phoebe Chen, Bruno Gaeta.
Bioinformatics Australia: The Australian Bioinformatics Network

Earlier this year, Bioinformatics Australia was successful in its bid for funding to establish the Australian Bioinformatics Network. This funding, provided by the federal Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, will enable Bioinformatics Australia to mature into its intended role as a national representative body supporting and coordinating bioinformatics throughout Australia. In addition, Bioinformatics Australia will be responsible for implementing the findings of the National Bioinformatics Strategy.

To take on these new challenges, a full-time executive officer responsible for the day-to-day management of Bioinformatics Australia will be appointed. The current committee will remain in place to provide strategic direction for the development of Bioinformatics Australia. Committee members will also serve as a point of contact for most of the major bioinformatics hubs in Australia, supporting BA’s goal of providing truly national representation across the whole field of bioinformatics.

This grant has made possible the realization of one of Bioinformatics Australia’s major goals: the establishment of a major national bioinformatics conference. Bioinformatics Australia 2006 was held in Sydney in November, and formed a showcase for Australian bioinformatics in addition to providing a forum for the development of the Australian Bioinformatics Network. It ran in parallel with the 2006 AusBiotech National Conference, thus providing numerous opportunities for interactions with commercial, government, and overseas organizations.

A second major initiative of BA is the development of a totally new website that provides a wide range of resources—including networking, funding, and commercialization opportunities—for the Australian bioinformatics community.

Further information about Bioinformatics Australia is available by contacting any member of the committee.

Web Links
1. BA Committee: http://www.ausbiotech.org/bio_advisory_board.asp