



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **DR CRAIG EMERSON**

Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy  
Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation

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Friday, 4 April 2008

### **Australia Hands Over New Kilogram to the World**

Small Business Minister Dr Craig Emerson today handed over two unique spheres that may redefine the “kilogram” to the world.

Dr Emerson, the Minister responsible for Australia’s National Measurement Institute (NMI), handed over the silicon spheres to the international measurement community during a special ceremony at Lindfield, Sydney.

The kilogram, the unit of mass in the International System of Units (SI) is presently defined as the mass of a platinum-iridium cylinder sitting in a vault in France.

There is evidence that the mass of the 119-year-old cylinder may have slowly changed over time in a small but measurable way.

“This presented a unique opportunity for staff from the CSIRO’s Australian Centre for Precision Optics and the NMI to take part in the Avogadro Project,” Dr Emerson said.

“The project is a global collaboration that aims to link the weight of the kilogram directly to the mass of atoms.

“It’s about scientific breakthroughs and providing the world with a reliable standard of mass.

“More importantly, we have a standard in which we have complete confidence, to underpin present and future technological innovations.”

Dr Emerson said the definition of the kilogram is the peak measurement standard of mass to which all others worldwide are traced.

“I understand that not only are measurements of mass affected, the definition of the kilogram links directly to measurements for energy, electrical and chemical quantities,” he said.

“Improving the kilogram will improve our measurement capabilities in these and other areas.

“This is great news for those industries that rely on accurate measurement such as aerospace.”

For more information see [www.measurement.gov.au](http://www.measurement.gov.au)