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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION** [AU/AU]; Limestone Avenue, CAMPBELL, ACT 2612 (AU).

(72) Inventors; and

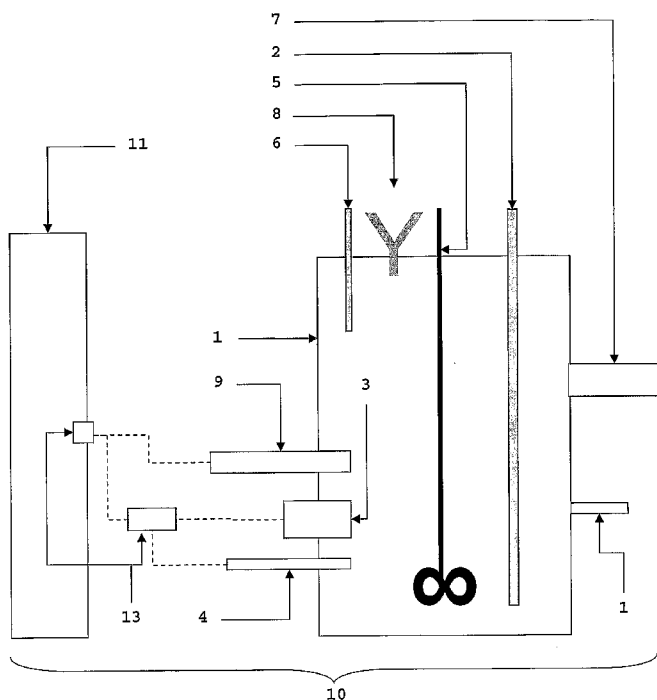
(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **BRIDGER, John, Stephen** [GB/AU]; 24A Lansdown Street, Balwyn North, Victoria 3104 (AU). **OCAL, Günseli** [AU/AU]; 24A Lansdown Street, Balwyn North, Victoria 3104 (AU). **DUMSDAY, Geoffrey** [AU/AU]; 18 Stockmans Drive, Vermont South, Victoria 3133 (AU). **ZACHARIOU, Michael** [AU/AU]; 7 Gibbon Avenue, Vermont South, Victoria 3133 (AU).

(74) Agent: **GRIFFITH HACK**; 509 St Kilda Road, MELBOURNE, Victoria 3004 (AU).

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(54) Title: SELECTIVE ENRICHMENT OF MICROORGANISMS FOR DESIRED METABOLIC PROPERTIES



(57) Abstract: A method for selectively enriching for a microorganism able to metabolise a test substrate, and/or the enrichment of an enzyme involved in the metabolism of the test substrate, the method comprising the steps of: a) providing a population of microorganisms in a vessel, b) feeding fluid into the vessel at a controlled flow rate commencing with an initial flow rate, the fluid comprising a nutrient medium and, for at least part of the feed period, the test substrate, c) producing a signal indicative of the level of a metabolism indicator over the time-frame of the enrichment, and d) providing an output based on the signal to enable assessment of selective enrichment of a microorganism that metabolises the test substrate, and/or the enrichment of an enzyme produced by the microorganism that is involved in the metabolism of the test substrate. To accelerate the enrichment process, conditions may be set to increase the flow rate in stages as a steady state is detected. This may be achieved by presetting conditions to be met by the signal output to result in a change in the fluid flow rate, and changing the flow rate at which fluid is fed into the vessel when the conditions are met, wherein the preset conditions are a combination of a predetermined period of time and a preset value range within which the signal must remain for the predetermined period of time.

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