

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



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## TECHNOLOGY PARK AND IBM CELEBRATE 25 YEARS IN BALLARAT

Back when the dot-com boom began and Javascript was launched, Ballarat was kicking off its own digital tech revolution with the opening of the IBM Ballarat Regional Delivery Centre and the Ballarat Technology Park.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today marked the 25-year anniversary of the IBM Ballarat Centre, which now employs around 500 people and plans to create 100 new jobs in the coming year.

A quarter of a century ago, the Victorian Government partnered with IBM and Federation University to address an emerging skills shortage and pioneered the “earn as you learn” concept. Not only did this deliver job-ready graduates, but it planted the seeds for the Ballarat Technology Park that today supports 4,435 jobs in the state.

The Technology Park itself is home to more than 2,200 employees and 62 enterprises, generating \$6 million in turnover and accounting for nearly nine per cent of jobs in Ballarat.

The IBM and Federation University partnership has facilitated research projects that have solved real-world challenges and delivered hands-on experience for students – driving innovation and research. Breakthroughs have included Qantas’ self-check-in kiosks which were designed and built at IBM’s Ballarat facility.

IBM Australia’s P-TECH program runs out of the Ballarat Technology Park in collaboration with Federation College and introduces high school students to the practical applications of digital technology.

The Andrews Labor Government understands that tech talent and innovation will be critical for Victoria’s economic growth and the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* invests \$64 million in the *Digital Skills and Jobs* program to help retrain Victorians into sought-after digital roles.

The program will fund short courses and up to 5,000 industry internships to help jobseekers get job ready.

The Labor Government will also establish a \$12 million flagship digital hub in Cremorne – one of Australia’s leading urban technology precincts – to drive job creation, innovation and technology adoption, just like the Ballarat Technology Park.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford

*“Congratulations to IBM and Federation University – it’s wonderful to see how the Ballarat Technology Park has evolved and how it continues to drive innovation and new opportunities for the region and the state.”*

*“Innovative and collaborative partnerships like this one are central to ensuring Victoria’s place in the global digital economy – generating high-skill, high-value jobs and growth for all Victorians.”*