

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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INNOVATION CENTRE BRINGS HUNDREDS OF JOBS TO GIPPSLAND

One of Victoria's largest energy suppliers will call the Latrobe Valley home thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government, creating hundreds of new jobs and boosting the local economy.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas was in Morwell today to open the newly completed Innovation Centre and to announce that Alinta Energy will establish its customer operations hub within the new state-of-the-art building, creating more than 230 jobs for the Latrobe Valley.

The Labor Government wholly funded the \$17 million Centre, which is the centrepiece of the Gippsland High-Tech Precinct, through the \$40 million *Latrobe Valley Economic Development Program* established in 2016.

The Government has also supported Alinta Energy through its investment attraction and *Jobs Victoria* program, enabling the company to commit to bringing its customer contact operations from the Philippines to the Centre.

The commitment from Alinta Energy to set up a principal operations hub for its retail business within the Centre builds on the company's close community ties to Gippsland through its Loy Yang B Power Station.

The Innovation Centre is being managed by Federation University, with researchers to work closely with energy experts from the private sector to develop potential energy solutions.

The Centre will also host educational programs like the new subsidised Gippsland-based Master of Business Administration program providing business owners, entrepreneurs and leaders the tools to overcome challenges in their own organisations such as help with marketing and networking.

The Centre will also work with the adjacent Gippsland Tech School and TAFE Gippsland to ensure students have access to a broad range of opportunities and creating better pathways to higher education, research and industry.

Built to the highest environmental standards, key features of the new Centre include a 100-seat conference facility, commercial tenancies, and an innovation hub to promote creative thinking and practice.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"This Centre will play an important role in the region's transition and economic recovery – promoting different ways of doing business and fostering the innovation that will ensure the Valley's best days are ahead of it."

"The Centre complements the special Economic Growth Zone designation and the high-speed broadband improvements we've delivered to the Valley's jobs precincts, helping to attract new businesses to the region."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"This announcement is really positive news for the Valley - not only does it support local jobs, but it also continues our commitment to provide opportunities for growth in key industries."

Quote attributable to Alinta Energy MD & CEO Jeff Dimery

"We're establishing a new customer contact centre in Victoria so we can provide even better service and support to our customers. We thank the Victorian Government for their support to make this possible."

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Quote attributable to the Vice Chancellor of Federation University Professor Duncan Bentley

“This Centre will be a lighthouse for innovation for the region, hosting events, accelerator programs and start-up business programs as they collectively seek to create new economic opportunities for our regional economy.”