

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education



Monday, 15 March 2021

NEW SCIENCE HUBS TO SUPPORT BIO AND TECH INNOVATION

La Trobe University will become a one-stop-shop for the development of innovative products like anti-viral medication, water treatment solutions and portable farm technology thanks to funding from the Andrews Labor Government.

The \$23 million Digital and Bio Innovation Hubs will be housed in the refurbished Thomas Chery Building at the Bundoora campus, and will accommodate research and development by students, start-ups and Victorian businesses.

They will be a place for learning, integrated research and industry collaboration and will provide an invaluable opportunity for businesses to grow and transform as Victoria emerges from the coronavirus pandemic.

The facility will accommodate up to 10 companies and 40 research and business staff at any one time. They will have access to purpose-built wetlabs, temperature-controlled storage facilities, laboratories, high-end digital equipment, and offices.

It will enhance La Trobe University's existing support of start-ups and businesses, for example pharmaceutical company AdAlta, which has developed treatments for diseases including lung fibrosis which are now being prepared for clinical trials.

The hubs will create 170 jobs including those during the construction phase. Works will begin in May and are expected to be finished in 2022.

La Trobe University provided \$6 million and the Labor Government contributed \$17 million to the project. It is one of many pitches from universities to the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund, which was developed in response to the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the sector.

The unprecedented \$350 million Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund is supporting universities with capital works, research infrastructure projects and applied research focused on boosting Victoria's productivity and economy as the state recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"Projects like the Digital and Bio Innovation Hubs are all about giving Victorians the very best opportunities – whether that be in training, research or jobs – while also strengthening the state's economy."

Quote attributable to La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar

"With the support of the Victorian Government we are positioning La Trobe University as a leader of exciting bio and tech innovations that are relevant to a variety of industries around the world."

Quote attributable to Member for Bundoora Colin Brooks

"This project will position Bundoora as a key area for innovation and jobs in bio and digital technologies."