

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 7 July 2021

INNOVATION CENTRE BOOSTS THE LATROBE VALLEY ECONOMY

The Morwell Innovation Centre is now home to nearly one hundred workers, thanks to investment from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the centre which houses the customer operations hub for one of Victoria's largest energy suppliers, Alinta Energy, and is supporting a growing network of local businesses.

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

Since the centre opened in January, it has welcomed its first wave of tenants. Alinta Energy has begun transitioning their offshore operations to the centre – already recruiting 125 of the 230 roles for its new customer contact centre.

The purpose-built centre is quickly becoming a hub for innovation in the region and has hosted 80 events. Work has also started on a new research hub that will bring together academic and industry stakeholders to help transition the economy.

Innovation programs funded as a part of Government's overall investment will continue to be rolled out over the next three years and will support the growth and capability of at least 140 local businesses.

Geelong-based not-for-profit organisation, Runway, will deliver three innovation programs, working directly with 60 local businesses to help build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The program is implemented in three key stages, beginning with businesses identifying a new growth opportunity and an action plan to test it in the real world. Businesses then work with industry experts to deliver the plan, getting access to global networks and mentoring opportunities along the way.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's fantastic to see that the Morwell Innovation Centre has already cemented its status as a key driver of economic growth for the region – creating hundreds of jobs and supporting the future of the Latrobe Valley."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"Around the world, innovation centres have been invaluable in supporting the transformation of regional economies – it's important that the Latrobe Valley is also able to benefit from the development of new and emerging industries in this way."