

# 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



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## NEW CBD PRECINCT SPEARHEADS SOCIAL AND DIGITAL INNOVATION

A collection of projects funded by the Andrews Labor Government will continue the transformation of the old Royal Women's Hospital site into a world-class innovation precinct.

The \$15.2 million package will help establish the Zero Emissions Energy Lab at Melbourne Connect at the University of Melbourne – a place for students, researchers and start-ups to develop cheap, clean energy products including vehicles, energy storage and distribution.

The Labor Government's funding will also help create the Digital Twin Data Visualisation Lab, a visual workspace for major infrastructure project collaboration, and the Digital Health Validtron, which will replicate clinical and home environments for the development of medical devices.

Several other research programs will be created as part of the project, including Opportunity Lab, which allows industry and students to collaborate with small business on new technology solutions, and the Future of Work Lab which will research the implications of digital technologies for work and upskill women, Indigenous, CALD and LGBTQ+ Victorians in STEM.

Melbourne Connect opened in April and is the city's newest innovation precinct located on the old Royal Women's Hospital site adjacent to the University of Melbourne's Parkville campus. It brings together the university and research community, industry, business and start-ups to work on new and emerging technologies.

The fit-out of Melbourne Connect is expected to finish in 2022 and will create about 165 research, PhD and intern positions and 12 jobs during construction.

The Labor Government contributed \$10.7 million to the project in a joint effort with the University of Melbourne.

Melbourne Connect 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 Higher Education Gayle Tierney

*"This is exactly why we are supporting our local universities – Melbourne Connect will create jobs, great training opportunities for all Victorians, and of course, foster collaboration between researchers and industry."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Sheena Watt

*"The Melbourne Connect precinct will invigorate the heart of the CBD while helping support the creation of innovative products and initiatives that will shape Victoria's future."*

### Quote attributable to University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor Professor Duncan Maskell

*"On behalf of the University of Melbourne, I thank the State Government for providing significant funding for these two projects which will enhance Melbourne Connect's growing reputation as a world-class innovation precinct."*

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