

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



Wednesday, 29 September 2021

NEW LABORATORY TO SUPPORT LOCAL MEDICAL INNOVATIONS

A new facility opening at St Vincents Hospital will fast-track the time it takes to develop and trial medical devices, including new treatments for people with diabetes.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today opened Neo-Bionica – a joint venture between the Victorian Government, the Bionics Institute and the University of Melbourne – that will manufacture medical device prototypes for use in clinical trials.

The new state-of-art laboratory will address a nationwide shortage of medical device development and manufacturing facilities, boosting Victoria's reputation as a global centre for biomedical engineering.

Several devices under development at the Bionics Institute will be prototyped at Neo-Bionica, including a potential treatment for type 2 diabetes.

Still in the early stages of development, the device activates the body's natural processes to treat type 2 diabetes and will eventually be implanted in people with uncontrolled type 2 diabetes using key-hole surgery.

The Victorian Government is contributing \$4 million to support the fit out of the Neo-Bionica facility with essential equipment, provide funding for research jobs and support industry start-ups to commercialise medical prototypes.

The investment is part of the \$350 million *Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund*, which supports universities with capital works, applied research and research infrastructure. In the past year, the Government has invested more than \$580 million in medical research, including up to \$400 million for a new Australian Institute of Infectious Diseases.

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

"This new facility will be a link for Victoria between the concept phase and the clinical trial phase, which is crucial for the development and commercialisation of medical devices."

"Through investment in medical research and innovation, we're bringing Victorian ideas and talent to the world."

Quote attributable to Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"Victorian universities provide vital training and research opportunities and help boost our local economy – which is why we're making an unprecedented investment to help them recover from the pandemic."

Quote attributable to Bionics Institute CEO Robert Klupacs

"The opening of Neo-Bionica will completely change how we translate Australian innovation, enabling home-grown inventions to be manufactured rapidly in Australia for the benefit of patients throughout the world."

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

"I'm delighted to see Neo-Bionica become a reality. I look forward to taking Victorian bioengineering expertise to the world as we continue to build our global reputation as a powerhouse in this extremely important field."

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