

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Monday, 4 April 2022

VICTORIAN BIOBANK NOW GLOBALLY RECOGNISED

Victoria is now home to a state-of-the-art and globally accredited biobank featuring blood samples, plasma, saliva, tumour tissues, breast milk and mouth swabs, as the Andrews Labor Government continues its record investment in medical research.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today officially opened Biobanking Victoria, Australia's first industry standard biobanking facility, poised to make critical discoveries and develop new treatments.

Already housing 4.5 million biological specimens from six clinical trials, the \$10 million facility developed by the Monash University School of Clinical Sciences at Monash Health is backed with a \$1.5 million from the Labor Government's Future Industries Fund granted in 2018.

The facility is the first in Australia to be accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) cementing Victoria's status as a world leader for medical research.

Developed in collaboration with Rutgers University Cell and DNA Repository (RUCDR) Infinite Biologics in New Jersey, the biobank will propel the advancement of innovative new treatments saving the lives of people in Victoria and around the world.

Biobanking Victoria has been gradually collecting samples since 2018 and is undertaking many studies to identify some of the world's rarest diseases. A recent breast cancer study brought together samples from 30,000 Australian women, revealing unknown genetic mutations in women with and without a family history.

Mrs Gerda Evans, 73, knows the importance of biobanking. She was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 40 and within a couple of years, several other family members were also diagnosed.

Mrs Evans has long been involved with Monash research studies as she knows that her stored blood samples are checked for genetic mutations as they are isolated.

Operating at international standards, the facility will be used by epidemiologists and clinical researchers for precision medicine, genomics and clinical trials.

To keep Victoria at the forefront of innovation in the health technologies sector, the Government has made significant investments including \$5 million for the Victorian COVID-19 biobank, \$400 million for the new Australian Institute for Infectious Disease and \$50 million for mRNA Victoria to fast-track local mRNA vaccine manufacturing.

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

"Biobanking Victoria will drive growth across the state's medical research sector and elevate Victoria as the destination of choice for commercial clinical trials."

"This facility is cementing the state as a global leader in medical research and will help to drive new breakthroughs for generations to come."

Quote attributable to Director of Biobanking Victoria at Monash University Professor Melissa Southey

"Biobanking Victoria is the culmination of years of hard work by a highly dedicated team. We are in a remarkable position to offer custom infrastructure and are proud to be a critical element of impactful research and clinical trials."

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