

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



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NEW FELLOWSHIP TO CONTINUE FIGHT AGAINST INFECTIOUS DISEASES

World-leading infectious diseases researchers from Victoria's Doherty Institute and the Ragon Institute in Massachusetts are joining forces through an Andrews Labor Government funded fellowship.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford made the announcement while visiting the Ragon Institute in Boston, commending researchers for their pioneering work in the fight against COVID-19.

The joint study initiative will enable early career researchers to complete fellowships in Massachusetts or Victoria for three to 12 months, boosting research opportunities across the two world class research institutes.

The fellowships, funded through \$400,000 from the Labor Government, will support up to four researchers over the next two years.

Victoria's expertise in infectious diseases is led by the Doherty Institute and fellow Australian Institute of Infectious Diseases (AIID) Foundation Partners, the University of Melbourne and the Burnet Institute.

Much like the Doherty Institute and the AIID, the Ragon Institute brings together scientists and engineers from Massachusetts General Hospital, MIT and Harvard to better understand the immune system and support human health.

The Ragon Institute is also a global leader on HIV research, and a vaccine developed by scientists at the institute is currently being tested in a large efficacy trial in Africa.

Researchers in Victoria have led the way in scientific breakthroughs during the pandemic, working on vaccines and other treatments, while also looking into the effects of the virus. In January 2020, the Doherty Institute became the first organisation outside of China to successfully grow the COVID-19 virus in a laboratory setting.

The fellowship solidifies Victoria as the home of medical research in the southern hemisphere and strengthens ties with our international counterparts. It will also help attract and retain top research talent in Victoria.

Doherty fellowship researchers are also sharing their knowledge with their AIID partners at the University of Melbourne and Burnet Institute.

The Government is investing up to \$400 million for the AIID headquarters and since 2014 has invested more than \$1.3 billion to medical research. Government investment in the sector has helped create more than 73,000 direct and indirect full-time equivalent jobs.

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

"Sharing the unique perspectives of infectious disease researchers will further our knowledge, cementing Victoria as a global leader in medical research."

Quote attributable to Doherty Institute Director Professor Sharon Lewin

"We are delighted to be delivering this program with the Ragon Institute to build and support the infectious diseases workforce of the future."

Quote attributable to Ragon Institute Founding Director Bruce Walker

"Pandemics are by definition global crises, and they require an integrated global response. By connecting the Doherty and the Ragon Institute through these fellowships, we take an important step in that direction."

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