

# Media Release

**Mr Danny Pearson MP**

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs

Minister for Finance



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## ADVANCING THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILDHOOD CANCER

The Allan Labor Government is helping treat and cure childhood cancer and establishing Victoria as a global leader in paediatric cancer research.

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson today announced two Victorian researchers will share in \$2.1 million in funding under the Children's Cancer CoLab's Next-Generation Therapies Program, to develop new treatments for children's cancers that are the hardest to treat, including brain, bone and soft tissue cancers.

Dr Azimi from Monash University will develop models of medulloblastoma – the most common paediatric brain tumour – to efficiently and accurately test potential treatments.

Professor Firestein from the Hudson Institute of Medical Research will receive funding to profile 50 additional paediatric cancer cell lines and using artificial intelligence will work to discover new treatments.

Every year, more than 1,000 children and adolescents in Australia are diagnosed with cancer and more than 100 of these patients tragically lose their lives.

Cancer treatments designed for adults can be ineffective and harmful when used on children. Advances in medical research have seen the survival rate for paediatric cancer recently rise to over 80 per cent. Unfortunately, some cancers have far lower survival rates.

The Next-Generation Therapies Program aims to develop cutting-edge therapies specifically for these paediatric cancers, to ensure survival rates continue to rise for young cancer patients.

The Labor Government invested \$35 million to establish the Children's Cancer CoLab, alongside \$10 million from the Children's Cancer Foundation. The Children's Cancer CoLab brings together the best and brightest minds to undertake cutting-edge research to tackle childhood cancer.

Victoria is leading the way when it comes to cancer research, with the new \$152 million Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre recently opening at the Alfred Hospital.

The Labor Government's investment of more than \$1 billion in health and medical research over the past decade continues to drive growth, create jobs and support incredible breakthroughs in treatment and care.

Health technologies and medical research are identified as top priority areas in the Economic Growth Statement.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson**

*"Fighting childhood cancer is a battle no family should have to face – but it's a terrifying reality for hundreds of kids every year."*

*"This program will support our world-class researchers to deliver new life-saving treatments to give kids the best chance to grow up healthy and cancer-free."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas**

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*“Victoria is a global leader when it comes to advancing the fight against cancer— we’re backing our researchers to find the next big breakthrough in treatment and care so Victorians can live a healthy and happy life.”*

**Quote attributable to Children’s Cancer CoLab Chief Executive Officer Dr Udani Reets**

*“New therapies are urgently needed for children with high-risk cancers and it's essential to support a critical mass of brilliant researchers capable of making these discoveries.”*