

# Media Release

**Mr Danny Pearson MP**

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs

Minister for Finance



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## DEVELOPING SAFER, MORE EFFECTIVE CHILDHOOD CANCER TREATMENTS

The Allan Labor Government is supporting our world-class medical researchers to develop new childhood cancer treatments that are less painful and invasive than current treatments.

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson today announced two Victorian research teams will share \$2.6 million in funding under the first round of the Children's Cancer CoLab's Safer Therapies Program, to improve children's cancer treatments.

Recipients include Associate Professor Rachel Conyers, who is leading a Murdoch Children's Research Institute program exploring ways to reduce the toxic side effects and improve outcomes for children after undergoing cancer treatments.

Professor Mark Dawson from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre is also receiving funding under the program to lead a research project to develop a new type of cell therapy to improve the safety of bone marrow transplants in childhood cancer patients.

Every year, more than 1,000 children and adolescents in Australia are diagnosed with cancer and must undergo invasive, painful treatments including chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. Many cancer treatments are not designed for children's developing bodies and lead to adverse effects and long-term health issues.

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month – an apt time to celebrate the work of the Children's Cancer CoLab, which brings together the best and brightest minds to undertake cutting-edge research to tackle childhood cancer.

Through its Next-Generation Therapies Program, the Children's Cancer CoLab's recently awarded \$2.1 million to two Victorian researchers to develop new treatments for children's cancers that are the hardest to treat, including brain, bone and soft tissue cancers.

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

*"This program is supporting our world-class researchers to develop groundbreaking and age-appropriate treatments to give kids the best chance to beat cancer and live healthy lives."*

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

*“We’re continuing to back our talented medical researchers so that children undergoing cancer treatment can access the care they need in new ways that are safe, more comfortable and less harmful to their overall wellbeing.”*

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

*“With 80% of childhood cancer survivors facing debilitating lifelong side effects from their treatment, these two outstanding projects will help patients survive and thrive”*