

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Skills and TAFE
Minister for Water



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NOTHING GOES TO WASTE AT GEELONG'S NEW RESEARCH FACILITIES

Victoria is creating waves as a nation-leading innovator in aquaculture and organic waste recovery, backed by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today officially opened two new cutting-edge research and development facilities at Deakin University's Waurin Ponds campus – backed by a \$2 million investment to support the rapidly growing development in the aquaculture sector.

The new Aquaculture and Feed Innovation Laboratory – also known as the AquaFI Lab – is an innovative hub that's helping researchers and industry work together on new feeds and smarter aquaculture technologies.

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food sector globally, and the new lab will strengthen Victoria's food security.

The second project, the BioFactory, will pilot and test new processes to convert organic waste into valuable products such as protein-rich feed, nutritional ingredients, fertiliser, biogas and biomaterials for medical and textile applications.

Part of the Circular Economy Accelerator-Organics (CEA-O) project, which is backed by \$10 million in funding from the Labor Government, it will provide industry, councils and other partners with a one-stop-shop for technology development for handling food waste, agricultural waste and marine by-products.

The CEA-O project is a partnership between Deakin University, the Victorian Government, Monash University, RMIT University and 20 industry partners.

Funding for these projects was provided through the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund, a \$350 million Labor Government fund investing in capital works, applied research and research infrastructure projects at universities to boost productivity and Victoria's economy.

Circular economy is a priority area of the Victorian Government's *Economic Growth Statement*, which backs more than 40 initiatives to grow a stronger, fairer and more sustainable State economy.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"We're proud to invest in these important research facilities that will create future-focused jobs, boost food security, and transform waste into opportunity."

"Our Economic Growth Statement is helping to boost new industries, drive innovation, and open up exciting career pathways for Victorians."

Quote attributable to Deakin University Associate Head of the School of Life and Environmental Sciences David Francis

"AquaFI is a one-of-a-kind platform in Australia, giving researchers, students and industry partners unprecedented capacity to co-develop the next generation of aquaculture feeds and technologies."