

## Budget boost for genomic medicine will improve care for Victorians

Tuesday 24 November 2020

### **More Victorians will benefit from quicker and more accurate diagnosis – and more precise and efficient treatment – thanks to new funding in the 2020-21 Victorian State Budget.**

The Victorian Government will provide more than \$35 million over the next four years to Melbourne Genomics, a collaboration of 10 leading hospitals, research and academic organisations – Royal Melbourne Hospital, Royal Children’s Hospital, the University of Melbourne, WEHI, the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, CSIRO, the Australian Genomic Research Facility, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Austin Health, and Monash Health.

“We have shown that genomics can deliver life-saving and life-changing outcomes. Genomic medicine will benefit thousands of Victorians in the long term,” Executive Director of Melbourne Genomics, Professor Clara Gaff, said.

Genomics is a vitally important capability in Victoria’s health system, necessary to deliver world-class care for Victorians. It is key to a resilient healthcare system; one that can respond to current, emerging and future health challenges.

“This funding will help us continue to build Victoria’s global position as a leader in health and medical research, and in the real-world application of genomics.”

Melbourne Genomics supported and grew the genomics capability that has been used to track transmission of COVID-19 in Victoria.

Melbourne Genomics was established in 2013, and first funded by the Andrews Government in 2015. The Alliance has provided almost 4,000 patients with genomic testing, across 16 areas of healthcare.

Patients with cancer or genetic disease who were tested in Melbourne Genomics’ projects benefited from more tailored care based on their genomic results; nine times more than from usual medical investigations.

“Working together, the Melbourne Genomics alliance members have helped babies live longer through accurate diagnoses of rare conditions; enabled Victorians to enjoy a ‘normal’ life with more precise and efficient care and treatments; and supported families to have children, armed with knowledge about potential genetic risks.”

“From genetic conditions that affect the heart, immune system, kidneys, nervous system or blood, to complex conditions in children, cancer care, and superbug control, genomic medicine improves health outcomes. We now have the opportunity to deliver this to many more Victorians,” Professor Gaff said.

“As we look ahead, we are especially focused on increasing equity of access to care for all Victorians with rare and genetic diseases.”

The funding announced today, which will be matched by a \$10 million investment from Alliance members, will create more than 60 Victorian jobs, and will be used particularly to help accelerate access to better and more precise care for Victorians living in regional and rural areas.

With the support of the Victorian Government, Melbourne Genomics has built up a specialist workforce and systems to enable genomic medicine within its member organisations. This includes the design and creation of GenoVic, a world-leading all-in-one genomic data solution which enables more efficient and effective testing and provides a foundation for further medical research.

“We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved to date – and we look forward to doing more for Victorians in the next four years, thanks to this investment from the Victorian Government,” Professor Gaff said.

**For media enquiries and interview requests, including with patients who have benefited from genomic testing, please call Karen Meehan on 0448 666 607**

Alliance members

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