

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **MTPConnect announces \$7.4m funding for 14 national MTP projects** *Investment focused on big, bold ideas to boost the innovation, productivity and competitiveness of Australia's MTP sector*

**Monday, 24 October 2016 - Melbourne, Australia:** MTPConnect - the Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals Industry Growth Centre - today announced it will provide \$7.4 million of funding over two years for 14 national projects in the medtech, biotech and pharmaceutical (MTP) sector. In addition, these projects could leverage as much as \$32 million in industry partner funds. The selected programs will receive funding from MTPConnect's [Project Fund Program](#), a competitive, minimum dollar-for-dollar matched funding program that aims to invest in big, bold ideas to boost the innovation, productivity and competitiveness of Australia's MTP sector.

MTPConnect received 38 applications from industry, research organisations and universities to share in the funding available, with a proposed \$90 million of matched funding coming from the sector. MTPConnect selected the projects that would deliver results on a national scale, have sector-wide impact, and are aligned with MTPConnect's Sector Growth Priorities as defined in its draft [Sector Competitiveness Plan](#).

Sue MacLeman, CEO of MTPConnect, said, "The MTP sector has a fantastic opportunity for growth, but is currently hindered by constraints including a lack of collaboration between business and research, skills shortages, the need for more focused funding and investment, and the need for more streamlined and harmonised regulatory and market access frameworks. There also needs to be a focus on globally competitive incentives and long-term policy vision and stability. The selection panel has chosen these 14 projects because they creatively address many of these barriers and have the potential to have a major impact on the sector."

MTPConnect's Project Funds have been made available as part of the Australian Government's \$250 million Industry Growth Centres Initiative.

The successful applicants include the Industry Mentoring Network in STEM (IMNIS) mentoring program linking PhD students with industry experts led by the [Australian Academy of Technological Sciences \(ATSE\)](#), and The Bridge program, a consortium of 14 pharmaceutical companies, venture capitalists and universities to help Australian scientists commercialise promising pharmaceutical research. Both of these programs will improve coordination and collaboration across the sector—between research and industry, and within industry—to create a highly productive commercialisation environment.

Professor Paul Wood, Executive Officer of the IMNIS program said, "The team at IMNIS are passionate about enhancing the interaction between academics and industry and the MTPConnect grant will allow us to expand our mentoring program to all universities in Australia. The IMNIS program will enhance skills of PhD graduates to work within STEM based industries, promoting awareness about opportunities for collaboration and instigating strong strategic linkages with industry."

As part of its support for advanced manufacturing and medical devices in Australia, the MTPConnect panel also selected a National MedTech Accelerator program to be delivered through [STC Australia](#), which will run a

focused, 15-month actuator program to accelerate new high-value, niche advanced manufacturing and medical device technology development opportunities.

Dr. Buzz Palmer, CEO of STC Australia said, “We are extremely excited to receive support from MTPConnect. Australia as a nation punches above its weight in medtech research and innovation. The National MedTech Accelerator will allow us to rapidly unleash the incredible commercial and entrepreneurial talent within our research, technology and innovation communities, delivering economic gains and radical healthcare improvements across the country. By building on this country's deep-science and tech innovation excellence, we look forward to helping position Australia in its natural place as a world leader in medtech innovation.”

MTPConnect also selected a National Digital Health Initiative to create an integrated ecosystem for the development and commercialisation of evidence-based digital health products. This program, led by the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, and supported by international heavyweights Novartis Pharmaceuticals and Konica Minolta, aligns closely with MTPConnect’s priority to support the development of digitally enabled MTP solutions.

Beyond these projects, MTPConnect is also focused on strengthening Australia as an attractive clinical trial destination, and was pleased to see a number of clinical trial projects submitted to the Project Fund Program. MTPConnect has set funds aside to create a specific clinical trial initiative which will be further scoped with the sector in the coming weeks.

**Full list of successful applicants:**

- Australian Academy of Technological Sciences (ATSE): Aiming to narrow the cultural gap that exists in Australia between business and academia through the Industry Mentoring Network in STEM (IMNIS) program, that will develop a national mentoring program linking PhD students with qualified industry mentors.
- The Bridge Program: A consortium of 14 companies, universities and industry associations that aims to transfer practical skills on pharmaceutical commercialisation through online and residential training in drug discovery and development, and direct exposure to industry practitioners in the scientific, legal, financial, clinical, regulatory and reimbursement disciplines that contribute to the commercialising of candidate medicines.
- STC Australia: A National MedTech Accelerator to create a dedicated commercialisation infrastructure to leverage Australia’s existing industry and research capabilities in the acceleration of new high-value, niche advanced manufacturing and medical device technology development opportunities through a focused, 15-month actuator program.
- Murdoch Children’s Research Institute: A National Digital Health Initiative to create an integrated ecosystem for the development and commercialisation of evidence-based digital health products.
- Monash University with CSIRO: Aiming to upgrade the CSIRO (Clayton) protein production platform to human GMP capability for pilot-scale (<=200L) for a variety of expression systems (mammalian/yeast/bacterial) as well as scale-up of cells.
- St Vincent’s Hospital (Melbourne) Limited: BioFab3D@ACMD will be Australia’s first robotics and biomedical engineering centre, embedded within a hospital. Researchers, clinicians, engineers and industry partners will work alongside each other with a vision to build biological structures such as organs, bones, brain, muscle, nerves and glands.
- AusBiotech Ltd: A comprehensive global investment education program for the Australian life science sector - companies, investors and researchers.

- Monash University: CCRM Australia, an Australian hub of Canada's Commercialization Centre for Regenerative Medicine (CCRM) will support the development of foundational technologies to accelerate the commercialization of regenerative medicine products and therapies.
- Cancer Therapeutics CRC Pty Ltd (CTx): Will establish a national framework to provide Australian drug discovery organisations access to a comprehensive Hit ID platform that includes, a fit for purpose drug discovery library (up to 450,000 compounds), an ultra-high throughput screening facility, fragment based drug design capability, and a state of the art software platform for in silico drug discovery.
- Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA): COSA has developed a national guide for implementation of the Australasian Tele-Trial Model in consultation with clinical trial sponsors, clinicians, health administrators and regulatory bodies. This project will implement a feasible and effective tele-health strategy to increase access to clinical trials closer to the participant's homes, while at the same time ensuring the proper conduct of cancer clinical trials.
- Vaxine Pty Ltd and sector participants in the vaccine industry: Project to assist in landscaping Australia's vaccine research capabilities and relevant services for the use of the whole MTP sector.
- Flinders University of South Australia: Initial scoping of the roll out of a National Medical Device Partnering Program (NMDPP) to bring together research, clinical and industry partners in a streamlined process for collaboration and product development.
- Centre for Entrepreneurial Research and Innovation (CERI): Support for a national consortium for translational medical technology and pharmaceuticals research and training.
- Queensland University of Technology: Support for a biofabrication research centre located on a hospital campus utilising 3D digital scanning, modelling and advanced manufacturing technologies.
- MTPConnect has also set funds aside to create a specific clinical trial initiative which will be further scoped with the sector in the coming weeks.

While the entities named above will be the consortium leads, a broad range of program participants from all areas of the sector will be involved in their delivery.

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### About MTPConnect

MTPConnect was formed as an industry-led independent not-for-profit organisation in November 2015 as part of the federal government's \$250 million Industry Growth Centres Initiative to accelerate the rate of growth of the MTP sector to achieve greater commercialisation and establish Australia as an Asia-Pacific hub for MTP companies.

The MTPConnect Head Office is located at the New Horizons Building at Monash University, co-located with CSIRO and industry. There are also key hubs at the University of Sydney's Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Technology and the Medical Device Research Institute at Flinders University at Tonsley in Adelaide.

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