



# Media release

The Place To Be

From the Premier of Victoria

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Thursday, 25 July 2002

## **\$14M TECHNOLOGY TESTBED TO DELIVER JOBS FOR BALLARAT**

A \$4 million State Government grant will enable cutting edge technologies crucial to the development of remote medicine, high-speed data transfer and video on demand to be developed in Ballarat.

The State's contribution is critical to the \$14 million Collaborative Optical Leading Testbed (COLT) project, which will allow researchers to develop the next generation of communication networks.

The COLT grant was one of 16 Science, Technology and Innovation Infrastructure grants to be announced today by Premier Steve Bracks and Innovation Minister John Brumby.

Premier Steve Bracks said the project would cement Ballarat's reputation as an ICT hub.

"The COLT project will establish Ballarat as a national centre of excellence for optical fibre communication, which will attract investment and generate local jobs,' Mr Bracks said.

COLT spokesman Jonathan Spring said a superfast, live broadband network would be deployed across parts of the City of Ballarat, including local hospitals, universities, businesses and some residences.

"We will trial a new way of connecting users using optical fibre and light (photonics) that will make internet speeds 50 to 100 times faster and allow medical images to be transferred in 20 seconds instead of 30 minutes," Dr Spring said.

"It will be the most sophisticated electronic testbed in Australia and one of the best in the world at the access end, where users are connected to the exchange and where the real bottlenecks occur."

This "testbed" will allow more than 30 research organisations and businesses to develop world-first technologies and to demonstrate their success on a live network to potential buyers, fuelling exports and the creation of 150 high value jobs by 2007.

The research may assist in the development of real-time medical image transfer, which would allow city-based specialists to assist doctors in regional and remote hospitals with diagnosis, and the provision of broadband access to regional Victorians at an affordable price.

Members of the COLT program are CEOS Pty Ltd, c-Ballararat, Ballarat City Council, University of Ballarat, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria University, RMIT, Red Centre, PBN, CommTel DNS and Cisco.

COLT was one of 16 key innovation projects to receive State Government funding today. The State will contribute \$59 million to the 16 projects, locking in a total public and private investment of approximately \$190 million.

Premier Steve Bracks said the grants reflected the Government's commitment to the innovation economy in areas such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology, agriculture and environment protection.

"The \$59 million funding for the Round Two grants is the biggest single grants program investment in science infrastructure by any State Government in Australia," Mr Bracks said.

"The grants support cutting-edge medical, environmental and manufacturing projects that will generate jobs, wealth and well-being across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

"They will build on Victoria's reputation as a world-renowned centre of scientific excellence where researchers can turn their discoveries into commercial realities."

Minister for Innovation John Brumby said the grants were a catalyst for collaboration, bringing together experts who would normally work in isolation on smaller initiatives.

"The grants foster a culture of innovation, which is the key element to driving the success of the Victorian economy and assisting our industries to compete with the best in the world," Mr Brumby said.

The grants also demonstrated the State's commitment to regional Victoria. More than a third of the projects receiving State funding will be based in regional centres.

"This government recognises that the city doesn't have a monopoly on innovation and we are investing in the best thinkers, not just in Melbourne but in Ballarat, Geelong, Warrnambool, Gippsland and Euroa," Mr Brumby said.

"The \$59 million in State Government grants announced today give the green light to 16 projects worth approximately \$190 million. They build the skills and expertise necessary for Victoria to lead the way in the industries of the future, and to claim the lion's share of the jobs those industries create."

This second round of STI infrastructure grants brings the total grant allocation to over \$113 million, part of a broader \$310 million investment in Science, Technology and Innovation.

He said the grants built on other Bracks Government initiatives aimed at boosting Victoria's research and development capabilities, including:

- \$100 million towards building the Australian synchrotron at Monash University;
- \$27 million in the 2002/2003 Budget to implement the Biotechnology Strategic Development Plan; and
- \$35 million over four years in the 2002/2003 Budget to boost medical research in Victoria.

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Project	Location	Government grant	Total investment
<b>Nanotechnology Victoria</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$12 million</b>	<b>\$30 million</b>
<b>Clinical Trials Victoria</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$8 million</b>	<b>\$41 million</b>
<b>Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing</b>	<b>Geelong</b>	<b>\$5 million</b>	<b>\$17 million</b>
<b>Victorian Institute for Chemical Science</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$5 million</b>	<b>\$13.2 million</b>
<b>Research Centre for Advanced By-wire Technologies</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$4.73 million</b>	<b>\$10 million</b>
<b>Victorian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$4 million</b>	<b>\$12 million</b>
<b>Centre for Pre-Clinical Drug Candidate Optimisation</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$4 million</b>	<b>\$8.4 million</b>
<b>Collaborative Optical Leading Testbed</b>	<b>Ballarat</b>	<b>\$4 million</b>	<b>\$14 million</b>
<b>Victorian Centre for Oral Health Science</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$3.5 million</b>	<b>\$20.5 million</b>
<b>Australian Sustainable Industry Research Centre</b>	<b>Churchill, Gippsland</b>	<b>\$2.4 million</b>	<b>\$7.4 million</b>
<b>Systems for Sustainable Aquaculture</b>	<b>Warrnambool, Euroa</b>	<b>\$2.06 million</b>	<b>\$4.9 million</b>
<b>The Virtual Reality Observatory of Melbourne</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$1.3 million</b>	<b>\$3.3 million</b>
<b>Infection, Immunity and Vaccine Development (ImmunoID)</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$1.2 million</b>	<b>\$4.71 million</b>
<b>Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$1 million</b>	<b>\$2 million</b>
<b>Mobile Architecture and Building Environmental Laboratory</b>	<b>Geelong</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$1.5 million</b>
<b>Centre for Education &amp; Research in Environmental Strategies</b>	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>