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INNOVATION DISTRICTS CHALLENGE IS OPEN FOR R&D SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE COVID-19

The challenge has been set, and universities and CSIRO are ready to partner with businesses to create products that help tackle the impacts of COVID-19, through the NSW Government's Research and Development Innovation District Challenges.

Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney Stuart Ayres said the theme of the challenges aligned with the NSW Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

"In January while the state was fighting bushfires, we'd never have expected that this pandemic was still to come," Mr Ayres said.

"But where there is a challenge, there is opportunity for innovation, and the NSW Government is tapping into this creativity and expertise by investing \$3 million to take products to market.

"Out of the first challenge we hope to see innovative and ways of addressing the impact of COVID-19, whether assisting in detection of the virus, improving patient care or solutions that help the people of NSW safely get back to activities they enjoy."

Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Geoff Lee said the Innovation Districts Challenges provided much needed support for universities during some of the toughest months.

"We know our universities are doing it tough, which is why we are continuing to support their world-leading research and collaborate with business to bring products to market," Mr Lee said.

"This includes the funding to run these challenges and the opportunity for the state's 11 universities, NSW CSIRO and businesses to take these developments to consumers."

University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor and Principal Doctor Michael Spence said the program would strengthen connections between business communities and universities.

"So much is possible when we combine people power, ingenuity and collaboration between different sectors," Dr Spence said.

"We are looking forward to working with the NSW Government, our colleagues and the business community towards the mutual goal of not only reviving our economy, but ensuring it grows and strengthens through the development of innovation districts and smart places."

More information on the challenges is available here:

<https://www.business.nsw.gov.au/support-for-business/innovation-districts-c19-r-and-d-challenges>

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