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MEDIA RELEASE

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R&D GRANTS BOOST COLLABORATION

Collaboration between universities, CSIRO and local businesses will help bring new products to market that help to address the challenges of COVID-19.

More than 110 businesses have applied to be part of the NSW Government's R&D Innovation Districts Challenges, vying for a share in \$500,000 of seed funding.

Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney Stuart Ayres said the challenges were designed to find research and development solutions to health and wellbeing impacts as a result of the pandemic.

"We've seen an opportunity to help stimulate the economy, support businesses and drive innovation right across the state," Mr Ayres said.

"Innovation district partners worked with businesses to hone their applications for the state finals of the first challenge which called for R&D solutions to the health and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 on the people of New South Wales."

"Thirty-five finalists were evaluated by NSW Treasury and a panel of experts from NSW Health, the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and it's great to see collaborations from innovation districts across the state share in the funding."

Grant recipients:

- \$250,000 to DetectED-X lung scan AI diagnosis and education
- \$100,000 to VBreathe anti-viral air filtration personal device
- \$30,000 to EcoAid BioTech biodegradable, anti-viral coating spray
- \$10,000 to local winners: COVIU Global, Birth Beat, All Metal Products, Criticalarc, Colan Products, YourLink, Energisim, Pen CS, Moove & Groove, Halo Medical Devices, We Are Explorers, The Ripper Group.

Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Geoff Lee said the Innovation Districts Challenge recognises the benefits that collaborations with universities, the CSIRO and local businesses can bring to NSW.

"This is a real win for the sectors that have really done it tough as a result of COVID-19 and it's great to be able to support them to bring ideas to markets," Mr Lee said.

"Through the Challenge, we're supporting universities that are some of the leading organisations in adaption but have also really felt the brunt of international border closures."

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the innovation challenges were an example of how SMEs and researchers can collaborate more often, which is at the heart of the NSW Innovation and Productivity Council's new report, [Let's Collaborate](#) released today.

"Doubling our current rates of collaboration could see a productivity increase worth \$150 million per year for New South Wales," Mr Perrottet said.

"Innovation is the key to increasing productivity, boosting jobs and creating new industries."

IPC member and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology Sydney, Professor Attila Brungs said where businesses are able to connect with researchers, communities' benefit from the increased social and economic outcomes generated, including the creation of jobs for the future.

"In the aftermath of COVID-19, collaboration is more critical than ever, and there are also increased opportunities to collaborate as a result of the pandemic," Professor Brungs said.

"More can be done, particularly to improve engagement between NSW SMEs and research organisations and translate research into commercial outcomes.

"Government can play a pivotal role in helping SMEs and researchers come together to forge mutually beneficial partnerships."

"NSW universities, together with the NSW Government, aim to dramatically boost the economic and societal benefits research-business collaboration provides."

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