

Victoria to address skill shortage in biotech industry

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Singapore: The Victorian Coalition Government in Australia has unveiled a new plan to help Victoria's growing biotechnology industry address [critical skill shortages](#).

Technology Minister Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips recently released the strategy and announced new measures to build the state's biotechnology workforce at a biosciences conference in Melbourne. "Despite challenges in the global economy, employer demand for all biotechnology-related occupations in Victoria is increasing," said Mr Rich-Phillips. "The Coalition Government's Enabling Technologies Skills Strategy - Biotechnology: 2012-15 outlines new measures to build the commercial, business and technical skills of Victoria's biotechnology workforce to grow the industry further."

The state of Victoria has also started the [Technology Voucher Program](#) to aid commercialization of new technologies.

"However, the industry is also facing skill shortages in several critical areas like bioinformatics and biostatistics. Early career researchers will benefit from the 'Molecules to Medicines', a business development internship and mentoring pilot program led by the Cancer Therapeutics Cooperative Research Centre," Mr Rich-Phillips said.

The \$500,000, three-year program is based on a successful internship model developed by the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, and will expand the program to other Victorian research institutes.

"Three new initiatives will develop commercialization skills for early career researchers, improve business development and deal-making skills within businesses, and support around 800 sector leaders with strategy and governance," he said.

Mr Rich-Phillips said Victoria's innovative biotechnology industry was recognized as a world leader.

"Biotechnology employs some 22,000 Victorians and around 150 life science companies have their headquarters here, including CSL, one of the world's largest biopharmaceutical companies," Mr Rich-Phillips said. "We are also home to 13

major independent medical research institutes, 10 teaching hospitals, nine universities and a range of clinical trial operators and contract research organizations."

The government has helped key players in the industry attract investment and create new jobs through successful trade missions to India and China. "We are also making a \$55 million investment to support enabling technologies in the biotechnology industry," Mr Rich-Phillips said.