



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **MTP CONNECT GLOBAL AND AUSTRALIAN VIP RECEPTION**

### **Sunday 2 June 2024**

It's a pleasure to join you all this evening.

I'm particularly pleased to have the opportunity to represent the Australian State of Victoria – home to the world-leading Melbourne Biomedical Precinct and the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster.

MTP Connect and BIO 2024 share an important goal. That is, to connect industry leaders from across the international biotechnology sector and generate opportunities for collaboration and information exchange.

Of course, biotech collaboration between Australia and America predates this convention.

Many of you will have seen the recent award-winning film *Oppenheimer*.

It follows the career of J. Robert Oppenheimer, exploring his role in the Manhattan Project and gradual misgivings about its success.

A story with which you may be less familiar is that of Sir Mark Oliphant, the Australian physicist and humanitarian.

Oliphant, whose work on radar was significant for the British war effort, was approached by his colleagues (Frisch and Peierls), with the theoretical proof of the possibility of an atomic bomb.

The following year, armed with this knowledge, Oliphant travelled to America, ostensibly to discuss radar, but to impress the urgency of the development of the atomic bomb on the US– still neutral in the war at this stage.

When efforts through official channels failed, Oliphant met Ernst Lawerence and Robert Oppenheimer at the University of California, Berkeley, where they were encouraged to ‘check the numbers’.

It was this meeting, some historians argue, that ultimately led to the Manhattan Project.

Oliphant’s advocacy role was later recognised by the US government, which awarded him its highest civilian decoration.

The story is just one early example of the strong relationships between American and Australian STEM leaders.

BIO 2024 is an opportunity to further strengthen that relationship and generate new collaborative connections.

This year, Global Victoria has brought a cohort of more than 70 biotech Victorian companies, making it the largest ever Victorian trade mission to attend the BIO International Convention.

Each member represents a new opportunity in the American and Australian STEM relationship, and I encourage them to seize the opportunity to learn from our US-based counterparts. Sharing information and working collaboratively on developing project allows both sides to contribute to, and further develop, the international relationship.

Victoria has participated in this convention for over two decades as part of a larger Australian delegation which, in 2024, includes businesses from across the country and ecosystem.

Every trade mission participant represents an important strength in Victoria's biotechnology ecosystem.

The commercial Medtech and pharmaceutical sector employs over 51,000 workers in Victoria, with another 20,000 medical researchers employed at universities, medical research institutes, and health services.

Victoria is home to the world class Melbourne Biomedical Precinct in Parkville and the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster in Clayton, making our State a popular destination for research and development.

One third of all Australian clinical trials take place in Victoria and 40% of all Australia's listed MedTech and pharmaceutical firms are located in Melbourne.

Victoria is also home to 18 world-class research institutions including the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Victorian Heart Hospital.

It's also the location of Melbourne and Monash University. Their medical schools were ranked 17th and 32nd respectively by the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Rankings. This high international quality ensures graduates gain the necessary skills to support the longevity and strength of Victoria's biomedical capabilities.

As the former Vice-Chancellor and President of Monash University, I have seen the vital role tertiary institutions play in research and development.

Recently, I had the unique experience of participating in the planning of the first Australian World Health Summit Regional Meeting as Vice-Chancellor of Monash before hosting a Welcome Reception for participants at Government House as Governor of Victoria.

Victoria's capabilities have already been recognised by key international biotech players such as Moderna. In partnership with the Victorian and Australian Governments, Moderna is developing its manufacturing and fill and finish facility at Monash University in Melbourne.

This partnership leverages the expertise within Melbourne's Biomedical Precinct and opens the door for further international collaboration.

Thank you to MTP Connect and AusBiotech for their ongoing work supporting Australia's biotechnology capabilities.

And congratulations to this year's delegation members for being a part of this important event.