



Media Release

**Melbourne Brain Centre, Parkville & Austin Facilities,
University of Melbourne**

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Collaborative Architecture key to Neuroscience Design

A highly collaborative architectural process has been credited as a key to the design success of the new Melbourne Brain Centre, Parkville.

The \$225M facility in Parkville, opened by Premier Ted Baillieu yesterday, will be a world-class centre for neuroscience research, combining three leading research bodies, the Florey Neuroscience Institute, the Mental Health Research Institute, and the University of Melbourne's Neurosciences Faculty.

Designed by Melbourne-based architects Lyons, the 20,000 m² Melbourne Brain Centre at Parkville co-locates a diverse range of research disciplines into a highly collaborative environment.

Lyons director, Neil Appleton, says the brief was to create as open and interconnected facility as possible to aid the collaborative research process.

"This is where some 700 of the nation's best scientific minds will come together to conduct path-breaking research into the brain.

"To build this level of collaboration into the design process, we established a collaborative architectural team which included representatives from the three co-locating research entities as well as a broad range of consultants, facility managers and the builder.

"This collaborative architectural process which involved design workshopping has resulted in a building which maximizes the ability to share ideas and resources, and maintains ultimate flexibility to accommodate changing research demands.

"The design concept brings disparate research scientists into one building with the necessary critical mass and intensity to achieve outstanding outcomes.

"The architecture is there to support the science, creating an environment not separated by organisational or disciplinary structure.

"Shared and flexible laboratory areas, and shared lounge relaxation areas are integral to the collective design. There's much said about the rare Eureka breakthrough moments which happen in the lounges or around the coffee machine rather than in the laboratories.

"Traditionally, investment has been focussed on 'tight' labs as the space of highest importance, and most cost (due to its technical complexity and energy

intensiveness). But new directions in the design of scientific research facilities require equal emphasis on 'loose' space.

"Entries, stairwells and corridors can be much more than just space that connects the wet and dry labs. Properly designed 'loose' space can facilitate meetings of minds, which is vital to the pursuit of successful contemporary scientific research.

"Ultimately, the collaborative architectural process is about achieving greater productivity and better scientific outcomes", Mr Appleton said.

In opening the Centre, the Premier said the new facility would strengthen connections between researchers and technicians, enhancing their ability to work on common problems, and help to attract and retain the best and brightest scientific minds from around the world.

"Victoria's great strengths in medical research include our collaborative approach and the solid links forged between clinicians, researchers, hospitals and research institutes," Mr Baillieu said.

The Melbourne Brain Centre will also incorporate public spaces on the ground floor, including a Neurosciences Bookshop, and the Cunningham DAX Gallery, exhibiting artworks created by people with experience of mental illness and trauma.

The building is one of the first and largest research facilities in Australia to gain full 5 Star/Green Star environmental design rating, and makes strong use of natural light and interconnected bridges to facilitate interaction.

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Images available upon request

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