AgriBio, Centre for AgriBioscience opens - video transcript 18/4/13

Narrator:

La Trobe University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Dewar, and the Premier of Victoria, Denis Napthine, have officially opened Victoria’s new $288 million dollar Centre for AgriBioscience, located at La Trobe University’s Melbourne campus. Scientists at AgriBio will be at the cutting edge of management strategies for weeds, plant and animal pests, and serious diseases.

Professor John Dewar:

It’s about protecting agricultural production from disease, but also about making sure that we increase productivity to meet the demands of an expanding global population. These are important questions not just for the state of Victoria or indeed for Australia, these are global issues.

Narrator:

AgriBio is a cornerstone of the University’s Future Ready strategy, and will be a key pillar of scientific infrastructure in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. It represents an important collaboration between the Department of Primary Industries and La Trobe University.

Dr Bruce Kefford, DPI:

AgriBio is very important to the whole gender of economic growth in Victoria. Agriculture is a major export earner and the work we do underpins the performance of the sector, so it’s a very critical piece of scientific infrastructure that drives that objective.

Narrator:

The construction of AgriBio was completed in 2012, and scientists have been working at the building since then. However, the opening ceremony marks the official start of a partnership that will strengthen agricultural productivity into the future.

The Hon Peter Walsh MP:

Nearly a third of the food and fibre exports out of Australia actually come from Victoria, of what is effectively 3% of the arable landmass of Australia, so we are the driving force in food and fibre production and exports, and that creates a lot of jobs particularly in regional Victoria, and wealth for those communities that rely on those jobs.

Narrator:

The key mission of AgriBio is to provide a space where the best scientists from both government and university sectors can collaborate to research some of the biggest challenges facing agriculture in Australia and the world.

Professor John Dewar:

There will be 400 scientists working in this building, 100 will be from La Trobe, so this is going to be a major part of our research infrastructure for the next few years.

Dr Bruce Kefford, DPI:

When you bring the two teams of scientists together they tend to work together on individual projects anyway. What we add to that is a strategic framework where we link the strategy that DPI has with that of the university and bid for large sums of money to the commonwealth for important major projects. Two in particular, the Dairy Future CRC and the CRC for Plant Biosecurity, these are big programs that are strategic in nature and allow us to collaborate on a larger front.

Narrator:

AgriBio also represents a significant investment in the university research sector by the Victorian state government. It provides an opportunity for La Trobe University to export our knowledge to the world, ensuring that we contribute to solving some of the challenges ahead.

Professor Terry Spithill;

A lot of the diseases I work on, liver fluke is an international disease right through south-east Asia and Africa, plant pathogens are a problem all round the globe, soil issues in India, many countries have the same soil issues we do, so the work that’s being done her locally in Victoria, I predict will have significant impact world-wide.

END