

MEDIA RELEASE

Short-term, high-impact R&D project opportunities for manufacturing SMEs

Melbourne, 10 June 2021: The Innovative Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (IMCRC) is inviting further applications for IMCRC activate, a funding initiative developed to help Australian SMEs accelerate their recovery from COVID-19 through shorter-term, agile research and development (R&D) collaborations, with matched cash funding of between \$50,000 and \$150,000 available per project.

Launched by IMCRC in 2020, IMCRC activate supports highly targeted, cost effective and innovative R&D projects in collaboration with IMCRC partner universities and the CSIRO, allowing SMEs to quickly identify and solve key challenges within their businesses through the uptake of emerging technologies and new business models.

To date, IMCRC has invested \$2 million in more than 15 innovative manufacturing and Industry 4.0 related activate projects spanning multiple industry sectors, including medical products, building and construction, clean energy and minerals. Current activate project participants include Biomedbank, Alcolizer, 3D Dental, GTET, HYDAC, SPEE3D and FormFlow.

One of the first IMCRC activate approved projects, led by Perth-based technology company Alcolizer in collaboration with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), has focused on developing a medical device called Virulizer. The device will be used at the point of risk as a qualitative detection of the Nucleocapsid and Spike protein antigen to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) from saliva swabs. Virulizer produces results in under 10 minutes and its Levels of Detection (LOD) values outperform all rapid antigen tests currently available.

With all key milestones successfully met, the project has provided Alcolizer with a functional prototype, a strong position to receive additional funding through the Government's Commercialisation Fund and thus a clear pathway for commercialisation, strengthening the company's existing investment in non-invasive nanoparticle detection. Based on the success of the research collaboration, the business expects to generate a substantial increase in revenue over the next two years and create multiple high value jobs, including for several UTS researchers who have relocated to Perth to join Alcolizer's growing business.

Alcolizer General Manager Roger Hunt commented, "IMCRC's activate program has been fundamental to the early-stage funding of the COVID-19 test. Being easy to access, with a turnaround time from application to project commencement in under a month, the program has significantly helped us to accelerate our research efforts at a critical point in time.

It also has allowed us to engage multiple STEM staff for the first time in the company's history. This additional depth and knowledge will not only assist us with COVID-related projects but also integrate into our existing R&D work in the core business of producing drug and alcohol testing products that are used in law enforcement and industry."

Dr Jason Coonan, Chief Operating Officer at IMCRC, congratulated all IMCRC activate project participants on their work to date and said he looked forward to working with the next round of participants.

"COVID-19 continues to impact the manufacturing industry in Australia, especially SMEs," he said. "Kickstarting collaborative manufacturing research projects and helping them become commercially successful is critical to rebuilding the Australian manufacturing industry. We are delighted IMCRC activate has already been able to help manufacturing businesses across the

country, such as Alcolizer, accelerate their innovation journeys through development and application of new technologies and business models.

“We’re calling on ambitious Australian manufacturing SMEs with strong, commercially viable ideas to apply for IMCRC activate while funding remains – which won’t be for much longer.”

IMCRC activate is currently open for applications and more information on the funding initiative is available at <https://www.imcrc.org/activate/>.

About IMCRC activate

IMCRC activate is an initiative designed to help Australian manufacturers take action and gain a competitive edge in a post COVID-19 world.

To be eligible for IMCRC activate funding, projects must:

- Be industry-led, deliver clear manufacturing outcomes and be completed within six to 12 months
- Be undertaken by one of IMCRC’s partner research organisations
- Apply Industry 4.0 technologies and digital business models
- Ideally move through two Manufacturing Readiness Levels (MRLs)
- Ideally involve other Australian manufacturing SMEs as collaborators
- Address sustainability and/or national needs where possible.

More information is available at <https://www.imcrc.org/activate/>.

About IMCRC

IMCRC is an independent and for-impact cooperative research centre with a successful, proven and scalable model for catalysing research and business partnerships that drives transformative commercial outcomes for participating Australian manufacturers. To date, IMCRC has successfully co-invested in more than 50 R&D projects, catalysing more than \$200 million in transformative manufacturing research. Find out more at www.imcrc.org.

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