

| CASE STUDY

CONNECTING IDEAS, DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS AND IMPROVING LIVES

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

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When the Medical Device Partnering Program (MDPP) was established at Flinders University in 2008, it was designed to provide a model for engagement between researchers and industry.

More than a decade later, the MDPP is going from strength to strength as an ideas incubator, helping the nation build on its research and manufacturing capabilities to position Australia as a global leader in the growing medical devices market.

As the only program of its kind in Australia, the MDPP was originally

established by Professor Karen Reynolds at Flinders University with support from the South Australian Government, other university institutions and industry partners.

It focuses on breaking down the barriers for invention by working with industry partners to connect ideas and provide tangible outcomes such as proof of concept, prototyping, clinical evaluation and end-user trials.

“Our mission is to bring to life ideas for new medical devices and assistive technologies. And by focusing on early stage research and development, we’re able to provide the most value in a short amount of time,” said Professor Reynolds.

“The MDPP invites anyone to submit new ideas for innovations, whether they’re a serial inventor with a great idea; an end-user or clinician who identifies a problem; a company who wants to diversify their product portfolio; or an academic who has great technology sitting idle in the lab.

“The main requirement is that the technology is driven by end-user need.”

The ideas that are brought to the MDPP span a range of solutions and include therapeutic devices, diagnostics, hospital equipment, implantable technologies, surgical instruments and assistive technologies.

The MDPP team then undertakes a review of the idea, and if no other solutions are already existing and if the idea appears technologically and commercially viable, it moves to the workshop stage.

CONNECTED FOR DEVELOPMENT

The MDPP’s workshop stage is one of its

key points of difference.

The process brings together a range of experts – from engineers, clinicians, manufacturers, end-users, product development and intellectual property specialists – to analyse the idea and contribute to concept development.

This co-creation, as part of the project brainstorming and design phase, is critical. It is here that the team scopes the best use of 250 hours to ensure what is delivered has technical and commercial merit.

“The workshop process ensures that all the pieces of the puzzle are brought together to finalise the project scope and give the technology the best hope of success,” said Professor Reynolds.

“The MDPP is different because it doesn’t provide funding; it provides up to 250 hours of research and development expertise, and 30 hours of product opportunity assessment.

“Significantly, the applicant retains all IP developed during the 250-hour project, avoiding the need for long-winded agreements to expedite the process.”

FOCUSED FOR IMPACT

MDPP projects are selected based on viable technological and commercial merit – in response to industry-driven problems – and are deliberately limited to 250 hours to ensure focus and encourage future research and development.

Since the MDPP was established in 2008, it has considered over 500 ideas for new medical technologies, which has led to over 135 workshops and 90 completed projects.

A significant number of these projects



have since reached the market and are currently providing benefits to healthcare, in addition to new job opportunities and longer term research opportunities between industry and the university sector.

NATIONAL GROWTH

With support from MTPConnect and the Growth Centres Initiative, the MDPP is now expanding across Australia.

Through funding from LaunchVic

(Victoria's startup agency), the MDPP established operations in Victoria in January 2019, with Swinburne University of Technology helping bring together a number of local partners including the CSIRO, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, RMIT University, Melbourne Centre for Nanofabrication, Biomedical Research Victoria, St Vincent's Hospital, the Baker Institute and La Trobe University.

The MDPP is also currently exploring

opportunities in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia as it continues to develop ideas and build connections between researchers and industry to ultimately benefit the healthcare sector.

For more information visit www.mdpp.org.au.