



# MEDIA RELEASE

## SENATOR KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

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Thursday, 21 August 2008

### NATIONAL INNOVATIVE REGIONS CENTRE UP AND RUNNING

The Rudd Government's commitment to helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in regional areas of Australia grow and develop has been underpinned by the opening today of a national \$20 million Innovative Regions Centre to be run from Geelong, Victoria.

Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research said that the Innovative Regions Centre, based at Deakin University's Geelong campus, will help address the challenges faced by Australia's regional SMEs in today's increasingly global marketplace.

"The Innovative Regions Centre will operate as a source of advice and services to help regionally based SMEs become more innovative, efficient and competitive," Senator Carr said.

"The centre is aimed at assisting regions that are experiencing tough times with higher than average unemployment and significant adjustment pressures."

Senator Carr said the facility was an integral part of the Rudd Government's \$251 million Enterprise Connect network.

"This centre is part of a truly national network which will provide services and support for about 1,500 companies annually to access expert, practical advice and support which is tailored to their particular needs and requirements.

"SMEs today face many challenges, but the Rudd Government strongly believes that with these challenges come opportunities.

"This centre is about helping businesses seize these opportunities – boosting regional economies and creating more regional jobs," he said.

The Innovative Regions Centre will support businesses in targeted regions around the country, one of which is Geelong.

The centre will be resourced to analyse the issues facing SMEs in regional areas, analyse which other regions would benefit from the support of the centre and develop a new set of analytical tools and strategies to assist firms and promote local economic development.

Senator Carr also announced the appointment of Professor Roy Green as Chair of the Innovation Regions Centre Interim Advisory Board.

"Professor Green, the Dean of the Macquarie Graduate School of Management in NSW, brings great expertise and experience to guide the Interim Advisory Board in providing advice on the implementation of the Innovative Regions Centre and the ongoing strategic direction of the centre," he said.

For more information on the Innovative Regions Centre, and Enterprise Connect, visit [www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au](http://www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au) or interested businesses should call 131 791.

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