

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Tuesday, 7 July 2020

## **NEW LAUNCHVIC BOARD TO BOOST STARTUPS, JOBS AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Four new board members including a new chair have been appointed to LaunchVic, bringing new skills and experience to Victoria's startup agency.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today announced the appointment of Leigh Jasper, Ilona Charles, Teresa Engelhard and Aneetha de Silva for a term of three years – with Constantine Frantzeskos and Catriona Larritt reappointed to the board.

New chair Leigh Jasper brings a wealth of entrepreneurial, management, venture capital and board-level experience to the position.

The co-founder and former chief executive of Victorian startup success Aconex Limited, Jasper is CEO of Saniel Ventures and a director of the Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health, Salta Properties, Buildxact and Seek.

The Victorian Government continues to promote women's leadership with the new-look LaunchVic board, bettering its target of 50 per cent representation of women in new appointments to government boards.

LaunchVic is leading the development of a globally connected startup ecosystem in Victoria that attracts investment and generates jobs. In the past four years, LaunchVic-funded programs have supported 386 organisations and more than 4,800 entrepreneurs – providing mentorships, accelerator programs, bootcamps and other initiatives.

Victoria has more than 1,800 technology-based startups, providing new-economy jobs which will be vital in supporting our economic recovery.

Through LaunchVic, the Government has played an instrumental role in driving this growth, with over \$45 million invested in grants, research, sponsorship, events and other programs.

Minister Pulford acknowledged the work of outgoing chair Laura Anderson and inaugural board members Tim Fawcett and Anne Bennett for their leadership, dedication and oversight since the establishment of LaunchVic.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford**

*"I congratulate Leigh Jasper on his appointment to the role of chair – his experience will be an enormous asset to LaunchVic and Victoria's fast-developing startup ecosystem."*

*"This is an exciting time for LaunchVic and I look forward to working closely with the new board as we continue to support entrepreneurs and founders, grow investment and create jobs."*

*"I thank outgoing board members Laura Anderson, Ann Bennett and Tim Fawcett for the significant contribution they have made to the development of Victoria's startup ecosystem."*