



## **ASX ANNOUNCEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO THE MARKET**

**PPK Group Limited – ASX Code: PPK**

**12 March 2021**

### **Li-S Energy Limited to benefit from expansion of Deakin University ManuFutures advanced manufacturing hub.**

- PPK Group Ltd holds a 51.9% interest in Li-S Energy Limited;
- Li-S is an unlisted public company which is developing new battery technology incorporating BNNT as a Nano-insulator in the lithium sulphur battery chemistry to protect battery components and enable superior energy storage and re-charging functionality;
- Deakin University announced on 11 March 2021 will double the size of its ManuFutures advanced manufacturing hub and open-up the Geelong-based success story to key regional centres, thanks to a \$20 million partnership with the Victorian Government.

PPK Group Limited (ASX Code: PPK) PPK is delighted to confirm that Deakin University will double the size of its ManuFutures advanced manufacturing hub and open-up the Geelong-based success story to key regional centres, thanks to a \$20 million partnership with the Victorian Government.

PPK investee company LI-S Energy Ltd has been named as one of the first confirmed tenants at the expanded facility where it will build a battery testing plant to further broaden the application of the LI-S battery technology being currently developed.

PPK is pleased to provide a copy of Deakin University's announcement dated 11 March 2021 for further details.

This announcement has been approved and authorised by the Executive Chairman.

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## Advanced manufacturing hub to double in size as Geelong success expands to regional Victoria

Thursday, 11 March 2021

Deakin University will double the size of its ManuFutures advanced manufacturing hub and open-up the Geelong-based success story to key regional centres, thanks to a \$20 million partnership with the Victorian Government.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Iain Martin and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research Professor Julie Owens today welcomed Training, Skills and Higher Education Minister the Hon. Gayle Tierney MP to the Waurin Ponds Campus to unveil *ManuFutures 2*.

Deakin and the Victorian Government, through its Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF), will each invest \$10 million in the major project that will see ManuFutures double in size to give new start-ups and existing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) the opportunity to scale up quickly to advanced manufacturing and link-in with Geelong's knowledge economy.

Professor Iain Martin said the Geelong Future Economy Precinct at the Waurin Ponds Campus was fast becoming Victoria's epicentre of world-leading research and innovation in advanced manufacturing, materials, energy, sustainability, technology, health and high-value agriculture.

"ManuFutures 2 brings to life Deakin's commitment to the economic and social development of regional Victoria by taking the unique industry-University collaborative model we've built in Geelong and expanding this to manufacturing centres right across the state from Bendigo to Warrnambool and beyond," Professor Martin said.

"ManuFutures achieved financial sustainability in its first year and has created over 120 jobs, and this expansion will add 130 more jobs while building on Deakin's impressive track record of innovation and commercialisation outcomes.

"This critical infrastructure project is an excellent example of universities working together with governments and the private sector to leverage investment, create local jobs and deliver transformative outcomes for our community."

### Local jobs, global impact

Professor Owens said the ManuFutures 2 hub and accelerator would expand the range of services to support product design and engineering in regional Victoria, while providing immediate stimulus to Geelong's construction sector.

"ManuFutures is already home to 13 businesses, and that will more than double when this 3000-sqm purpose-built construction is complete. ManuFutures 2 will support a further 15 enterprises and 150 people involved in sustainable manufacturing industries from post-incubation (proof of concept) through to multinationals," Professor Owens said.

"The programs to develop and support manufacturing in regional Victoria as part of this investment will support many more enterprises and jobs.

"Deakin is a local university with global impact. We aim to translate our research into commercial, economic and social outcomes that help improve the future of communities. Together with our partners, Deakin leverages end-to-end solutions in areas of emerging national importance.

"ManuFutures 2 will be an exciting addition to the Geelong Future Economy Precinct and our Waurin Ponds Campus, and will enrich the research, innovation and manufacturing capabilities of Victoria and Australia."

The Geelong Future Economy Precinct integrates Deakin's high-level research capabilities with specialised research equipment and industrial-scale infrastructure. In just over five years, the Precinct has led to the creation of over 1000 jobs through industry

partnerships and co-location opportunities, and some of Australia's, and the world's leading advanced manufacturers now call the Precinct home.

The ManuFutures 2 project will deliver a new, fully fitted out and staffed Product Engineering Development Laboratory, six adjustable sized expansion bays and associated offices. It will also boast a dedicated community and multifunctional space for events, training, industry collaboration and networking.

The new project will be up and running in the coming months, with the new building slated to accept tenants in late 2022. Partner organisations already confirmed as tenants in the new building include lithium sulphur battery manufacturer, Li-S Energy, textile technology company, Xefco and engineering training company, Victech.

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