Media Release

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Melbourne signs Australian-first agreement with French science agency

Researchers in France and Melbourne will be more closely connected following a landmark agreement between the University of Melbourne and the *Centre de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS).

The CNRS, or French National Centre for Scientific Research, is the largest fundamental research organization in Europe. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Melbourne is an Australian first.

The agreement will support a Researcher Visits Program, which will fund three University of Melbourne projects annually over a four-year period to increase research collaboration between the two countries.

Researchers will be eligible for up to $10,000 AUD, with an initial total program budget of $80,000 in place. CNRS will provide equivalent funding for its nearly 12,000 researchers.

Beyond the exchange of researchers between institutions, the agreement will also promote the organization of joint conferences and seminars, joint publication of research results and other scientific co-operation.

Founded in 1939, the CNRS undertakes research across all areas of science via ten distinct research institutes, covering biological sciences, chemistry, ecology and environment, information and computer sciences, engineering sciences, mathematics, human and social sciences, physics, earth sciences and astronomy, and nuclear and particle physics.

In announcing the agreement, the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor James McCluskey said the agreement will lead to greater collaboration between researchers.

"The program reflects our mutual interest in collaborating to address some of our most difficult and shared challenges," Professor McCluskey said.

The agreement with CNRS is funded by the University's *Research at Melbourne: Ensuring Excellence and Impact to 2025* strategy. The strategy is investing more than $100 million AUD over the next five years to broaden the University's research goals.

Professor Dick Strugnell, Pro Vice Chancellor (Graduate Research) who was involved in establishing the program said "the agreement represents an outstanding opportunity for the University to work more closely with one of the world's best science organisations".

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