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FUTURE-PROOFING FORENSICS

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson has launched a research partnership between Forensic Science S.A. and Flinders University that will help future-proof forensic services in South Australia.

The Rann Government has granted recurrent funding of \$200, 000 a year for the partnership.

The \$200, 000 will pay for the new role of Justice Chair in Forensic D.N.A. Technology, research into solving forensic science problems and developing new technologies for use at Forensic Science S.A. (F.S.S.A.)

“This partnership means Flinders University’s research will be tailored to F.S.S.A’s needs. New technology will move more quickly from the classroom to the State’s laboratories,” Mr Atkinson said.

The collaboration will also help secure F.S.S.A’s future workforce in a highly competitive world market. There is an international shortage of forensic pathologists and other scientists are also in high demand.

“Talented students will be encouraged to take up research degree programs and will be given a clear path into the forensic science workforce. There’s no better way of recruiting the best and brightest than giving them a taste of the opportunities on offer in South Australia,” Mr Atkinson said.

Forensic Science S.A. and Flinders University have built a close relationship since the development of the first local forensic degree program in 1996. The Memorandum of Understanding formalises that relationship and builds on it.

The annual \$200, 000 grant will be administered by a Board of Management comprised of representatives from the Attorney-General’s Department, Forensic Science S.A. and Flinders University.

The Rann Government is investing heavily in Forensic Science S.A. to slash the backlog of post-mortem reports and test results.

In June an \$8.4 million funding boost was announced to slash the wait for post-mortem reports and D.N.A. casework to three months. The money will be spent on 22 new scientific and support staff.

F.S.S.A. employees perform many different tasks, from testing suspected illicit drugs and analysing drug driver tests, to autopsies and crime scene examination.

Fourteen graduates of Flinders University’s Forensic and Analytical Chemistry course are currently employed with F.S.S.A.