

MEDIA RELEASE

Melbourne-designed system that opens up cell therapy to more patients wins Good Design Award

Celleo's Larkem V40 automates one of the last hand-done steps in making a cell therapy, so the vials every batch needs are filled faster, more precisely and without the most expensive kind of cleanroom.

MELBOURNE, Australia, 6 October 2026: A Melbourne company's answer to one of the bottlenecks holding back cell therapy has been named a winner in the 2026 Australian Good Design Awards. Celleo's Larkem® V40 was named a Good Design Award Winner in the Product Design (Medical and Scientific) category. The Awards ceremony is at ICC Sydney on Friday 9 October.

Cell therapies, such as the CAR-T treatments used against leukaemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma, have produced lasting remissions in some patients whose cancer had come back after other treatments. They are also among the hardest medicines in the world to make. Most are autologous: built from a patient's own cells, modified, grown and tested over several weeks, then returned to that one patient. Every dose is a manufacturing run of its own, and manufacturing capacity is now one of the main limits on how many people are treated.

One of the last steps of that run has stayed stubbornly manual. Every batch needs vials: the samples that release it for use, retained samples, cell banks and intermediates, and the product itself where it is supplied in vials. Today those are drawn up by hand and pipetted one at a time, inside the most stringent class of cleanroom. It is slow, varies from vial to vial, and ties up skilled staff and the scarcest space in the facility at the moment the batch is worth the most.

What the award recognises

Larkem V40 does that job automatically, inside a sealed, single-use kit. Up to 40 vials are filled at once, in minutes, to a precise, consistent volume, without ever being opened to the air. Because the cells never leave the sealed kit, the system can run in a lower-grade cleanroom, which most facilities already have, instead of the specialised, heavily controlled suites that are costly to build and in short supply.

For a manufacturer, that means a faster and more consistent step and less reliance on the most expensive room in the building. For patients, the aim is more doses from the facilities that already exist.

The Good Design Awards jury said: *“The Jury recognises Celleo's Larkem V40 as an innovative solution addressing a critical unmet need in cell and gene therapy manufacturing. The platform's fully closed, automated vial filling system represents a significant technical achievement, replacing manual, contamination-prone processes with precise, scalable automation that eliminates reliance on high-grade cleanrooms. The Jury commends the team for tackling a complex manufacturing challenge with the potential to reduce batch failure rates, lower contamination risk and meaningfully improve patient access to life-saving therapies, demonstrating a well-informed product package with far-reaching healthcare impact.”*

“Larkem exists because the people making these therapies told us vial filling was the step they could not scale,” said David Kneen, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Celleo. *“This award recognises a team that took a hard manufacturing problem and designed a better way through it, and the customers and partners who put the system through its paces in their own facilities. It comes as Larkem systems are being installed with cell therapy manufacturers worldwide.”*

Designed with the people who do the work

Celleo built the V40 after more than a hundred interviews with the scientists and operators who make cell therapies. The design brief was to close the process, automate it, and make it simple enough that an operator trusts it on the first day.

“Everything about the V40 design, from the nuances around single-use packaging to the high-definition user interface, evolved out of extensive voice of customer,” said Mark Rob, Chief Technology Officer and co-founder of Celleo. *“You know a good design in manufacturing when end users embrace it intuitively, with little more than a quick introduction.”*

Made in Victoria, installed overseas

In one example, Larkem V40 systems are installed at the facilities of a biopharma multinational that makes CAR-T therapies, in the United States and Europe. Independent evaluations by Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult in the United Kingdom and CCRM Nordic in Sweden have recently been published.

The system is assembled in Melbourne. Its single-use kits are made in Victoria in a cleanroom built to Celleo's requirements, with assembly, packaging and sterilisation completed in Singapore. Larkem will be shown at Advanced Therapies Week in San Diego in January 2027.

The Australian Good Design Awards, established in 1958, are Australia's longest-running international design awards. Entries are judged by an independent jury of more than 100 Australian and international design experts on good design, design innovation and design impact. The 2026 winners are announced online today as part of Good Design Week; the ceremony on Friday 9 October will name the Best in Discipline winners, the Special Accolades, the Good Design Award for Sustainability and the Australian Good Design Award of the Year. Celleo's entry is listed as “Celleo's Larkem® V40 – Closed Vial Fill for Cell Therapy”, entry 11220.

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About Celleo

Celleo Biotech is a Melbourne company that designs and builds automated production systems for cell therapy manufacturing and the biological materials that go into it. Its Larkem® V40 fills the final vials of a cell therapy batch automatically, inside a sealed single-use kit, in minutes, outside the most stringent class of cleanroom. Founded in 2022, Celleo is headquartered at the Jumar Bioincubator in Melbourne's Parkville biomedical precinct. More at celleo.com.

About the Australian Good Design Awards

Established in 1958 under the auspices of the Industrial Design Council of Australia, the Australian Good Design Awards are Australia's longest-running international design awards program and have recognised excellence in design and innovation for more than six decades. The Awards span 13 overarching design disciplines and more than 30 categories, encompassing Built Environment, Communication Design, Concept Design, Digital Design, Design Research, Design Strategy, Engineering Design, Fashion and Textiles, Next Gen, Policy Design, Product Design, Service Design and Social Impact. Good Design Australia is an international design promotion organisation responsible for managing the annual Australian Good Design Awards and other design programs, events and initiatives. good-design.org

The official Good Design Australia winner's media release for this project, including the full jury comments, is available on request and at good-design.org from 9:00 AM AEDT, Tuesday 6 October 2026.

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Images

All images and video, with captions, specifications and terms of use, are in the Celleo media kit: celleo.com/media-kit/2026-10-good-design-award. Print-resolution files are available on request.



Larkem V40 with its single-use consumable and finished vials.

Credit: Celleo

[View and download](#)



An operator removes finished vials from the Larkem V40.

Credit: Celleo

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Finished vials from the Larkem V40.

Credit: Celleo

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Video

Larkem V40, system in action (2 min 18 s). Click the image to watch. Embed code and a still frame are on the media kit page.



celleo.com/media-kit/2026-10-good-design-award/larkem-v40-video

Further reading

- Larkem V40 product page: celleo.com/larkem-v40
- Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult (UK), application note, July 2026: closed vial filling for iPSC cell banking, comparing Larkem V40 with manual filling on efficiency and cell quality. [Download the application note \(PDF\)](#) · [Summary on celleo.com](#)
- CCRM Nordic (Sweden), application note, 2026: automated CAR-T vial filling using the Larkem V40, presented at Advanced Therapies Europe in Barcelona in September 2026. [Read at ccrmnordic.se](#) · [Summary on celleo.com](#)

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