

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



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## CRUCIAL MEDICAL RESEARCH JOINS CORONAVIRUS FIGHT

Victoria's world-leading medical researchers are making significant strides in the battle against coronavirus, with the Victorian Government providing support for projects on multiple fronts.

The Government has invested more than \$14.7 million in 17 projects dedicated to fighting coronavirus and being conducted by our state's renowned medical research institutes and universities.

This work has already resulted in a consortium led by the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, one of our leading research institutes, using antibodies to prevent coronavirus from infecting human cells under laboratory conditions.

While still in the early stages, this breakthrough has the potential to influence antibody-based therapies, a key alternative until a successful vaccine is secured – and vital for those Victorians for whom a vaccination may not be possible due to age or ill health.

In another Victorian success story – a group based at Monash University has developed the National COVID-19 Clinical Guidelines, which is saving lives and helping patients with coronavirus to recover more quickly by connecting doctors with the best and most up-to-date advice and treatments.

This work builds on more than five years of Victorian-led innovation in *Living Evidence*, which uses a suite of new technologies to translate the latest in research into evidence-based guidelines and practices.

More than 100,000 clinicians, both here and around the world, are using Australia's National COVID-19 Clinical Guidelines, covering all aspects of treatment including primary and acute care as well as care in special populations such as older people, pregnant women and adolescents.

More than 30 medical organisations – with the Royal Australian College of Surgeons the latest to join – contribute to this dynamic log of treatment intelligence.

Other projects are improving our understanding of how the virus is transmitted, investigating its long-term impacts on the body and investigating the repurposing of existing drugs for treatment. Many are yielding important results and building the knowledge and clinical expertise that will help us to defeat this virus.

The Government has a long history of investment in medical research. In addition to the funds assigned to coronavirus-related research in the past six months, the Government has allocated more than \$47 million to the advancement of other life-saving medical research.

Victoria is home to 12 independent medical research institutes that employ more than 4,800 people. The state's wider medical research sector supports more than 30,000 jobs across institutes, universities and industry.

### Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"Just as our doctors, nurses and hospital staff are vital in fighting this virus – so too are our scientists, researchers and academics."*

*"We are proud to back this crucial research, helping to uncover answers both for Victorian patients and patients around the world."*

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

*"We lead the world in so many ways and medical research may be the most significant. It certainly has the most potential to make a difference in the lives of Victorian families."*

**Quotes attributable to Walter and Eliza Hall Institute Associate Professor Wai-Hong Tham**

*"The antibody-based therapies we are working on have shown they could be useful in both preventing and treating COVID-19, if effective and approved in human clinical trials."*

*"One potential use for antibody-based therapies is to limit the spread of disease and provide treatment options to older individuals, who may not be able to mount a robust immune response to a potential vaccination."*

**Quotes attributable to Monash University Associate Professor Julian Elliott**

*"Through the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce we've established a truly world-class collaboration of experts who work around the clock to identify, evaluate and implement global COVID-19 research findings."*

*"This means that frontline clinicians have a trusted single source of evidence-based guidance in a time of great uncertainty."*