

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Wednesday, 21 April 2021

VICTORIA READY TO LEAD ON NEW VACCINE MANUFACTURING

The Victorian Government will invest in new critical manufacturing technology and research to provide certainty of supply of new vaccines and lifesaving treatments in Australia.

Following the Commonwealth identifying onshore production of mRNA vaccines as a national priority, Victoria will provide \$50 million to establish mRNA vaccine and therapeutic manufacturing in Melbourne, through partnerships with our world-class Victorian universities, leading researchers, and Australian and international manufacturing companies.

Victoria is ideally placed to lead in mRNA manufacturing and the production of mRNA vaccines and therapeutics and the Victorian Government will work closely with the Commonwealth and world-leading experts from Monash University, the University of Melbourne, The Doherty Institute and other leading research institutes to develop the first mRNA manufacturing capability in the Southern Hemisphere.

mRNA vaccines are a promising alternative to traditional vaccines because of their high efficacy, capacity for rapid development, low-cost manufacture, and safe administration. This has been highlighted by the success of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna which are manufactured in Europe and the United States.

Developing mRNA manufacturing capability locally in Victoria would provide vaccine security, ensuring manufacturing can be contracted locally to avoid global supply chain issues and creating a more robust defence against future pandemics.

Increasingly, mRNA and other forms of RNA nanomedicines can be used in the treatment of cancer, rare diseases, cellular engineering and protein-replacement therapy. This investment will help accelerate RNA-based projects and develop new lifesaving treatments.

Victoria continues to be a world leader in infectious disease research with funding committed to help establish the Australian Institutes for Infectious Diseases, and will soon be home to the only cell-based influenza vaccine manufacturing facility in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Government welcomes the opportunity to work with the Commonwealth to secure mRNA manufacturing capability for the benefit of all Australians. Further investment to support delivery of mRNA vaccines in Victoria may be considered through the *Breakthrough Victoria Fund*.

Quote attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

"It's vital that we can develop and manufacture mRNA vaccines and treatments locally to ensure we have vaccine security here in Australia and across our region."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"There are major advantages to this technology including high efficacy, rapid speed in development, and flexible manufacturing processes. Victoria is well positioned to be at the forefront of this effort."

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

"Victoria already has the strongest mRNA capability in the country – this investment will give our researchers the support they need to expand that capability."

Media contact: Matthew Dixon 0438 190 148 | matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au