

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Thursday, 27 May 2021

## **FAST-TRACKING VICTORIA'S MRNA MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY**

Victoria's future supply of coronavirus vaccines will be fast-tracked, with a new body charged with building the state's mRNA manufacturing capability.

*mRNA Victoria* will lead mRNA manufacturing in the state and deliver on the Andrews Labor Government's \$50 million investment in securing local supply.

The new body will be led by Michael Kapel, who has been appointed the inaugural CEO and will oversee the establishment of commercial-scale mRNA manufacturing capability in Victoria within the next 12 months.

Mr Kapel is the former Commissioner to the Americas for the Government of Victoria, where he oversaw a network of trade and investment offices across the United States, Canada and South America.

*mRNA Victoria* will leverage the state's significant scientific expertise and partner with universities, research institutes and industry across the globe to accelerate onshore mRNA manufacturing.

The dedicated organisation will be led by Mr Kapel and supported by a science advisory group of industry and technical experts.

Victoria's Chief Scientist Amanda Caples will convene the advisory group, with additional appointments expected in the coming weeks. The group will provide advice to the Government on crucial steps to support the project.

The creation of the new body solidifies the Government's commitment to driving innovation and research, building on the establishment of the \$2 billion *Breakthrough Victoria Fund*, the \$60 million *Victorian Startup Capital Fund* and the \$25 million *Venture Debt Fund*.

mRNA has not only created a new frontier for vaccine development, but become a promising new weapon in the fight against cancer and other diseases.

Developing mRNA capability in Victoria will provide vaccine security, support local manufacturing and create a more robust defence against future pandemics.

The Labor Government will continue to work collaboratively with the Federal Government given its recently announced investment in end-to-end mRNA manufacturing in Australia.

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

*"Victoria is the national home for mRNA and we're well placed to lead the development of Australia's mRNA manufacturing."*

*"I am delighted to appoint Michael Kapel as the chief executive of mRNA Victoria – he will play a lead role in helping us to fast-track this vital work."*

### **Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas**

*"Our investment puts Victoria at the forefront of developing life-saving vaccines and therapeutic treatments for all Australians."*

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