

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Thursday, 17 June 2021

## RENOWNED SCIENTISTS LEAD mRNA VICTORIA ADVISORY GROUP

Leading global vaccine experts have been enlisted to provide advice on mRNA manufacturing capability in Victoria, with an international pioneer to team up with local leaders to form mRNA Victoria's new Scientific Advisory Group.

The Victorian Government today announced the members of the Group, including Dr Barney Graham, whose ground-breaking research into the spike protein was a key part of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine breakthrough.

Dr Graham is the Deputy Director of the Vaccine Research Center at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) and worked with American company Moderna to create their mRNA vaccine.

The award-winning immunologist and virologist has worked closely with Dr Anthony Fauci – the leader of the United States' coronavirus response and chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden – during the pandemic and has hosted presidents Biden and Trump at his laboratory.

Dr Graham is one of nine members of the Scientific Advisory Group, which also features Melbourne-based, world-leading infectious disease experts such as Professor Sharon Lewin and Professor Brendan Crabb.

The members of the group are:

- Dr Amanda Caples – Victoria's Lead Scientist and Chair of the Group
- Professor Sharon Lewin – Director, Doherty Institute
- Dr Barney Graham – Deputy Director, Vaccine Research Center, US National Institutes of Health
- Professor William Charman – Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Monash University
- Professor Brendan Crabb – Director, Burnet Institute
- Professor Doug Hilton – Director, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
- Professor Terry Nolan – Head, Infectious Diseases, University of Melbourne
- Professor John Carroll – Director, Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute
- Professor Andrew Steer – Director, Infection and Immunity, Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Operating for an initial term of two years, the Scientific Advisory Group will harness the expertise of its members and, in consultation with mRNA Victoria, support the development of mRNA vaccine manufacturing and research.

mRNA Victoria will also work with industry associations such as AusBiotech and BioMelbourne Network to establish a panel of industry experts and service providers to complement the expertise of the Advisory Group.

The Victorian Government is investing \$50 million to build mRNA capability, which will equip Australia with vaccine support for protection against coronavirus and future pandemics, and capabilities for new research breakthroughs.

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*.

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

*"The brilliant experts who are part of this group will provide us with an unparalleled understanding of mRNA, which will help Victoria become home to world-class vaccine manufacturing capability."*

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*“This body will ensure that Victoria is at the forefront of mRNA research and it’s fantastic to see Dr Graham join our mRNA program. His knowledge led to incredible vaccine development in the United States and will be invaluable.”*

**Quotes attributable to Doherty Institute director Professor Sharon Lewin**

*“Bringing together leaders across many aspects of medical research will ensure that the scientific direction of mRNA manufacturing in Victoria, and Australia, will be world-leading.”*

*“Being able to benefit from Dr Graham’s extensive experience in the development of the Moderna mRNA vaccine and virology more broadly will be of enormous benefit to informing Victoria’s mRNA manufacturing capability.”*