

Media Release

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



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BREAKTHROUGH: VICTORIA CLOSER TO MANUFACTURING VACCINE

Victoria has developed and will make Australia's first local mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate to reach Phase 1 clinical trials – a breakthrough in medicine and manufacturing that will create jobs and save lives.

The Victorian Government confirmed today that it would invest \$5 million to support Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS) to manufacture doses of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for trials, which are due to start within months.

The novel mRNA-based vaccine will enable a Victorian manufacturer to develop critical manufacturing capability of mRNA vaccines for clinical trials – a level of expertise currently unavailable in Australia.

The investment is the first to be made from the Victorian Government's landmark \$50 million fund to develop the state's mRNA manufacturing capability.

The collaboration between MIPS and the Doherty Institute reinforces the strong mRNA sector in Victoria and means we are leading the national charge to develop mRNA manufacturing capability.

The MIPS candidate is Australia's leading mRNA vaccine candidate, delivering next-generation vaccine support for ongoing COVID protection and future pandemics, and research capabilities for new drug and medical research breakthroughs.

The MIPS vaccine has previously received \$3 million from the *Medical Research Future Fund* to cover the costs of the Phase 1 clinical trial.

The development of mRNA capability is revolutionising medical research globally and has the capacity for broad-based application in HIV, cancer and other treatments.

Some 150 people will be involved in the clinical trials that are due to begin in October, with preliminary results expected to be available in the first half of 2022.

mRNA Victoria's Scientific Advisory Group, led by Victoria's Lead Scientist Dr Amanda Caples and including American luminary Dr Barney Graham and eminent Victorian infectious disease experts such as professor Sharon Lewin (Doherty Institute) and Professor Brendan Crabb (Burnet Institute), endorsed the Monash investment.

Quote attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

"Making COVID vaccines in Victoria will create jobs and save lives – and it's exciting these trials will be getting underway soon."

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

"We're serious about developing our mRNA manufacturing capacity and doing it quickly as we can, because it will save lives."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"Our message to Victorians today is get vaccinated if you are eligible to do so – for the sake of yourself, your family, your friends and your community."

Quote attributable to Monash University Professor of Pharmaceutical Biology Colin Pouton

"The investment by the Victorian Government into establishing Victoria's mRNA manufacturing capability presents exciting opportunities to develop life-saving vaccines and therapeutic treatments for all Australians."