

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



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Keeping The Community Safe With New COVID Immunity Test

A new finger prick test that can quickly assess a person's immunity to COVID-19 and whether they need a coronavirus booster shot is being developed with funding support from the Victorian Government.

In less than 20 minutes, the COVID-19 NAb-Test shows the level of immunity present in individuals by accurately measuring the level of neutralising antibodies to COVID-19.

The new technology will also be able to predict a person's immunity to new and emerging variants of COVID-19 and it can be used at scale for large groups.

The test could be used to determine whether a person may need a booster shot by analysing their current level of immunity to the virus. The test doesn't check for current infection.

Neutralising antibodies are a key measure of immunity to COVID-19 and are part of the body's natural immune response that is triggered by either prior infection or vaccination against the virus.

Funded through a \$500,000 grant as part of the Government's \$31 million investment into coronavirus research, world-leading experts from the Burnet Institute and Doherty Institute developed the test inside 12 months.

While the test is still at the prototype stage, the Burnet Institute and Doherty Institute are in commercial discussions to progress the COVID-19 NAb-Test so it can be used to benefit Victorians as soon as possible.

The Victorian Government has invested more than \$580 million in medical research in the past year, including \$400 million for a new Australian Institute of Infectious Diseases. The Government has separately created a \$2 billion Breakthrough Victoria Fund to back the next generation of research and innovation and drive jobs growth.

For more information on the Victorian Government's *COVID-19 Research Fund*, visit djpr.vic.gov.au/priority-industries-sectors/medical-research.

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

"Building confidence in our immunity against coronavirus will become increasingly important as Victoria and Australia open up."

"This work is testament to the world-class research skills and expertise we have in Victoria and will give us better understanding of the coronavirus and help in our fight against it."

Quote attributable to Burnet Diagnostics Initiative Chief Scientific Officer, Assoc. Prof. David Anderson

"This is a great collaboration between Burnet and Doherty that makes the most of our respective areas of expertise, but we could not have made such rapid progress without this funding from the Victorian Government."

Quote attributable to Theme Leader, Immunology at the Doherty Institute, Professor Dale Godfrey

"Other rapid tests don't measure the important 'neutralising antibodies' that block virus infection. This is the advantage of the COVID-19 NAb-Test and what makes it a valuable addition to our COVID-19 diagnostic toolkit."

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