

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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VICTORIA MAKES AUSTRALIA'S FIRST mRNA VACCINE CANDIDATE

Victorian scientists and manufacturers have created Australia's first mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate – Australia's first ever mRNA drug product – in just five months, enabling clinical trials to begin in the new year.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today announced 450 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine candidate have been produced in Boronia, enabling 150 people to take part in Phase 1 clinical trials run by the Doherty Institute, with results expected later in 2022.

The Andrews Labor Government invested \$5 million to enable manufacture of the vaccine candidate, with dedicated equipment shipped to manufacturer IDT Australia from Canada. The machine processed nanoparticles into final liquid drug form, sterilised the product and filled vials with mRNA vaccine.

Victoria is one of the few places in the world with the capability to develop and manufacture mRNA therapeutics and vaccines and the mRNA-based vaccine breakthrough demonstrates Victoria's leadership in the mRNA sector.

The project has been led by mRNA Victoria in partnership with Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS), the Doherty Institute and IDT Australia – a landmark collaboration between Victoria's renowned medical research and manufacturing sectors.

The Labor Government established mRNA Victoria to drive the establishment of a sovereign mRNA manufacturing industry and earlier this year supported a number of proposals from Victorian industry and consortia as part of the Commonwealth's Approach to Market (ATM) on mRNA manufacturing capability.

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

"This is an Australian first that confirms Victoria as a leader in mRNA therapeutics and manufacturing – it is an incredible achievement to have made an mRNA vaccine candidate that is ready for clinical trials."

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

Quote attributable to Doherty Institute Head of Vaccine and Immunisation Research Group Professor Terry Nolan

"This is a major milestone in Australia's ability to manufacture home-grown COVID-19 mRNA vaccines and we are excited to commence Phase 1 clinical trials of this candidate, along with the protein vaccine candidate developed by the Doherty Institute, in the coming months."

Quote attributable to Monash University Professor of Pharmaceutical Biology Colin Pouton

"We have worked with determination and in close collaboration with IDT to develop the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate – reaching this milestone demonstrates that the skills and experience to make mRNA products are available in Victoria."

Quote attributable to IDT Australia CEO Dr David Sparling

"We're honored to be a part of this collaboration. We believe this product will be the first locally developed mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate and the first locally manufactured cGMP mRNA drug product."

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