

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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RECORD SUPPORT FOR BREAKTHROUGH mRNA RESEARCH

Victoria is leading the nation in mRNA research to fast-track sovereign manufacturing and health-care breakthroughs, today announcing the largest ever dedicated mRNA research grant program seen in Australia.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford unveiled the \$21 million *mRNA Victoria Activation Program* (mAP) which will support bold ideas to grow Victoria's RNA research, development and manufacturing capability.

mAP grants will provide broad-based support to grow the RNA ecosystem, including support for clinical research and projects to develop enabling technology such as artificial intelligence, next-generation manufacturing, safety testing and alternative vaccine delivery methods.

The Program is part of the Andrews Labor Government's \$50 million commitment to mRNA Victoria, which is preparing the ground for large-scale mRNA manufacturing to secure the supply of vaccines for future pandemics and provide breakthroughs in treatment for conditions like heart disease, cancer and rare genetic disorders.

The Labor Government has invested \$5 million to support the development of the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences' COVID-19 vaccine candidate and clinical trial – the vaccine for the trial has been manufactured in Boronia in an Australian mRNA landmark revealed last week – and has also announced the *mRNA Victoria Research Acceleration Fund*, offering grants of up to \$500,000 to support early-stage research projects.

The Government 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.

The recent decision by global synthetic biology leader Ginkgo Bioworks to establish a Melbourne base further underscores Victoria's national leadership in mRNA.

mAP will support Victorian businesses, universities and medical research institutes developing new technologies and therapies to produce better health outcomes, with the grants open to projects from early-stage research through to commercialisation.

To address gender inequities in medical research, applications from female researchers and projects that include at least 50 per cent women and early to mid-career researchers will receive extra weighting in the competitive assessment process.

The mAP grants will take place over two rounds, with initial applications opening on Friday, 10 December and closing on 19 January. For more information and to view the guidelines, go to djpr.vic.gov.au/mrnvictoria.

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

"Victoria leads the way in this crucial field and we want to see more bold ideas that can create breakthroughs across the health spectrum."

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

Media contact: Stephanie Hobbs 0429 275 437 | stephanie.hobbs@minstaff.vic.gov.au