

# 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



Thursday, 2 June 2022

## FASTER DIAGNOSIS POSSIBLE IN NEW CLINICAL TRIAL

Victorians experiencing immune deficiencies may soon receive diagnoses faster thanks to a gene-based test backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford welcomed the start of clinical trials for the genomic diagnostic test developed by the Royal Melbourne Hospital and health start-up Immunosis.

Researchers received \$100,000 in funding through the Labor Government's Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund (VMRAF), and it's hoped the test will more accurately identify some of the 400 primary immune deficiency disorders (PID) experienced by more than 12,000 Victorians.

PID is difficult to diagnose and is often protracted leading to frequent or severe infections and autoimmune problems, which can result in complications such as chronic lung disease, lymphoma, and autoimmune illnesses such as ulcerative colitis and anemia.

The research team carried out a pilot study over three years demonstrating that their genomic testing algorithm predicts PID with 93% accuracy, reducing the lengthy diagnostic journey.

Recent studies also found faster diagnoses could reduce a patient's annual days in hospital from 19.8 to 3.1 and cut the days they spend on antibiotics by more than half.

Launched by the Government in 2017, the VMRAF provides \$3 million in grant support to accelerate health and medical research and fast-track innovative projects from research to real-world impact.

Clinical trials held in Victoria contribute more than \$300 million annually to the state's economy.

Led by Professor Jo Douglass at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the clinical trial is also supported by the Royal Melbourne Hospital, WEHI and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. The study is also supported by matched funding from Victorian biotech startup, Immunosis.

The first patients have been recruited into the trials, with more expected between now and September, and potential participants are invited to get in touch with the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

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

*"This clinical trial presents a great opportunity for Victorians with primary immune deficiency disorders to not only be diagnosed sooner but have access to treatment earlier, greatly improving their quality of life."*

*"By supporting new clinical trials, we're backing our world class medical researchers, creating more jobs and improving health outcomes for Victorians."*

### Quotes attributable to Royal Melbourne Hospital Director of Research Professor Jo Douglass

*"Once patients are accurately diagnosed with PID, personalised treatment can be offered which has real benefits in improving health and quality of life."*

*"That's why developing an accurate diagnostic test for PID is so important."*

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