

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



Monday, 13 June 2022

VICTORIAN mRNA RESEARCH ACCELERATION GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Andrews Labor Government is fast-tracking innovative mRNA research projects with grants for Victorian scientists.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford today announced the first round of recipients from the *mRNA Victorian Research Acceleration Fund (mVRAF)*, with almost \$2 million shared across 12 projects.

Successful recipients include a research partnership between Monash University and Alfred Health to develop a lipotide-based nanoparticle (LBPN) RNA delivery technology for muscular dystrophy, a disease that impacts 1 in 20,000 children.

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health will also partner with Monash University, receiving a grant to help them develop an mRNA vaccine for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

The mRNA grants are part of the Labor Government's \$50 million commitment to establish a world-class mRNA industry in Victoria by supporting projects developing artificial intelligence technology, next generation manufacturing, safety testing and alternative vaccine delivery methods (needle-free technology).

Victorian scientists and manufacturers recently also created Australia's first mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate – Australia's first ever mRNA drug product – in just five months, with clinical trials now underway.

Victoria will soon become the first place in the southern hemisphere to manufacture mRNA vaccines, with Moderna set to establish a large-scale manufacturing facility in Melbourne.

The Government has invested \$1.3 billion in medical research since 2014, including up to \$400 million for the establishment of the Australian Institute for Infectious Disease.

Government investment in the medical research sector has helped create more than 73,000 direct and indirect full-time equivalent jobs.

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

"mRNA-based treatments have the potential to change people's lives, and that's why we're backing our world-leading scientists to do this incredible research."

"These grants are supporting our researchers to do incredible work, that in future could prevent and treat all types of illness from cancer to autoimmune diseases."

Quote attributable to Monash University Professor Christina Mitchell

"Not only is this award further proof of Monash University's strong commitment mRNA research it is also recognition, by mRNA Victoria, that this is an area of research that will be hugely beneficial to human health, across a broad range of medical applications and diseases."

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