

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Minister for Industry and Innovation
Minister for Manufacturing Sovereignty
Minister for Employment
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VICTORIA AND SOUTH AFRICA TO PARTNER ON MRNA VACCINES

A new partnership between Victoria and South Africa will fast track international collaboration on the development and manufacture of next generation mRNA vaccines and medicines – thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

A partnership signed today by representatives of mRNA Victoria, Afrigen Biologics and the South African Medical Research Council will develop mRNA vaccine collaboration between the two jurisdictions including, a South-African based World Health Organisation mRNA Technology Transfer Hub in South Africa.

The initiative is aimed to improve low-cost mRNA vaccine production capacity in low- and middle-income countries worldwide and train international workforces in mRNA vaccine advanced manufacturing.

The Memorandum of Understanding will focus on sharing knowledge across three key areas - best-practice mRNA advanced manufacturing, mRNA workforce training and development and research collaboration.

The Afrigen Biologics and South African Medical Research Council delegation will visit Victorian research institutes – including the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection & Immunity, Burnet Institute, and Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute at Monash University's Clayton campus – to discuss potential collaborations.

The partnership signed with Afrigen Biologics and South African Medical Research Council follows previous partnership agreements signed by mRNA Victoria with the United Arab Emirates and South Korea, along with global mRNA industry leaders including Moderna and BioNTech to establish operations in Melbourne.

With global medical research over the next decade expected to be dominated by mRNA research, Melbourne has become the leading site for medical research in the Indo-Pacific, home to global innovative biotechnology companies and world-renowned medical research institutions.

The Labor Government has invested \$1.3 billion in medical research since 2014, and has helped create more than 100,000 direct and indirect full-time jobs in the state's biotech sector.

Quote attributable to Minister for Industry and Innovation Ben Carroll

"This agreement positions Victoria as a world leader in the mRNA industry and it ensures we play a critical role in assisting other countries to develop vaccines and medicines using this technology."

Quote attributable to Afrigen Biologics CEO Professor Petro Terblanche

"mRNA Victoria and the mRNA Hub at Afrigen, in partnership with the South African Medical Research Council, will collaborate on a portfolio of projects focusing on process improvements, novel delivery systems and end to end development of new mRNA vaccine candidates."