

Australia injects funds to manufacture rapid virus testing technology

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Local start-up company behind new technology, working in partnership with leading WA research institutions



Innovation and ICT Minister Dave Kelly has announced that the McGowan Government would invest \$150,000 from the New Industries Fund towards the immediate establishment of a manufacturing facility for the Avicena rapid virus testing machine.

Western Australian startup Avicena Systems is behind the innovative testing technology which uses saliva samples and has the potential to deliver a rapid alternative to the current COVID screening system. Initially designed to test for COVID-19, the testing technology also supports a range of other detection test kits for pathogens such as dengue fever, tuberculosis and malaria.

The local startup received \$500,000 in innovation funding from the McGowan Government through the Department of Health in October to pilot the technology.

The new technology supports rapid, low-cost and large-scale viral screening, which combines a range of existing technologies with locally developed custom hardware and system control software.

The platform is designed to provide portable, scalable screening, with rapid throughput that would enable the processing of up to 5,000 samples per hour.

The system has the potential to provide population-scale background screening in virus outbreak zones and rapid, high-throughput testing for major sporting events and high traffic zones such as airport terminals.

Avicena has recently sold two machines in Hungary and is in the process of a sale to the Basque Government in Spain, and has had interest from several other countries including the UK and India.