

Australia's Monash University receives \$5M grant for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine

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Australia's Monash University has received \$5 million from the Victorian Government to manufacture the first Australian batch of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for clinical trials, using a vaccine candidate developed by researchers from the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS).

The grant will enable the MIPS team, led by Professor Colin Pouton, to work with a Melbourne-based manufacturing company to prepare their product for Phase 1 clinical trials, set to commence later in the year.

The funding is part of the Victorian Government's mRNA Victoria, established to lead the development of mRNA industry capability and manufacturing in the state and to deliver on the Victorian Government's \$50 million commitment to establish mRNA vaccine and therapeutic manufacturing in Melbourne.

Last year, Professor Pouton and his colleagues produced the first known mRNA COVID-19 vaccine in Australia.

The MIPS COVID-19 mRNA vaccine first received funding in 2020 through a collaboration with the Doherty Institute. The two leading Melbourne institutes received a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant to commence the clinical trial process for their two vaccine candidates.

Professor Colin Pouton said: "In April we welcomed the State Government's significant investment into establishing Victoria's mRNA manufacturing capability, which presents new and exciting opportunities to develop life-saving vaccines and therapeutic treatments for all Australians. This grant will enable us to produce our second generation COVID-19 vaccine in preparation for Phase 1 clinical trials, which will be conducted through our partnership with the Doherty Institute."