

## **New Zealand announces funding worth \$40.7 M for development of novel mRNA vaccines, therapies**

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**To allow vaccines and other therapeutics to be rapidly developed at a local scale**

The University of Auckland in New Zealand has received budget funding of \$40.7 million for development of novel mRNA vaccines and other therapies.

Wellbeing Budget 2022 funding of \$40.7 million over four years will support scientists who are looking to leverage exciting new mRNA technology and its potential for new medical therapies, says Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences dean Professor John Fraser.

Development of mRNA technology has taken a quantum leap during the COVID-19 pandemic, work that paves the way for further novel vaccines addressing challenging infectious diseases and other human and animal therapies.

“This funding is a clear signal of the government’s willingness to invest in an exciting and powerful new science and to develop mRNA expertise here in Aotearoa. mRNA technology can be applied to many therapeutics, not just vaccines,” Fraser says.

The funding is for a research and development mRNA ‘platform’ that will allow New Zealand to develop its emerging strengths in this field, identify and address gaps in terms of capability and create high value jobs; bridge engagement between researchers and industry partners to test and commercialise new approaches; support clinical testing; and facilitate linkages with partners and institutions overseas.