

## VicAAMRI: Victoria leading the way on COVID-19 research

Victoria's medical research sector has been moving fast since COVID-19 made its presence known, with innovative research currently occurring across the state.

"COVID-19 requires science as much as it does public health and clinical medicine; without the new knowledge that has come from research in just the last three months, we would be flying blind. Victoria should be proud of its research response," said VicAAMRI Chair Professor Brendan Crabb AC, Director and CEO of the Burnet Institute.

"The government was especially quick off the mark in this regard, its leaders in the sector were responsive, and the great cohort of talented health and medical researchers in this state have joined forces and are delivering for Australia and the world."

The critical research to tackle COVID-19 was kick-started by a \$6 million injection of funding from the Victorian Government on 3 March, granted to the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity and Burnet Institute to fast-track new treatments, tests and disease prevention. The additional \$8 million announced by Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos last week will support Victorian researchers to better understand transmission, immunity and the long-term health impacts of coronavirus.

Victorian research into COVID-19 includes developing better tests, diagnostics, vaccines and other prevention strategies, drug development and screening, new treatments, mental health effects, indigenous health, and data modelling.

- Through the **Doherty Institute**, Associate Professor Steven Tong is leading a multi-site trial with researchers across Australia to recruit patients from over 70 hospitals to test two treatments that have been shown to kill COVID-19 in laboratory tests.
- Professor Marc Pellegrini at the **Walter and Eliza Hall Institute** is using the Victorian Government-funded **National Drug Discovery Centre** to search for new medicines against COVID-19 and future coronaviruses.
- Professor Vicki Anderson and Harriet Hiscock at the **Murdoch Children's Research Institute** are undertaking in-depth mental health research to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Victoria's most vulnerable children and their families.

These projects represent just a fraction of the COVID-19 research now underway in Victoria, with much more being planned to support Victoria's response to this pandemic.

“We’re leading the way in Victoria because of what was built previously, of investments made over decades,” said Professor Crabb.

“Over this long period, the Victorian Government has been crucial to establishing what is now well-established as a world centre of excellence for health and medical research. Having a strong medical research sector allows us to step up and support the community when it’s most needed, to react instantly and at scale. This new funding is hugely welcomed in kick starting the COVID-19 research response.”

**Media Contact: Aimee Sanderson, 0414 611 334, [aimee.sanderson@amri.org.au](mailto:aimee.sanderson@amri.org.au).**

## About VicAAMRI

VicAAMRI represents 14 of Victoria’s world-class independent medical research institutes. Our members work to deliver better health outcomes through cutting-edge research across a wide range of health and disease areas. VicAAMRI aims to strengthen Victoria’s medical research sector by raising the profile of health and medical research and the role of medical research institutes in building a healthy and prosperous Victoria.

## VicAAMRI Members

