



Hon Dr Megan Woods

Minister of Research Science and
Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

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Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Associate Minister of Research Science and
Innovation

A booster for RNA research and development

- More support for RNA research through to pilot manufacturing
- RNA technology platform to be created to facilitate engagement between research and industry partners

Researchers and businesses working in the rapidly developing field of RNA technology will benefit from a new research and development platform, funded in Budget 2022

“RNA is a potentially transformative technology. We have already seen the important impact it can make through the development of safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 to protect those who live here in Aotearoa New Zealand,” Megan Woods said.

“There is also a lot of potential to produce new vaccines, treatments and diagnostics that support wellbeing and better health outcomes in other areas such as cancer, and autoimmune and neurological disorders.

“RNA technology offers an opportunity to develop applications in animal health, agriculture and aquaculture. This investment is especially important to build our ability domestically to respond to future pandemics should we need to.”

An investment of \$40.7 million over four years 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
- facilitate linkages with partners and institutions overseas.

“New Zealand has incredible researchers and innovators. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how research and science have been vital to minimise the impact of the virus on our whānau.

“An RNA platform will help put New Zealand researchers at the forefront of global efforts by increasing domestic and international collaborations. We want to make sure that New Zealand starts investing in this now, bringing together key players across the industry, and unlocking and developing international relationships. This will complement the investment the Government has already made in managing infectious disease,” Megan Woods said.

“On occasion New Zealand needs vaccines that can’t be sourced from global suppliers, such as for meningococcal disease or rheumatic fever. Having domestic RNA capability will help us better respond to the health needs of New Zealanders,” Ayesha Verrall said.

The RNA platform will be run through the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment’s Strategic Science Investment Fund.

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