

# Frequently Asked Questions

## RNA Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility

November 2024

The NSW Government has committed \$96 million to build a Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility at Macquarie University's Wallumattagal Campus. A further \$119 million has been announced over 10 years for RNA research and development initiatives.

The new facility, which will include laboratories and other support spaces, will be the only site in Australia where a wide range of new and existing RNA therapeutics will be produced. Therapies will include vaccines as well as treatments for rare diseases in both people and animals.

### What is Ribonucleic Acid (RNA)?

Chemically like DNA, RNA is a nucleic acid found in every cell of the body.

There are several different types of RNA and each has its own function. It can help turn genes on and off, manage protein production and control cell behaviour. The main type of RNA involved in RNA therapeutics is messenger RNA (mRNA). Messenger RNA carries information from DNA around the cell to manage protein production.

### What are RNA-based therapeutics?

RNA-based therapeutics are an important medical technology that use synthetic RNA to change the functions inside a cell. Therapies and products can be made quickly for clinical testing and can be targeted to treat a range of human and animal diseases, disorders and infections. The most well-known RNA-based therapeutic was the first approved mRNA vaccine developed for COVID-19.

### Who is involved in the pilot facility?

The facility is being built and funded by the NSW Government and will be operated by Aurora Biosynthetics, part of a global therapeutics company and an independent partner selected through a competitive tender process.

The NSW Government along with five leading NSW

universities (Macquarie University, University of Sydney, University of NSW, University of Technology Sydney, and Australian National University) will oversee the facility.

### Why do we need an RNA research and pilot manufacturing facility?

The RNA Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility is the first opportunity for RNA therapeutics to be tested and manufactured locally. This will reduce Australia's reliance on international supply and provide patients with faster access to new therapies for hard-to-treat diseases such as cancer and rare genetic disorders.

There is also potential to attract global investment to Australia and increase the number of local jobs.

### Where will the facility be located?

The RNA Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility will be located at Macquarie University's Wallumattagal Campus, on the corner of Culloden and Gymnasium Roads in the Connect Macquarie Park Innovation District.

The Connect Macquarie Park Innovation District is one of Australia's leading science innovation districts, with access to world-class medical research, health services, medical manufacturing expertise, intellectual property and infrastructure.

### When will construction start?

Construction of the RNA Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility started in August 2024. Health Infrastructure has engaged Hindmarsh Construction to deliver the facility on behalf of the Office of the Chief the Scientist and Engineer.

A State Significant Development Application was lodged with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure in late 2023. The application was approved in early 2024.

The State Significant Development Application process is the formal planning approval pathway for major infrastructure developments valued at \$30 million and above.

### When will the RNA Research and Pilot Manufacturing Facility be completed?

The facility is expected to be completed and operational in early 2026.

### How will traffic and parking be managed during construction?

Health Infrastructure is aware of existing traffic and parking conditions on Culloden Road and surrounding streets, especially during peak times.

A Construction Traffic and Pedestrian Management Plan has been prepared to outline measures to ensure public safety and minimise disruption to road users and pedestrians.

Disruption will be minimised by:

- Ensuring car spaces in the Macquarie University North 3 and West 5 car parks are available for use during construction
- Encouraging construction workers to use sustainable transport options to access the site, including public transport, cycling and walking
- Moving materials within the site boundary where possible
- Managing the movement of large vehicles such as cranes and trucks when entering and exiting the construction site
- Placing traffic controllers onsite where required.

Traffic noise because of the construction has also been assessed and is expected to have minimal effect on the ambient noise environment.

### How will construction impact the use of the Macquarie University Sport and Aquatic Centre?

The project team understands that Sport and Aquatic Centre members use the Macquarie University North 3 car park and spaces will remain available for use

during construction and once the facility is completed. The West 5 car park to the west of the of the Sport and Aquatic Centre will also remain open.



### Will trees be removed during construction?

Health Infrastructure is aware of the importance of working with the topography of the land and preserving existing trees onsite.

As part of the State Significant Development Application an independent analysis of the existing trees were assessed in the footprint of the new facility and some trees were removed.

Approximately 80% of the trees removed were classified as having low retention value. Low retention value means that these trees could be in poor health or generally have low landscape significance. A comprehensive replanting program will start at the completion of the facility to replace the trees that have been removed.

### How can I contact the project team?

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact our project team via [hi-rna@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hi-rna@health.nsw.gov.au).



For an interpreter, call 131 450 and ask them to call 02 9978 5956

### For more information

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