

Southern hemisphere to get first mRNA vaccine facility

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Covid-19 vaccine maker Moderna announced Monday that it will open an mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility in the Australian city of Melbourne, a first for the southern hemisphere.

The project will be based at one of Australia's largest universities, Monash, and will produce 100 million vaccine doses a year for

Covid-19, influenza and other diseases.

Moderna's Spikevax was one of a new class of inoculations developed during the coronavirus pandemic that uses a cutting-edge technology called messenger RNA (mRNA).

These vaccines can be quickly developed and use a molecule to teach the body to identify and fight a pathogen, such as Covid-19, unlike traditional jabs, which contain a small piece of bacteria or virus.

Construction on the mRNA manufacturing facility is set to begin this year and be complete in 2024—with vaccines production starting soon after.

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Monday that it was a "show of faith" in Australia by vaccine giant Moderna.

For Australia, the facility is not only about health or science, he said, but "also about national security" after the country experienced serious vaccine shortages during the pandemic.

Melbourne, where the Moderna facility will be based, faced one of the world's longest lockdowns as authorities tried to contain the virus.

Albanese said a lesson from the pandemic was that "we need to make more things here. We can't continue to assume that it's okay to be at the end of global supply chains".

"In this part of the world, in the fastest-growing region in the world in human history, we have an opportunity to project that capacity into the Indo-Pacific as well," he said.

In recent months, Covid-19 cases have spiked in Australia after

restrictions were loosened. The [virus](#) became the country's third-most common cause of death in 2022.

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