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Australia to soon roll-out single-dose COVID-19 vaccine

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The vaccine will now be fast-tracked to human trials thanks to a $1.5 million MRFF grant

A single-dose vaccine that targets new COVID-19 variants has been awarded funding to fast-track testing in human trials.

The University of Sydney technology was one of 12 research projects to be awarded funding under the latest Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) round.

Other Sydney projects that shared in the $29 million in funding will focus on child mental health and silicosis.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Duncan Ivison said Sydney dominated this round of MRFF funding.

“We’re delighted that this funding injection will support our continued research into important areas of need for the communities we serve – from long-term management of COVID to addressing the ever-increasing mental health challenges our children and young people face.”

Professor Jamie Triccas and collaborators developed the innovative single-dose vaccine using the tuberculosis vaccine, which he says has “impeccable safety”, as a base.

Showing potent COVID-19 immunity in pre-clinical trials, the vaccine, which can be manufactured at a low cost and does not require storage at very low temperatures, will now be fast-tracked to human trials thanks to a $1.5 million MRFF grant.

Professor Triccas said the vaccine may offer broader protection than first generation vaccines against emerging and highly transmissible variants, such as the B.1.351 (South African) variant, which is able to avoid both natural and vaccine-induced immunity.

Professor Triccas’ vaccine may even offer protection against tuberculosis, which is still a significant issue in developing countries.

If approved, it could act as a booster shot for Australians who have already received the COVID-19 vaccine or be rolled out to

low- and middle-income countries as part of Australia’s commitment to supply vaccines to countries in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.