



## Exploring mRNA vaccines and therapeutics AusBiotech 2023 keynote Prof John Skerritt

**In the past few years, mRNA vaccines have emerged as a revolutionary technology, most recently in their successful application for combating COVID-19. Join us as we dive into the fascinating world of mRNA vaccines and therapeutics with Prof. John Skerritt, from the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney.**

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### mRNA vaccines and therapeutics - product development & regulatory aspects of a platform technology

Beyond their COVID-19 success, researchers are actively developing mRNA vaccines for a wide range of diseases, including respiratory and tropical infections, rare metabolic disorders, and oncological conditions.

The key driving force behind this surge in research and development is the utilisation of a common platform technology. This can streamline both the development and regulatory evaluation of these products, although regulatory guidance is needed on which aspects of the product and its

regulatory review will be more common between products and which aspects are expected to be product specific.

For Australia to maintain a competitive research, development, regulatory and commercialisation environment, there needs to be a clearer description and agreement of the implications of platform technology for these enabling processes and a willingness to capitalise on the benefits of platform technology to enable efficient translation of products through the development and regulatory phases to commercial products.

This plenary will describe platform technology as it relates to mRNA vaccines and therapeutics, its impact on medicine and vaccine development and regulatory considerations, and the urgent need for agreed guidance materials.

**Date:** Friday, 3 November

**Time:** 13:15 - 13:45

**Location:** Plenary Room

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### About Prof John Skerritt

**Universities of Melbourne and Sydney, Australia**

Professor John Skerritt, a former Deputy Secretary of the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, held line responsibilities for four key Australian regulators. His expertise encompassed medicines, biologics, and device regulation as the head of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, gene technology, industrial chemicals, and drug import/export control.



Despite retirement, he remains actively engaged on national and international boards, notably advising on the establishment of Australia's mRNA vaccines and medicines industry. He chairs the Scientific Advisory Council at the UK-based Centre for Innovation in Regulatory Science and serves on the board of the Centre for Regulatory Excellence in Singapore. In academia, John is an Enterprise Professor in Health Research Impact at the University of Melbourne and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Sydney's Faculty of Medicine and Health.

With extensive experience spanning over 40 countries, his career has primarily focused on the Asia-Pacific region. He played a pivotal role in Australia's COVID-19 response, conducting numerous high-profile media engagements alongside senior government officials.

Prof Skerritt's distinguished career also includes earlier achievements in commercialising over a dozen biotechnology products and facilitating collaborative research and development programmes valued at over \$1 billion between Australia and major regional countries. His academic contributions comprise over 300 publications across various fields, backed by a PhD and a university medal.

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