

RNA Australia appoints experienced biotech leader as CEO

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, December 19, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Australia's national RNA innovation catalyst [RNA Australia](#) has appointed biotech stalwart Paul McDonald as its new CEO, effective 13 January 2026.

Paul brings over 25 years' experience in biotech manufacturing and was most recently CEO at publicly-listed [IDT Australia](#).

He stood out as a strong choice to lead RNA Australia due to his first-hand experience leading ribonucleic acid (RNA) product development, advanced manufacturing, quality assurance, research & development, and commercialisation.

He also joins at a critical juncture for RNA Australia, being tasked with overseeing the operator of a new open-access RNA pilot manufacturing facility currently being built in Sydney, for use in developing and manufacturing RNA therapeutics for clinical trials.

RNA Australia will also support the growth and success of the national RNA ecosystem via support programs and services to strengthen the pipeline of local and global RNA groups accessing the facility, support the growth of new advanced manufacturing companies and jobs, and help the development of new RNA therapeutics for human and animal health.

This work will occur in close collaboration with the NSW Government and RNA Australia's founding university partners, [Aurora](#) as the operator of the facility, other government stakeholders, and the RNA research and biotech community.

Paul's depth of technical, scientific, and commercial experience will play a central role in his success in the new role and in his ability to help accelerate Australia's RNA capability and translation pipeline as a whole, according to RNA Australia.



Paul McDonald, incoming CEO of RNA Australia

Kate Pounder, Chair of RNA Australia, said: "Paul brings a rare blend of scientific understanding, industry experience, and steady leadership that will guide RNA Australia into its next chapter. He recognises that building sovereign RNA capability relies on bringing people together, and he is deeply committed to working with researchers, industry, government, and emerging innovators right across the country. With Paul at the helm, we are well placed to accelerate translation, strengthen national capability, and ensure Australia plays a leading role in the future of RNA science and manufacturing."

Paul McDonald, incoming CEO of RNA Australia, said: RNA is one of the most transformative developments in biotech of our time, and Australia has the talent and research strength to lead in this field. I look forward to bringing together the people, capability, and infrastructure needed to create a national pathway for developing and producing RNA therapeutics here on home soil and to serve a large variety of unmet medical needs from respiratory to cancer. By working closely with researchers, industry partners, and government - and supporting the NSW Government's initiatives and serving our members - we can build a thriving RNA ecosystem that positions Australia strongly in the global bioeconomy."

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, said: "I'm delighted to welcome Paul McDonald as the CEO of RNA Australia. With the new RNA Manufacturing and Research Facility on track to open in the first half of 2026, Paul's appointment is a significant step in establishing a world-class RNA ecosystem here in NSW."

"Paul brings over 25 years' experience in pharmaceutical product development, operations and business development, having led high-performing teams in senior roles at Pfizer and IDT Australia. This strong track record makes him the perfect person to drive RNA Australia's unique model of collaboration, which brings together the NSW Government, research sector, industry and other stakeholders both locally and internationally."

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