



Damian Purcell is Professor of Virology at The University of Melbourne and theme leader for viral infectious diseases at the Peter Doherty Institute. After receiving a PhD from The University of Melbourne in 1987 he was a CJ Martin traveling fellow of the NHMRC working at the Laboratory for Molecular Microbiology of the NIAID, NIH in Bethesda, MD, USA. He returned to Melbourne's Burnet Institute in 1995 before moving to The University of Melbourne in 2001.

His research has focused on molecular virology of human blood-borne and respiratory viruses and includes publishing early self-amplifying RNA vaccine candidates for influenza in 2008, and for HIV in 2013. Since 2002 his team have synthesized and expressed in human T-cells mRNA for various HIV proteins, culminating in finding HIV RNA elements that strongly activate this approach for an HIV mRNA vaccine. He has patented several vaccine and immunotherapeutic candidates and led pre-clinical studies for human trials. Since 2020 he has led pre-clinical research into the virology of SARS-CoV-2 and tested protein and mRNA vaccines for several variant strains causing COVID-19.

He was President of the Australasian Virology Society from 2011-2015, an Executive Committee Member of the Australian Centres for HIV and Hepatitis Virology since 2000, the regional Governing Councillor of the International Retrovirology Association since 2017, a founding member of the Australian RNA Production Consortium and is the Treasurer for the RNA Network of Australia.

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