# RNA Symposium 2026 Programme

*Updated: 28 Oct 2026*

## 10 November Tuesday

| Time | Duration | Presentation | Speaker(s) / Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| **9-10:30** | **90 min** | **Session 1 - Platform update & Payload Design Pillar** | |
| | 10 min | RNA platform to date | Gary Evans, Kjesten Wiig (RNA Platform) |
| | 20 min | Payload Pillar | William Kelton (University of Waikato) |
| | 25 min | International Guest | Tobias von der Haar (University of Kent) |
| | 15 min | Modular design of circRNA | Lydia White (MIMR/VUW) |
| | 20 min | RNA optimisation | Paul Gardner (University of Otago) |
| **10:30-11:00** | **30 min** | **Morning Tea** | |
| **11 - 12:35** | **95 min** | **Session 2 - Production facility / QC Pillar** | |
| | 25 min | One molecule at a time: what direct RNA sequencing tells us about RNA and RNA therapeutics | Nikolay Shirokikh(University of Western Australia) |
| | 20 min | Reflection and Updates from this year – Central Facility | Rebecca McKenzie (MIMR) |
| | 20 min | RNA development team topics | Jochem Vink (Ferrier Research Institute, VUW) |
| | 15 min | Analytical Ultra centrifugation for LNP QC | Zac Tillett(University of Canterbury) |
| | 15 min | Lysis-free RNA quantification and Encapsulation Efficiency of RNA-LNPs using CloudSpec | Eric Le Ru (Marama lab) |
| **12:35 - 12:40** | **5 min** | **Group photo** | |
| **12:40 - 1:30** | **50 min** | **Lunch** | |
| **1:30 - 3:30** | **120 min** | **Session 3 – Formulation Pillar (Delivery Technologies)** | **Chair Gavin Painter** |
| | 20 min | Investigating the influence of ionisable lipid properties on endosome escape | Angus Johnston - Monash University (TBC) |
| | 20 min | Micro-LNPs | Greg Walker - University of Otago |
| | 20 min | CD47-Silencing RNA Nanoparticles for Macrophage-Mediated Cancer Immunotherapy | Zimei Wu - University of Auckland |
| | 20 min | Tuning particle pKa by modification of lipid tail structure alone | Regan Anderson - Ferrier Research Institute, VUW |
| | 20 min | Hybrid LNP-EVs and miRNAs | Kirsty Danielson – WELLINGTON School of Medicine |
| | 20 min | Load and Go | Sarah Draper - Ferrier Research Institute, VUW |
| **3:30 - 4:00** | **30 min** | **Afternoon Tea** | |
| **4:00 - 5:30** | **90 min** | **Session 4 - Flagship projects -RNA Vaccines** | |
| | 30 min | Staph Vaccine – RNA | Fiona Radcliff (University of Auckland) |
| | 30 min | Influenza Pre-pandemic vaccine | Lisa Connor (MIMR) & Wayne Patrick (VUW) |
| | 30 min | BoViDx: in vitro benchmarking and the shape of the first immunogenicity study | Axel Heiser (BSI) |
| **6:00 - 8:00** | | **Networking session at the venue** | **Light meal & drinks provided** |

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| 11 November Wednesday | | | |
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| **Time** | **Duration** | Presentation | **Speaker(s) / Details** |
| **9:00 - 10:30** | **90 min** | **Session 5 - Preclinical Pillar** | |
| | 15 min | Preclinical Screen of Novel LNPs | Olga Palmer (MIMR) |
| | 15 min | Immunogenicity of circRNA vaccines | Abby Martin (MIMR) |
| | 15 min | Correlates of protection against Staph | Rob Crawford (University of Auckland) |
| | 15 min | mRNA vaccine immunogenicity in the setting of type I IFN deficiency | Kaitlin Buick (MIMR/HRC Measles programme) |
| | 15 min | Developing a Measles mRNA vaccine | Ellie Torbati (MIMR/HRC Measles programme) |
| | 15 min | Nanopore sequencing approaches to interrogate mRNA vaccine quality | Kyrin Hanning (University of Waikato) |
| **10:30-11:00** | **30 min** | **Morning Tea** | |
| **11:00 - 12:35** | **95 min** | **Session 6 - Manufacturing Pillar** | |
| | 20 min | Accelerating Research Translation of mRNA-based Innovation | Sarah Herridge (BioNTech SE) |
| | 20 min | Overview of the Manufacturing Pillar | William Rolleston (South Pacific Sera Ltd) |
| | 20 min | Global trends in RNA/LNP Manufacturing | Rick Witte (South Pacific Sera Ltd) |
| | 20 min | Challenges in scale up/GMP | Jeremy Stephens (South Pacific Sera Ltd) |
| | 15 min | Small and Nimble: A New GMP RNA Manufacturing Facility in Brisbane | Andy Herbert (Bioprocess Consultant) |
| **12:35 – 1:30** | **55 min** | **Lunch** | |
| **1:30 – 3:05** | **95 min** | **Session 7 - Guest speakers** | |
| | 20 min | International speaker | Obadiah Plante (Biotech executive) |
| | 20 min | Nucleotide and RNA Chemistry at Otago | Nick Green (University of Otago) |
| | 20 min | Clinical Test Pillar update | Georgia Lenihan-Geels(UoA), Gary Evans |
| | 15 min | Fast Start - Self Amplifying RNA | Jordan Minnell (MIMR) |
| | 20 min | Guest speaker – Infectious disease research platform | Adrian Cookson (Infectious disease research platform) |
| **3:05-3:30** | **25 min** | **Afternoon Tea** | |
| **3:30 – 5:00** | **90 min** | **Session 8 - The Future of RNA: Emerging Technologies and Global Perspectives** | |
| | 20 min | International speaker | Phill Santangelo (Emory University and Georgia Tech) |
| | 15 min | mRNA sensitisation of the immune system in Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor therapy | John Fraser (University of Auckland) |
| | 15 min | AI and LNP Development | Ha Hoang (VUW) |
| | 15 min | NeoAntigent | Daniel Verdon (University of Auckland) |
| | 15 min | Tactical project - CAR-T | Rachel Perret (MIMR) |
| | 20 min | International speaker | Pall Thordarson (UNSW) |
| | 5 min | Closing speech | Gary Evans, Kjesten Wiig (RNA Platform) |