

Response from a CSIRO spokesperson:

Critical to research for human health is the understanding of how humans, animals, and the environment interact to pose threats to our health and biosecurity. Seventy-five per cent of human diseases are those passed from animals to humans – called zoonotic diseases.

The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) in Geelong is a high biocontainment facility, established in 1985, and the only facility of its kind in the southern hemisphere able to work with such pathogens. CSIRO also undertakes all research in accordance with strict biosecurity and legislative requirements.

Research into bats underpins much of our understanding of zoonotic diseases. For example:

- CSIRO's previous bat research helped us develop the world's first vaccine for the deadly Hendra virus, which has saved lives
- CSIRO was the first organisation to determine that SARS originated in bats.

Previous bat research such as this meant that the scientific community was able to quickly respond to COVID-19.

Recent media speculation regarding the possible origin of SARS CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19, is unhelpful. Research of the genome has found no evidence of laboratory manipulation and there is no published evidence of this virus having been previously identified.

Scientific analysis of the origins of SARS CoV-2 undertaken by an international team of researchers has been published in the world's pre-eminent scientific [journal Nature in March 2020](#). It found no evidence to suggest the virus had been engineered. The authors concluded: "Our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus."

To imply otherwise without supporting facts or evidence is misleading and irresponsible.

CSIRO does collaborate with research organisations from many countries around the world, helping drive global effort forwards to human diseases prevention and management. As with all partners, CSIRO undertakes due diligence and takes security very seriously.

CSIRO has been working around-the-clock in the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 and save lives. In less than three months we have progressed our vaccine work to a stage that would have ordinarily taken years to reach. This has only been made possible by previous pivotal research into bats.