

## **Australia's medical research sector backs the Medical Research Future Fund**

### ***New MRFF Action Group advocates for the most important initiative in Australian medical research in generations***

[DATE] – The organisations that carry out Australia's world-leading medical research have joined forces to support the Federal Government's proposed Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

The **MRFF Action Group** – which comprises members from organisations representing all of Australia's medical researchers – will promote the groundbreaking benefits the MRFF will bring to Australia's health and prosperity.

The health benefits of medical research are well understood. Australian medical research has extended lives and reduced suffering in Australia and across the world. Over many decades, Australia has developed a highly skilled health and medical research workforce, establishing a global reputation for discovery and innovation. The increase in medical research expenditure that will flow from the MRFF will underpin Australia's future as a world leader in the health industry. Australian discoveries are too numerous to mention but include the development of penicillin, spray-on skin, the Cochlear implant, a cure for peptic ulcers, the Gardasil vaccine for cervical cancer and novel treatments for cancers.

MRFF Action Group chairman Alastair Lucas said: "In addition to the health benefits of medical research, the economic impact of world-leading medical research should also be emphasised. Medical research is Australia's best knowledge industry, employing 23,000 research professionals supporting a medicines industry of over 40,000. Annually, Australia now exports \$4 billion worth of products developed through medical research, making it Australia's largest high technology export industry."

"However, while our research skills excel, the reality is that our medical research spending lags many other western nations. Australia will fall behind if this funding gap is not addressed. The Medical Research Future Fund will bridge this gap."

Professor Christine Bennett, Chair of Research Australia, said: "The MRFF will more than double government spending on medical research. It will give Australia a perpetual funding body for medical research with the scope and impact of the Wellcome Trust in the UK and the Howard Hughes Institute in the US. The MRFF will make Australia a global centre for lifesaving research for generations."

"We know that most Australians support additional medical research expenditure. There is multi-party support for existing medical research funding and the MRFF guarantees we can build on this solid foundation to ensure we reap the rewards in terms of Australia's future health and wealth."

Professor Bruce Robinson, Chair of the Group of Eight Deans of Medicine Committee, said: "The MRFF will provide a sustainable future for Australia's talented young medical researchers who underpin Australia's superb medical research skills. The MRFF will help drive the efficiency, effectiveness and long-term sustainability of our health system. Medical research is an integral part of a high quality health system – they are inseparable. It is not coincidental that Australia has one of the best health systems in the world. Medical research has underpinned it and the potential to do much more is truly exciting."

Professor Brendan Crabb, President of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes, pointed to the benefits the MRFF will bring to Australia's capacity to deal with new and emerging diseases.

"It is an unfortunate reality that we do not know where another health threat to Australia might emerge," Professor Crabb said. "The MRFF will provide a real boost to Australia's capacity to address

new health problems, as well as the particular health issues faced by Australia's indigenous communities."

The MRFF will propel many further groundbreaking discoveries. The benefits the MRFF will bring cannot be measured now, but the MRFF Action Group argues that its benefits will profoundly advantage our nation.

On behalf of

**The Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes  
AusBiotech  
The Australian Society for Medical Research  
Group of Eight Universities Australia  
Go8 Deans of Medicine Committee  
Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand  
Research Australia**

**Members of the MRFF Action Group are:**

*Chair: Mr Alastair Lucas, Chairman, Burnet Institute  
Professor Christine Bennett, Chair, Research Australia  
Professor Brendan Crabb, President, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes  
Professor Les Field, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of New South Wales  
Professor Nicholas Fisk, Executive Dean (Medicine & Biomedical Sciences), University of Queensland  
Mr Matthew Grounds, Chairman, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute  
Professor Doug Hilton, Director, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research  
Professor Jim McCluskey, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Melbourne  
Dr Chris Roberts, CEO & President, Cochlear Limited  
Professor Bruce Robinson, Chair, Group of Eight Universities Deans of Medicine Committee  
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