

Media Release Wed 25 January 2006 10.18pm

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) congratulates Professor Ian Frazer as the 2006 Australian of the Year

"The Australian health and medical research community congratulates Professor Ian Frazer on this great honour", said ASMR President Professor Levon Khachigian. "It recognises Ian's pioneering work developing cervical cancer vaccines which have great potential to save countless lives around the world as well as hundreds of millions of dollars."

"That the Honour again has gone to a medical researcher sends a very clear message that Australians value home-grown advances in basic, clinical and public health research", said Professor Khachigian. "Medical research is a golden-egg. Access Economics has found that for every \$1 invested in medical research, there is between a \$5-8 per year return on that investment" .

Professor Khachigian cautioned that while it is gratifying that Australian medical research again has this recognition, public investment in medical research now lags well behind that of other OECD countries as a percentage of GDP.

"Unless we see a further increase in health research funding in the Federal budget in May, we genuinely risk losing the opportunity of capturing and building on investments already made", said Professor Khachigian. "Investing some of this year's projected budget surplus into Australian health research would be both visionary for our country's health and social well-being, and strengthen our knowledge-based economy. It is electorally-popular too".

Professor Khachigian can be contacted on 0405 540 010 or 02-9808 3305 at anytime.