

## Health and Medical Research in Australia: The State of Play

Australia's current investment into health and medical research through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) equates to 0.53% of total health expenditure.

The NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) primarily supports the fundamental discoveries which feed the pipeline to translation.

- Grants disbursed from the MREA are subject to rigorous peer review and return over \$3 in health and economic benefits for every \$1.00 invested.

The MRFF, announced in 2014, is declared to support research in the later stages of the discovery-to-translation pipeline.

- Grants for research funding disbursed from the MRFF are not necessarily subject to expert review.

Years of static investment into the NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account are having devastating impacts on the research workforce with the full-time NHMRC supported workforce declining by 20% between 2012 and 2017. It would seem unwise in terms of the health and economic wellbeing of Australians to allow this investment to continue to dwindle.

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR), today calls on government to –

- **Ensure transparency and an overarching principle of peer-review for MRFF disbursements**
- **Commit to an immediate increase of \$400 million to the NHMRC MREA to stabilise the workforce and offset any losses in future health gains**
- **Commit to incrementally increasing investment into health and medical research to 3% of total health expenditure**

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*Best research and health outcomes occur where transparency, discipline and independent expert review flourishes.*