

the Australian Society for Medical Research



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CAN AUSTRALIA REMAIN INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE AT CURRENT AND PROPOSED FUNDING LEVELS?

The Australian Society for Medical Research today welcomed the ALP commitment to continuity of funding through their proposed Telstra Reward Fund. *However, current and proposed levels of funding by the ALP and the Howard Government (May Budget) are insufficient to maintain an internationally competitive research industry.*

Health is an issue of critical importance to all Australians.

The H&MR (health medical research) Industry provides rewards in terms of better health, more jobs and export dollars. *Estimated savings from discoveries which enhance organ transplantation and the cause of stomach and duodenal ulcers alone, equal \$150-\$170million per annum.* H&MR does not receive investment similar to other technology driven industries, i.e. 5% of total expenditure. H&MR is not a charity; it doesn't need to be one.

The Australian Society for Medical Research calls upon the Howard Government and the ALP to address this imbalance. *There must be a bi-partisan commitment to increase investment in H&MR to 5% of the total health expenditure and a doubling of NHMRC funding over the next five years.* The cost of inaction will be a continuing increase in the number of important projects which remain unfunded *and* in the numbers of scientists forced to take their skills and passion for discovery to other countries.

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"ASMR welcomes the ALP commitment in terms of continuity of funding but it is not enough to allow Australia to remain internationally competitive; there must be more discussion on the level of funding" The ALP

platform is on the table, LP must also be – what are the plans for the next four years. The Liberal party do not have and industry policy for medical research."

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Steven Wesselingh, *President, ASMR* Tel. 08 8204 4284 Fax. 08 8276 8658
mislw@gamgee.cc.flinders.edu.au

Matthew Gillespie (Vic) *President Elect* Tel. 03 9288 2480 Fax. 03 9416 2676
m.gillespie@medicine.unimelb.edu.au

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