



The Australian Society for Medical Research

Thursday 13th January 2011

Media Release

“Framework for the Future – An Asia Pacific Health and Medical Research Funding Union”

The realisation of an Asia Pacific Health and Medical Research Funding Union (APHMRFU) drew one step closer last week with the release of a *Nature Medicine* journal article by Branwen Morgan reporting on the opportunities and challenges of such an initiative.

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) recently brought together an eminent panel to discuss the possibilities, opportunities and challenges presented by an APHMRFU. Speaking from Sydney today, the ASMR's immediate past president Dr Alison Butt said, *“We believe the opportunities for the region are several fold - not just through the enhanced capabilities for research, but through real opportunities to address the unique healthcare needs of our region.”*

“A regional funding alliance has the enormous potential to harness and develop the best talent in our region, to build essential capacity and capability both of workforce and infrastructure, leading to enhanced growth and competitiveness as well as enhanced scale and scope of the research effort.”

Dr Edison Liu, Executive Director of the Genome Institute of Singapore believes the proposed union is a possibility. The idea also has the support of Richard Woolcott, AC Former Secretary of the Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Trade, former Australian Ambassador to Indonesia and the Phillipines, former High Commissioner to Malaysia, Ghana and Singapore, who believes that there is a diplomatic way forward to bring together many countries in the region.

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence, ASMR President, will be moving the initiative forward over the next twelve months, primarily through existing organisations such as APEC and the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum. She said, *“We believe a regional funding partnership will be of great benefit to Australia and the Asia Pacific, improving health, stimulating growth and fostering economic stability. The European Union (27 countries) Framework 7 Program shows us what can be achieved through co-operation and collaboration.”*

“Many people believed the EU Framework Program was an impossible dream. It took 30 years to put into place and it is working. If we learn from the European experience, adapting ideas to suit our part of the world, we can create a workable Asia Pacific Health and Medical Research Funding Union within the next 10 years.”

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