

Media Release

May 10, 2011

ASMR WELCOMES BUDGET OUTCOME FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) congratulates the Gillard Government on protecting investment in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in what is undoubtedly, a difficult fiscal environment.

ASMR's President, Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence said, *"We are pleased that investment in NHMRC has not been cut. In the face of the ongoing global financial crisis and domestic environmental disasters affecting the lives of many Australians, we believe this outcome reflects the government's confidence in the health and medical research sector to underpin many aspects of the global and domestic recovery process"*.

Dr Parkinson-Lawrence went on to say, *"The health of Australians, young and old, is the business of the sector. Understanding disease helps us to prevent it, improving treatments helps us to limit its impact, screening strategies allow early intervention. Sometimes, we can do more than prevent and mitigate, cures are the reality for many diseases in 2011 and this is the result of health and medical research"*.

Australian health and medical research has a distinguished track record and the sector will continue to contribute provided investment in the critically important NHMRC keeps pace with the health needs of Australia.

Dr Parkinson-Lawrence said, *"We must face the challenges of an ageing population as well as the impacts of climate change. Sometimes people ask me why NHMRC is so important....the answer is that NHMRC funding supports the 'cream of the crop'. The best researchers, by world standards, conducting the research which saves lives. The tragedy is that, even with funding maintained in this most welcome announcement, in 2010 only those ranked 'outstanding' were funded while none of those ranked 'excellent' were funded. The world standard rankings are there, the funding pool just isn't large enough. How much more might we achieve?"*.

ASMR congratulates the Gillard Government on this welcome outcome and cautions that in the coming decades, innovative initiatives which link government investment in health and medical research to the health needs of the population will be an imperative to ensure a healthy and economically viable Australia.

Contact: Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence (ASMR President) 0400 635 822