

Media Release  
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**Medical Research Future Fund Bill  
ASMR Submission to the Senate Inquiry**

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR), has submitted four key recommendations to the senate inquiry into the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Bill. The ASMR strongly supports the establishment of the MRFF as a long-term strategy to secure the health and medical research sector, yet recommends some specific changes to administration, transparency and scope of the Fund. Specifically:

- All strategies and priorities for the MRFF should be established under the umbrella of existing National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Committee; sub-committee could be formed to provide additional expertise in innovation and commercialisation.
- All MRFF investment must be independently peer-reviewed by NHMRC.
- MRFF investment should be targeted with the purpose of 'value adding' to research already being funded by NHMRC.
- The fostering of research translation, clinical trials, innovative ideas and industry partnered grants should be considered for funding from the MRFF.

Speaking in Sydney today, Dr Phoebe Phillips, ASMR President, said

*"In addition to these changes to the MRFF, the ASMR urges the federal government to provide an immediate injection of \$300 million to the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA). Many may feel that the MRFF answers government responsibility in terms of investment into the sector. The truth is, investment into NHMRC has been declining in real terms for a number of years, so much so that we are at a critical point, losing expensively trained, highly skilled researchers to an extent that it may take years to recover the loss of valuable intellectual capital".*

Conservative extrapolations of economic benefits resulting from NHMRC investment in health R&D between 2000 and 2010, measured across only five disease groups (cardiovascular, cancer, SIDS, asthma and muscular dystrophy), predict:

- savings of \$966 million in direct and indirect health costs to the health system<sup>1</sup>
- gains in wellbeing valued at \$6 billion<sup>1</sup>
- commercial benefits across these disease groups of \$1.6 billion<sup>1</sup>

Dr Phillips said, *"The success of the MRFF rests upon the success of the NHMRC's MREA which underpins our ability to provide the health and medical research knowledge and basic discoveries to ensure integrated, effective and cost efficient health care delivery, preventative health measures and solid evidence base for clinical care".*

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte Access Economics, Returns on NHMRC funded R&D. In: 2011, <http://www.asmr.org.au/Publications.html>