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MEDIA RELEASE

RETAINING OUR HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH WORKFORCE

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) is pleased to announce the publication in the Medical Journal of Australia the results of a pilot study "**Perceptions of Health and Medical Research Careers: The Australian Society for Medical Research Workforce Survey**"

Australian health and medical research (HMR) ranks highly in the international research community with Australian publications in the top one per cent of most-cited articles.

The survey of nearly 400 health and medical research scientists gauged views on career and funding opportunities, salary and quality of working environment.

Dr Sarah Meachem, ASMR President-elect said today, "The sector provides exceptional returns on investment in terms of health and economic benefit. It is imperative to provide an environment which fosters the retention of our skilled HMR workforce".

A key finding of the survey is that employment insecurity and a lack of funding are causing considerable anxiety among Australian health and medical researchers.

"Australia makes a considerable investment in training this valuable human resource. It makes good sense to protect the asset from erosion of intellectual capacity and return on investment.

Factors influencing decisions about whether to leave HMR included shortage of funding (91%), lack of career development (78%) and poor financial rewards (72%).

Other key findings of the study included:

- 6% of respondents had left active research in the past five years;
- 73% had considered leaving;
- 57% were directly supported by grants or fellowships;
- 16% were not reliant on grants for their continuing employment;
- 62% believed funding had increased in the past five years yet only 30% perceived an increase in employment opportunities in HMR; and
- Twice as many men as women have post-graduate qualifications and earned \$100,000 a year or more.

Contact: Dr Sarah Meachem 0412 640 774