

# the Australian Society *for* Medical Research



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## Media Releases

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January, 1996

### **VOTERS EXPECT MAJOR BOOST TO MEDICAL RESEARCH**

Australians across the board want to see major increases in support for health and medical research as part of their preferred party's election commitments, according to national opinion poll results released today.

The Newspoll telephone poll of 1200 people was conducted last month for the Australian Society for Medical Research.

It found that half of those polled (52%) felt that Australia did not do enough health and medical research, while only one quarter (27%) thought the amount was sufficient and only one per cent (1%) felt it was too much.

In a strong message to the ALP and Coalition parties, 80% said they would be concerned (including 37% very concerned) if their preferred party did not advocate major increases in support for medical research.

Almost eighty percent of those polled preferred that the Government, rather than private industry or donations, take the main burden of funding more health and medical research

Australians currently pay about six cents per person each day for government-funded medical research. On average, those polled were prepared to pay around five cents per day extra in taxes to support health and medical research.

"There are important messages in these results for all parties," said Dr Graham Mann, President of the Australian Society for Medical Research. "Australia's health and medical research effort matters to the vast majority of Australians, and they are expecting Government to give it much stronger support than it currently receives."

"The Australian people see a clear connection between the effort we make in health and medical research, and the quality and cost-effectiveness of our health care," said Dr Mann. "Health is a major political concern for Australians, and they understand that without a strong research capability, our ability to deliver better health cannot be up to scratch."

"It's up to the parties now to produce policies that will deliver a major boost to Australia's health and medical research effort. The taxpayers and the voters are clearly keen for that to happen."

This poll was conducted on the weekend of December 8-10, 1995 by Newspoll. Respondents were asked about their attitudes to Australian medical research, meaning all research aimed at improving health and the prevention and treatment of disease.

More than 90% believed that health and medical research was important in improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care in Australia. Eighty-five percent indicated the amount of medical research done in Australia mattered to them personally, with two-thirds (64%) saying it mattered a lot.

These results were very consistent across age groups, sex, income level and voting intention.

**Dr Graham Mann**  
**President**  
**Australian Society for Medical Research**

The poll was carried out with the financial assistance of:

Deans of the Faculties of Medicine at Monash University, University of Sydney, Flinders University, University of Western Australia and University of Melbourne; and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, A & NZ College of Anaesthetists, Australian College of Paediatrics and Royal A & NZ College of Psychiatrists, Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

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