

Medical Research Future Fund



Medical Research Future Fund – Regional Benefits

INVESTMENT

The Government is doubling investment in health and medical research through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). The first MRFF disbursements will inject **\$65.9 million** into eight strategic programs that will benefit all Australians, including those living in regional Australia.

KEY ELEMENTS

- **\$20 million** for preventive health and research translation projects including support for Advanced Health and Research Translation Centres and new Centres for Innovation in Regional Health.
- **\$33 million** for clinical trials that will build on Australia's world class research strengths, support access to clinical trials for people living in regional areas and build regional research capacity.
- **\$12.9 million** for breakthrough research that drives cutting edge science and accelerates research on new treatments and cures.

RATIONALE

- There are unique challenges in providing healthcare to regional and remote Australia.
- The health of Australians in rural, remote, and regional areas is generally poorer than their counterparts living in urban areas.
- The Australian Medical Research Advisory Board that supports the MRFF acknowledges in their Strategy the impact of location (urban, regional and remote) on healthcare access and outcomes.
- Location, together with cultural and socio-economic factors, is an important consideration in research investment, design, application and translation into clinical practice.
- Many people living in regional Australia do not have access to clinical trials of new breakthrough medicines, therapies and devices.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A stronger, sustainable health system, capable of addressing disease complexity, ageing and chronic conditions, lifestyle behaviours, new technologies, communicable diseases, and increasing consumer expectations.
- A balance of long-term research and quick win programs that improve health system efficiency, patient care and access, health outcomes, and innovation in health.

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND

The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) demonstrates the Government's strong commitment to research and innovation. The MRFF provides a long term sustainable source of funding for endeavours that aim to improve health outcomes, quality of life and health system sustainability.

The MRFF will double direct Australian Government funding for health and medical research.

The MRFF is a dedicated vehicle for priority investment in health and medical research.

The MRFF, established under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*, provides grants of financial assistance to support health and medical research and innovation in improving the health and wellbeing of Australians. It operates as an endowment fund with the capital preserved in perpetuity. At maturity, the MRFF will reach \$20 billion.

The first disbursements from the MRFF focus on translating research into real health benefits, breakthrough investments in new technologies and challenges, and enhancing Australia's reputation for research excellence and leadership.

Over \$65 million will be injected into a range of programs that cut across the research pipeline – fuelling new discoveries and the translation and commercialisation of great Australian ideas.





KEY FACTS

- Regional Australia experiences higher rates of injury and greater levels of chronic diseases and preventable lifestyle diseases.
- The MRFF will provide opportunities for talented researchers living and working in regional Australia through access to research grants and fellowships.
- Under clinical trial programs new and innovative recruitment approaches will be encouraged to help regional Australians access the benefits of emerging therapies, drugs and devices.
- The *Rapid Applied Research Translation* investment will specifically harness accredited and internationally recognised Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres (AHRTCs) with expertise in rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health – like the whole-of-state South Australian AHRTC.
- AHRTCs are health service led collaborations involving universities, medical research institutes, hospitals, primary care networks and community services working on priority driven research agendas.
- AHRTCs have the end users of research – patients – front of mind, and will implement projects that are practical, scalable and solve every day healthcare problems.
- The soon to be announced Centres for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRH, related AHRTC entities) will ensure a concerted focus on regional Australian health needs and service improvements.
- A key element of the AHRTCs and CIRHs investment is improving the health of vulnerable groups, including those experiencing health inequities due to location, cultural or socio-economic disadvantage.

IMPLEMENTATION

- A variety of mechanisms will be deployed to implement the eight new MRFF research programs, including open and targeted grant opportunities for clinical trials and registries.
- The expertise of the National Health and Medical Research Council will be used to assist in administration of programs where appropriate.
- Agreed project plans for the AHRTCs and associated CIRHs will focus on three key program elements: clinical pathways and care transition, clinical variation and improving the health of vulnerable groups.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Australian Medical Research Advisory Board, established in accordance with the *MRFF Act*, is responsible for consulting on and developing a five-yearly Strategy that sets out the vision, aims and objectives for the MRFF and an accompanying two-yearly list of Priorities. The Government must consider the Strategy and Priorities in making MRFF investment decisions.

STRATEGY 2016-2021

VISION: A health system fully informed by quality health and medical research.

Identifies key strategic investment platforms that set to position Australia to meet future healthcare challenges:

- Strategic and international horizons
- Data and infrastructure
- Health services and systems research
- Capacity and collaboration
- Trials and translation
- Commercialisation

PRIORITIES 2016-2018

The first MRFF disbursements address identified Priorities under each strategic platform, are a mix of strategic investments, and use a range of administrative mechanisms to maximise impact. More disbursements will occur in 2017-18.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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