

Medical Research Future Fund



Lifting Clinical Trials and Registries Capacity – Clinical Trials Networks

INVESTMENT

The Australian Government will invest **\$5 million** over four years (from 2016-17) for a national alliance partner to build the capacity of existing and new Clinical Trials Networks (CTNs).

KEY ELEMENTS

CTNs are networks of investigators and service providers that work together to identify and evaluate new approaches to optimise healthcare effectiveness.

A national alliance partner will work with CTNs to strengthen sector capability, maximise collaboration, embed clinical trial best practice and professional support, and foster leadership and knowledge exchange across disciplines and health service sites.

RATIONALE

- CTNs currently operate as the backbone of the investigator-initiated, public good clinical trials sector. They work to identify important research questions, and test the effectiveness of existing and new clinical practice.
- CTNs can return significant dividends in terms of improved clinical trial productivity, improved outcomes for patients and cost savings to the health system.
- Australian CTNs are internationally recognised and capacity support will empower them to investigate vitally important questions about clinical care.
- Clinical trial activity is set to increase in Australia with additional investment under the MRFF making it important to have strong CTNs in place.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Enhanced access and patient recruitment to clinical trials across Australia.
- Deployment of innovative trial designs and recruitment strategies.
- Purposeful health service engagement to improve the translation of research into practice and improve outcomes for patients.
- Improved design, quality and efficiency of clinical trials and networks in Australia.
- Reinforcement of Australia's position as a preferred destination for clinical trials.

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

- Clinical trials are research investigations that evaluate whether a medical strategy, treatment, drug or device is safe and effective for humans.
- Clinical trials provide the evidence to inform best practice. They also offer participants opportunities to benefit from the latest medical research and provide legitimate alternative therapy options.
- CTNs are collaborative groups of doctors, nurses, allied health and research professionals that come together to identify important clinical questions and design large multi-centre clinical trials to answer them.
- CTNs build the evidence about which treatments work, which don't and which are most cost-effective in the real-world context of clinical practice.
- Recent estimates indicate that implementing the results of high impact trials conducted by CTNs can provide a return of \$5.80 for every research dollar invested through improved health outcomes and avoided future healthcare costs.
- The long-term collaborations that CTNs establish help to build world-class Australian expertise in the design and conduct of clinical trials.
- The Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) is the national peak body of more than 50 CTNs, clinical trial coordinating centres and clinical quality registries across Australia that cover a large number of clinical specialties and disease-specific areas.
- This investment strategically builds on the Government's 2016 *Encouraging more clinical trials in Australia* initiative that seeks to streamline trial operations to improve start-up and recruitment efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION

- ACTA will serve as the CTN national alliance partner over the next four years.
- ACTA will analyse the CTN landscape and identify network priorities and implement a national capability building framework.
- ACTA will support existing and assist in establishing new CTNs.
- ACTA will facilitate cross-sector collaboration to advance novel methodologies and technologies that support the conduct of well designed, high impact investigator-initiated clinical trials.

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. 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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