

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000813

OUTCOME: 1 - Health System Policy, Design and Innovation

Topic: MRFF

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

- a) What was the process for deciding the first disbursements for the Medical Research Future Fund? Was there a call for applications? Applications? Who were the decision-makers?
- b) The MRFF measure says these disbursements “will be consistent with the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2016-18, which have been identified by the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board”. Did the Board specifically recommend these disbursements? Or did the Government identify them?
- c) Can you please provide a breakdown of funding by specific project?
- d) The Government promised that the MRFF would disburse \$1 billion a year. The Budget papers show that won't happen over the next five years – when will it happen?
- e) Can you guarantee that the MRFF will disburse \$1 billion a year?

Answer:

- a) As prescribed by the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*, the first disbursements from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) were guided by the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-2021* and related *Priorities 2016-2018*. These documents were prepared following a national consultation by the independent Australian Medical Research Advisory Board. Decisions on how MRFF funds are disbursed are that of the Australia Government. The first disbursement package includes eight strategic programs that utilise a range of market approaches including open and targeted calls for applications, and direct sourcing expert entities.
- b) In considering the program structure for the first MRFF disbursement, the Australian Government referenced the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-2021* and related *Priorities 2016-2018* developed by the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board and consulted with the Advisory Board to ensure program alignment. Final program-level funding decisions were a matter for Government.
- c) Please refer to Attachment A.
- d) In the 2014-15 Budget, the Government announced that payments from the MRFF were expected to reach around \$1 billion per year from 2022-23.
- e) Please refer to the response to part d) above.

Breakdown of MRFF funding

MRFF Investment	Summary	MRFF Priorities Addressed	2016-17 (\$m)	2017-18 (\$m)	2018-19 (\$m)	2019-20 (\$m)	2020-21 (\$m)	TOTAL (\$m)
Boosting preventive health research	Support work conducted by The Australian Preventive Health Partnership Centre (TAPPC) to generate low-cost, translatable and scalable interventions to promote the adoption of good health practices, prevent disease and keep people out of hospital.	Behavioural economics application; Targeted translation topics	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Rapid applied research translation	Support for Advanced Health and Research Translation Centres (AHRTCs) and new Centres for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRHs) as accredited by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to conduct collaborative research into clinical variation, care pathways and transition and access to care for vulnerable populations.	Targeted translation topics	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Lifting clinical trials and registries capacity	Support for the Australian Clinical Trial Alliance to build the capacity of existing and new clinical trial networks and further strengthen the clinical trial sector.	Clinical quality registries; Clinical trial network; Public good demonstration trials	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	0.0	5.0
	A competitive open grant program to support clinical trials and registry activity that seeks to address areas of health burden and unmet need. Novel and innovation methodologies will also be encouraged, such as the application of precision medicine.		13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Next generation clinical researchers	Additional support to ensure supply of high quality next generation research talent through boosting the scale of existing NHMRC fellowship schemes.	Clinical researcher fellowships	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Accelerated Research Investment	Funding to CanTeen to facilitate new clinical trial activity to support adolescent and young adult cancer patients.	Public good demonstration trial	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Funding to Cure4MND (Motor Neuron Disease) Foundation to increase clinical trial activity to test the viability of repurposed drugs with potential.		2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
National security against pandemic risk	International contribution to the Centre for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovations (CEPI) to expedite vaccine development and better prepare, rather than react, to epidemics.	International collaborative research	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	Targeted Call for Research into advance novel treatments and point-of-care technologies to address AMR.	Antimicrobial resistance	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9
Biotech Horizons	Biotech Generator Grant Program to support biotechnologies discoveries of potential that require a boost to get to the proof-of-concept stage. Initial technologies of interest include precision medicine and 3D anatomic printing.	Disruptive technology	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
TOTAL			60.9	2.5	1.5	1.0	0.0	65.9

