



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
www.imagineahealthierfuture.org

TWEET #ActionMRFF



Australia leading the world in
medical breakthroughs with the
Medical Research Future Fund



**MEDICAL
RESEARCH
FUTURE FUND**



“INVESTING IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH IS ABOUT BETTER HEALTH AND WELLBEING, GREATER PRODUCTIVITY AND A STRONGER ECONOMY, AND GIVING HOPE TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR WHICH RESEARCH IS THE ONLY HOPE”

– Professor Christine Bennett AO, Chair, Research Australia

TRUE VISION FOR THE *future*

Foreword by Mr Peter Scott, MRFF Action Group Chair and Chairman, Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute, alongside Alastair Lucas, MRFF Action Group Founding Chair and Chairman, Burnet Institute.

The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) is the single most important initiative in Australia's history to cement the country's position as a leader in medical research, and through this, will transform the health and prosperity of our nation.

Australian health and medical research has extended lives and reduced suffering in Australia and across the world. The MRFF will allow us to keep doing so, driving the efficiency, effectiveness and long-term sustainability of our healthcare system - improving our health, reducing the burden of disease for the more than seven million Australians living with a chronic illness, and curtailing spiralling healthcare costs.

Health and medical research is not just about researchers in lab coats, but translates right through to preventing illness and implementing new treatments, devices and practices in the clinic and community.

Hospitals and primary healthcare providers with active research provide more effective care, and nations strong in research have better tailored solutions and safeguards.

Despite the excellence of Australian health and medical research, and the proven return on investment that it provides, government support for health and medical research currently lags behind international benchmarks.

The Federal Government's budget initiative to build a \$20 billion publicly-owned perpetual endowment fund over the next decade would help secure funding for health and medical research into the future. As proposed, the MRFF will eventually deliver \$1 billion in annual funding for health and medical research. It is vital that the size and pace of the MRFF be achieved to prevent us falling further behind other nations.

The MRFF has the potential to have a transformational impact on the country's long-term future, with ramifications extending far beyond the nation's health.

As well as improving the health of current and future generations through better health policies, technologies and medicines, the MRFF would drive economic outcomes by improving workforce participation and productivity. It would help grow Australia's medicines industry, currently worth \$4 billion in annual exports, and attract private investment to Australia.

The MRFF would create high-value jobs, and improve the lives and livelihoods of some of our most disadvantaged and chronically ill by helping them to prevent, manage and overcome illness.

Imagine

THE POTENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

Why HERE AND NOW?

AUSTRALIA NEEDS THE MRFF TO ENSURE WE BUILD ON OUR TRACK RECORD TO LEAD, RATHER THAN FALL BEHIND IN HEALTH INNOVATION.



Access Economics estimates that every \$1 invested in Australian health and medical research generates an average return of \$2.17 in health benefits to the nation.

While our scientists and researchers are dedicated and talented, Australia has fallen behind the pace when it comes to research funding.

The Australian Government invests 0.075% of GDP in health and medical research, just 64% of the OECD average.

Australia needs a perpetual fund to support health and medical research – we do not have the equivalent of the Wellcome Trust, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute or a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, philanthropic organisations that have been defining bodies for research in the UK and US.

It is vital that the full scale of the MRFF be achieved to bring Australia back to an internationally comparable level of government support, and to secure sustainable funding for the next generation of discoveries and inventions.

“THIS CAMPAIGN IS UNPRECEDENTED IN ITS SCALE, BRINGING TOGETHER EVERY FACET OF THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY. IT EMPHASISES THE POTENTIAL OF THE MRFF TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF AUSTRALIANS AND OUR NATION’S FUTURE”

– Professor Brendan Crabb, President, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes



“THE MRFF WILL SECURE AUSTRALIA’S FUTURE AS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO ADVANCES IN HEALTH AND MEDICINE. IT WILL PROVIDE CAREER SECURITY FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIAN RESEARCHERS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE CHOOSE TO FULFIL THEIR CAREERS OVERSEAS. IMPORTANTLY, **BY ALLOWING AUSTRALIA TO MAINTAIN AND HOPEFULLY ENHANCE ITS REPUTATION FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE, IT WILL ASSIST OUR LEADING UNIVERSITIES IN ATTRACTING FEE PAYING STUDENTS FROM OVERSEAS.**”

– Professor Bruce Robinson AM, Chair, Group of Eight Universities Deans of Medicine Committee



Australia HAS THE POTENTIAL

Australia’s breakthroughs are renowned. From the invention of the cochlear implant to “spray-on skin” and the development of the cervical cancer vaccine and a cure for peptic ulcers, Australia’s health and medical research has changed lives for the better around the world.

For every famous research breakthrough, however, there are hundreds more. Other Australian discoveries include:

- The invention of foetal ultrasound, which is now used worldwide
- The link between a baby’s sleeping position and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Proving an increase in folate consumption during pregnancy reduces spina bifida
- The use of lithium as a treatment for mania
- The link between analgesic use and severe kidney disease
- The discovery of colony stimulating factors’ (CSFs) role in restoring white blood cell counts to normal post-chemotherapy. More than 20 million cancer patients have received CSFs
- The development of a “continuous automatic positive airways pressure kit”, or CPAP, to prevent the upper airways of those with sleep apnea from closing
- The invention of the first bionic eye

Imagine what we can achieve with the MRFF...

**IMAGINE VACCINES. IMAGINE FREEDOM FROM PAIN.
IMAGINE CURES WITHIN OUR REACH.**



Imagine
a healthier
future.

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND

The MRFF as proposed will build to a \$20 billion publicly-owned, perpetual endowment fund over the next decade. Earnings from the fund will support health and medical research, beginning at \$20 million in 2015-16, and progressively increasing to \$1 billion per annum by 2022-23.

It's not just the amount of money that's important; the type of fund is also significant. A perpetual endowment fund endures, providing secure and sustainable funding. We have seen the tremendous impact similar funds have had in the UK and US.

The growth of disbursements over the next decade would progressively grow medical research in our hospitals, clinics, medical research institutes and universities, to better the health outcomes of Australians.

Medical research is Australia's best "smart industry", employing 23,000 research professionals who support a medicines industry of more than 40,000. Not only do they improve lives, they represent commercial success for the Australian economy, driving Australia's largest export industry.

The MRFF means we can build on a solid foundation to ensure Australia reaps the rewards in future health and wealth.



Imagine

"THE MRFF PROVIDES A SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH THAT WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR BOTH THE HEALTH OF OUR POPULATION AND FOR OUR ECONOMY."

– Dr Chris Roberts, CEO & President, Cochlear Limited



Cathy's STORY

Imagine having a stroke at age 43

Cathy Starkey, ever the optimist, promised to bring home some take-away for her two kids after popping in to her GP.

A fortnight later, from her bed in an acute stroke ward, she reflected on her strange behaviour that day.

Cathy had, in fact, suffered two strokes separated by a couple of days. Her language was a little muddled, her gait changed and she couldn't drive properly. But still the alarm bells didn't ring. Her son thought she was acting a bit funny and her work colleagues shrugged-off her changed behaviour because she did.

On that fateful day Cathy, an accountant, sat at her desk after her second stroke (which occurred during her lunch hour) and continued to work on international trade figures. On her way home, she visited the GP and within an hour was in an emergency department being treated for two strokes. There was to be no take-away that night.

After analysing her MRI scans, doctors were astonished she had been able to function given the extent of damage to her brain.

"I look back and remember having a sense that something wasn't quite right – but I simply didn't take it seriously. My decision-making capacity was impaired," Cathy says.

As a cancer survivor, with many associated health issues, Cathy was reluctant to make a fuss. But her message to others is clear. Make a fuss. Act quickly.



Cathy joined a Melbourne-based stroke study in November 2013, and since then has completed two sessions, undergoing MRI scans and detailed cognitive assessments.

The study aims to measure any changes in brain volume and thinking skills over time, with the data being used to determine if stroke patients are more likely to develop dementia than healthy people.

If they are more vulnerable to dementia, the research will provide a shift in the way stroke patients are assisted in the years following their strokes.

According to research fellow Dr Amy Brodtmann, who is leading the study at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, people typically have problems with thinking, speech and memory immediately after a stroke - but they usually recover.

"But one in three stroke survivors - even those who make a good recovery - slides into dementia," Dr Brodtmann says.

"It might take two or three years to occur and the reasons have never been explained. The Florey is trying to find out why it happens and how we might intervene to help those likely to suffer."

THE IMAGINE A HEALTHIER FUTURE CAMPAIGN IS SUPPORTED BY:

Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes

AusBiotech

Australian Society for Medical Research

Group of Eight Universities Australia

Group of Eight Deans of Medicine Committee

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand

Research Australia



MRFF ACTION GROUP MEMBERS

Founding Chair: Mr Alastair Lucas, Chairman, Burnet Institute

Chair: Mr Peter Scott, Chairman, Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute

Deputy Chair: Mr Matthew Grounds, Chairman, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

Deputy Chair: Mr Ian Smith, Board Member, Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute

Professor Christine Bennett, Chair, Research Australia

Professor Brendan Crabb, President, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes

Professor Les Field, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of New South Wales

Professor Nicholas Fisk, Executive Dean (Medicine & Biomedical Sciences), University of Queensland

Professor Doug Hilton, Director, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Professor Jim McCluskey, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Melbourne

Dr Chris Roberts, CEO & President, Cochlear Limited

Professor Bruce Robinson, Chair, Group of Eight Universities Deans of Medicine Committee

Professor Peter Smith, President, Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand

CONTACT THE MRFF ACTION GROUP

Rebecca Thorpe • Communications Officer

Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes | aamri

t: 03 9345 2921 • e: rebecca.thorpe@aamri.org.au