1. **AAMRI news** – AAMRI Submission on IRIISS funding rules, meetings in Canberra and more

1.1 **AAMRI submission on IRIISS funding rules**

The NHMRC is proposing changes to the funding rules for the Independent Research Institutes Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRISS), the national scheme to help independent medical research institutes meet their overhead costs (e.g. lab equipment, electricity, admin and support staff, ethics approvals, etc.).

AAMRI's submission on the proposed new funding rules is available on our [website](#).

1.2 **AAMRI President in Canberra**

AAMRI's President, Prof Brendan Crabb, had a busy month discussing AAMRI’s budget submission and medical research policy with key Parliamentarians and Government representatives in Canberra. AAMRI's budget submission can be found on our [website](#). The federal budget will be handed down on 13 May.

1.3 **AAMRI submission on changes to 'in Australia’ tax legislation - in progress**

AAMRI is again working with Research Australia around proposed amendments to the new exposure draft of the 'in Australia' special conditions for income tax exempt entities and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) charities (including medical research institutes, hospitals and universities). The legislation stipulates that DGR charities must generally operate and pursue their purposes solely in Australia (with some exceptions).
AAMRI and Research Australia collectively worked with the previous Government to have relevant medical research institutes exempted from having to conduct their activities solely in Australia. However, the latest draft of the legislation has altered the way it deals with this exemption of medical research institutes. AAMRI and Research Australia will make submissions and consult with the Government regarding the exemption of medical research institutes from the ‘in Australia’ requirements.

2. Government update

2.1 A big month for science and research in Parliament

- **This year’s Science Meets Parliament event** (17-18 March), organised by Science & Technology Australia, saw 200 researchers gather at Parliament House to engage with politicians and learn more about the Parliamentary process. Politicians, journalists, academics, bureaucrats and special interest group representatives participated in the event.

- **The Prime Minister showed his support for medical research in March:** In the [Ministerial Statement on Deregulation](#) (19 March), the Prime Minister asked, ‘Why should Australian medical researchers collectively put 500 years of work into preparing grant applications - of which only 20 per cent succeed?’ and stated, ‘Soon, NHMRC grants will run for five years - not three - so that successful medical researchers will spend less time filing out forms’. At the opening of the new Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research building on 11 March, the Prime Minister stated that he ‘was determined to be the Prime Minister for medical research in the months and years to come.’

- **The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Leader of the Opposition, called for a new ‘national commitment to science and innovation’** in his Science Meets Parliament speech.

- **The Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, Minister for Industry, discussed strengthening connections between research and industry** in his speech at the same event.

- **The Senate passed the Greens motion to maintain Government funding for research in the budget** and lift overall Australian R&D to 3% of GDP. The Greens also launched their Respect Research campaign.

- **Prof Ian Chubb, Australian Chief Scientist, encouraged scientists ‘to better explain ideas to engage MPs’** during the Science Meets Parliament Press Club address.

2.2 New Shadow Assistant Minister for Health appointed

Federal Labor MP Stephen Jones has been appointed new Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, replacing the Hon Melissa Parke MP, who recently stepped down.

2.3 Repeal of ACNC Act - in progress

The Government has introduced the first of two Bills to [repeal the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) Act](#), and replace the ACNC with a National Centre for Excellence. The first Bill repealing the ACNC Act will not take effect until the enactment of a later Bill (expected in the May-July sittings of Parliament), which provides details of the arrangements to replace the ACNC with a National Centre for Excellence.
It is expected that regulatory functions previously transferred to the ACNC from the ATO and ASIC will return to those bodies.

For those medical research institutes with a financial reporting period of 1 July - 30 June, your 2013 ACNC Annual Information Statement was due by today, 31 March. Organisations missing their deadline will receive a final reminder from the ACNC prior to any penalties being applied.

2.4 Commercialisation Australia grants on hold

Commercialisation Australia is not accepting or processing applications or requests for funding extensions while the Government reviews funding arrangements ahead of the budget.

3. NHMRC & ARC

3.1 **Request for Feedback** - Survey on streamlined NHMRC Project Grant applications

A team of QUT researchers is requesting researchers to take 5-10 minutes of their time to provide anonymous feedback on their experience of preparing the new streamlined 2014 NHMRC Project Grant applications. The survey is open to all researchers, not just those who submitted an application in 2014. The information will inform a new study on the NHMRC grant application process. This is the same research team that published a Nature paper last year on time wasted applying for grants and recently published in BMJ Open about researchers’ experience of applying for funding.

Further info and the survey available here.

3.2 **Consultation** - Review of ethical guidelines for assisted reproductive technology

The NHMRC is conducting a review of Part B of the Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Clinical Practice and Research, 2007. Submissions close 30 April. Further info available here.

3.3 Updates to NHMRC funding rules and guidelines

- Read changes to the NHMRC Project Grants Peer Review Guidelines (p. 3). Significant changes include: Not for Further Consideration (NFFC) process to identify the least competitive 50% of applications; external assessors to provide written assessments but not scores; and removal of the final ranking process.

- Wording of the Early Career Fellowship (ECF) funding rules relating to qualification eligibility has been amended to provide clarification around the policy’s intent. A brief summary of all changes to the ECF funding rules can also be found here.

- New Ethical Considerations in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Activities has been released by the NHMRC to assist institutions in deciding the appropriate level of oversight for quality assurance and evaluation.

- New ‘opt out’ approach to recruiting participants in human research has been added to the updated National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
4. Sector news

4.1 Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research: new building and Director

The Prime Minister officially opened the new Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research (formerly WA Institute of Medical Research) building at the QEII Medical Centre in Perth on 11 March. Click [here](#) to read his speech. You can also read the WA State Government release [here](#).

We also welcome new Director of the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, Professor Peter Leedman, and farewell outgoing Director, Professor Peter Klinken.

4.2 Telethon Institute for Child Health Research now the Telethon Kids Institute

The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research has changed its name and look to reflect its new business model. It is now known as the [Telethon Kids Institute](#).

4.3 Interim Director for Queensland Children’s Medical Research Institute (QCMRI)

We farewell outgoing Director of QCMRI, Professor Keith Grimwood, and welcome the Interim Director, Professor Claire Wainwright.

4.4 Australian Academy of Science (AAS) Fellows and Honorific Awards announced

Congratulations to the 21 researchers elected to the Australian Academy of Science Fellowship. See the full list of new fellows [here](#).

Congratulations to Simon McKeon AO, awarded the 2014 Academy Medal for contributions to science by means other than the conduct of scientific research. See the full list of recipients of Academy honorific awards for scientific excellence [here](#).

4.5 Biomedical Research Victoria launched

[Biomedical Research Victoria](#) (the next phase of the Bio21 Cluster), launched on 17 March, is a state-wide organisation representing hospitals, universities, medical research institutes, CSIRO and other organisations whose scientists make up the medical research community across Victoria. It provides a mechanism for research organisations to work effectively with Government to create policies, infrastructure and a supportive environment.

4.6 Data submission support

A team of 'data chaperones' has been established at the Bioinformatics Resource Australia EMBL (BRAEMBL). They offer a fast track data submission service to various public databases, as well as curation support. In addition, the team offers local expertise to the content and services of many other European Bioinformatic Institute (EBI) resources. All services are supported by a team of species specialists and developers. For more information contact: [datasubs@braembl.org.au](mailto:datasubs@braembl.org.au) or visit their [website](#).
5. Reports and resources

Royal Society Open Science - this is a new open access journal with some important distinguishing features: (A) ‘objective peer review’ (i.e. publishing all articles which are scientifically sound, leaving any judgement of importance or potential impact to the reader); (B) No restrictions on scope, length or impact; (C) articles will embody open data principles; (D) post-publication comments will be encouraged. Royal Society Open Science welcomes the submission of all high quality science including articles which may usually be difficult to publish elsewhere, for example, those that include negative findings.

Women in Science - A new interactive tool from UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Presents the latest available data for countries at all stages of development. The tool lets you explore and visualise gender gaps in the pipeline leading to a research career, from the decision to get a doctorate degree to the fields of science that women pursue and the sectors in which they work.

Queensland Science Capability Directory - This online directory provides information on the state's key research capabilities, science expertise, and collaboration and investment opportunities.

Controlling Costly Care: a billion dollar hospital opportunity - This report by The Grattan Institute suggests that a better pricing system for public hospital treatment could show where costs are too high, and free up $1 billion for more and better health care.

AIHW Health Expenditure in Australia 2011 - 2012 Report - This report provides key trends on health expenditure in Australia from 2001-02 to 2011-12. Highlights include: while health spending in Australia has risen markedly in the last decade, the increases have not been even across all sectors, or across states and territories; and Australian Government funding directed towards primary health care has risen, while the share directed towards hospitals has fallen.

AIHW Health Expenditure Australia 2011-12: analysis by sector - This report extends the analysis of the above report to further explore expenditure on particular categories of health goods and services (e.g. hospitals, primary health care, other recurrent health expenditure).

AIHW Health Care Expenditure on Cardiovascular Diseases 2008-09 - The report estimates that $7.6 billion was spent on cardiovascular disease (including coronary heart disease, stroke and other CVDs) in 2008-09 in Australia, accounting for 12% of all health expenditure, and the highest expenditure of any disease group.

Cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia: an overview - This publication brings together the most up-to-date data available from a wide range of sources to describe the status of cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

ABS Cause of Death Data 2012 - This publication presents trend data on the number of deaths in Australia by gender, age groups and cause of death. For example, the proportion of deaths caused by heart disease has fallen from 22.2% in 1998 to 13.6% in 2012.

Review of pharmaceutical patents in Australia - This review was commissioned by the previous government and undertaken by an independent panel.

Healthcare-associated staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infections in 2012-13 - This report was prepared by the National Health Performance Authority and shows that there were 1,724 cases of the potentially deadly Staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infection acquired through public hospitals in 2012–13.
6. Funding & award opportunities

National Science Week - 16 - 24 August, 2014. Grants for holding events in Queensland, NSW and Tasmania are now open.

The Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science are considered the nation’s finest for excellence in science and science teaching. Stage one nominations close 29 May.

Dementia Research Foundation Grants - The 2014 Dementia Grants Program includes project grants, fellowships, travel awards and PhD scholarships for new investigators (i.e. researchers who have not been a principal investigator on a grant worth more than $50 K, excluding scholarships and fellowships, and within 8 years of being awarded their PhD). First round applications close 4 April.

EMBL Australia PhD travel grants - Provide up to $3,500 for short trips of less than 6 weeks, or up to $7,500 for a longer visit of up to 6 months. Applications for travel between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2014 are due by 4 April.


Queensland Government’s Accelerate Partnerships - Queensland researchers, scientists and their commercial partners are encouraged to apply for grants of up to $500,000 under this new science and research funding program. Applications close 14 April.

Queensland Government’s Accelerate Fellowships - For early career and mid-career researchers. Applications close 22 April.

Australian Academy of Science Awards

- Honorific awards for scientific excellence - Nominations for a range of honorific awards are due by 17 April.

- Funding for research conferences - Expressions of Intent are due by 30 July.

- Research Awards - Applications due by 30 July.

- Travelling Fellowships - Several travelling fellowship programs are open, with applications due 30 July.

- France-Australia Science Innovation Collaboration Program - Up to $6,000 for travel by early career researchers to France; applications close 4 April.

L’Oreal Australia & NZ for Women in Science Fellowships - These fellowships are awarded to three early-career female researchers. Nominations close 16 April.

AIPS Young Tall Poppy Science Awards - Are now open for all states. Close 27 April.

National Foundation for Medical Research and Innovation Grants - General expressions of interest for the infectious diseases grant announced with Biosecurity NSW close 30 April. General expressions of interest for all other NFMRI general research grant applications also close 30 April.
**Australian Museum Eureka Prizes** - Include prizes for research and innovation; leadership and commercialisation; science communication and journalism; and school science. Note to early career researchers - criteria for the early career researcher prize have been broadened to include 5 years post-phD. Nominations close 2 May.

**Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in Science and Science Education** - This Award recognises students, teachers, support officers, schools and science education partners. Applications close 2 May.

**Diabetes Australia Research Program** - This year the Diabetes Australia Research (DART) program will provide over $3.5 million to vital diabetes research projects across Australia. Projects focused on behavioural research, self management education/support, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and cultural diversity are encouraged. Applications are due by no later than 5 May.

**RACGP Foundation Research Grants and Awards** - A diverse range of grants are available. Applications close 5 May.

**Gates Foundation: Grand Challenges in Global Health** - Grand Challenges Explorations Round 13 is now open across a range of topics, including Measuring foetal and infant brain development, Inciting health behaviours, Interventions for Enteric Dysfunction and more. Closes 6 May, 11.30am Pacific Daylight Time.

**veski innovation fellowships** (Vic only) - Includes new bioengineering category; open to Australian and non-Australian Researchers. Closes 21 May.

**Perpetual Trustees Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Grants** - Applications for the Ramaciotti Establishment Grants and Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research in 2014 close on 30 May.

**Next round of CRC bids** - Closes 3 July. Register your interest for an information session [here](#).

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7. **Upcoming conferences & events**

**Save the Date: AAMRI 2014 National Convention, Canberra, 27-28 October**. The AAMRI Convention is a free event for AAMRI member organisations only. We encourage MRI Directors to attend and to invite a representative from their Board, their COO and/or another member of their executive (e.g. CFO, Deputy Director).

**Media training for scientists** - by Science in Public. Various dates throughout Australia.

**World Congress of Cardiology 2014** - Melbourne, 4-7 May

**CRC Association National Conference** - Perth, 20-21 May

**Science at the Shine Dome 2014** - Canberra, 27-29 May

**BIO International Convention** - San Diego, 23-26 June

**20th International AIDS Conference** - Melbourne, 20-25 July

**Medical Oncology Group of Australia (MOGA) Annual Scientific Meeting** - Sydney, 6-8 August
Australia/China Life Science Summit 2015 - AusBiotech is considering opportunities to hold the event both in Australia and/or China in 2015, and would appreciate feedback; particularly if your organisation would consider attending the event if it were to be held in mainland China. Expressions of interest are invited.

If you would prefer not to receive the AAMRI e-newsletter, please email admin@aamri.org.