

New AAMRI President to further Australian health and medical research

Fighting for the full funding and implementation of the Medical Research Future Fund and keeping Australia's best and brightest medical researchers and clinicians onshore for the health of the nation will be at the top of Professor Tony Cunningham's agenda as he takes over the presidency of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) today.

"The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for improved health and economic outcomes for Australia, and we need to see it reach its full capitalisation of \$20 billion in order for a doubling of Government funding to eventuate," said Professor Cunningham, Director of the Westmead Institute for Medical Research.

"Just last night we had the [launch of the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2016-2018](#) by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Health Minister Sussan Ley at the AAMRI annual dinner at Parliament House. The release of these Priorities is a giant leap forward, taking the MRFF from an exciting concept to a game-changing opportunity that will ultimately save lives, and save on health care costs in the future.

"More than half of all Australians live with a chronic medical condition, and we're looking down the barrel of a doubling in health and aged care costs to the taxpayer in coming years. The only way we are going to get on top of these problems is by investing in health and medical research to get at the causes, and hopefully even prevent these conditions."

Professor Cunningham, a clinician scientist, is also passionate about ensuring that Australian discoveries are translated into better treatments that benefit all of the community, particularly our most chronically ill and disadvantaged.

"Australia, like many western countries, faces the grand challenge of ensuring medical advances derived from research are translated into new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and treatments widely available to the whole community without bankrupting the nation," Professor Cunningham said.

"Keeping our brightest researchers here and better translating discoveries into improved healthcare will enhance the lives of all Australians, including the disadvantaged, and improve access for discoveries to us all. We must ensure the best medical treatments are available to everyone, not just the wealthy."

Professor Cunningham said that AAMRI was a broad church, representing the full spectrum of the health and medical research sector.

"That means everything from discovery research to better understand diseases, through to prevention, clinical trials, population studies, and health services research in our hospitals and other healthcare settings," he said.

"As AAMRI President I will continue to pursue a more efficient peer review system, full and transparent funding for research, and a better deal for our early and mid-career researchers."

Professor Cunningham officially commences as AAMRI President today, taking over from incumbent President Professor Doug Hilton, Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, who has been in the role for two years.

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About AAMRI

AAMRI is the peak body representing medical research institutes across Australia. Our 47 member organisations are international leaders in health and medical research, addressing practically every aspect of human health and disease. Collectively, AAMRI's members represent more than 10,000 staff and students.

AAMRI Members

