

Jewels of the health system: Australian Medical Research Institutes New report shows commercialisation and translation of research growing in MRIs

Strong growth in clinical trials and the commercialisation of research are just two of the ways Australia's Medical Research Institutes (MRIs) are helping improve the health system and economy, a new report has found.

The [Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes \(AAMRI\) Members Report 2016](#) has found that MRIs deliver tremendous results for the community via their agile structures and dedicated workforces.

In just the past year, AAMRI members have made significant discoveries in cancer treatments, organ transplantation, anaphylactic food allergies, genomics and virology, among many others, said AAMRI President Professor Tony Cunningham AO.

Professor Cunningham, an infectious diseases physician, clinical virologist and scientist, said Australian MRIs were able to translate health and medical research discoveries effectively and efficiently due to many of them being embedded within hospitals, or operating in close collaboration with hospitals and the broader health system.

"Medical research institutes are a vital part of the Australian health sector, and the Australian economy," Professor Cunningham said. "We not only make health and medical research discoveries, we also translate them from the bench to the bedside, and we then market them around the world.

"As this report shows, our members have secured 207 patents and are currently conducting more than 1200 clinical trials. MRIs have brought in more than \$84 million from commercialising their research, and doubled the amount of money they have brought in commercially in recent years. The money generated through these successes is invested in further research at MRIs.

"Running clinical trials locally under Australian conditions with Australian patients is critical to ensuring patients not only have the best access to the latest research, but also to research that is relevant to them. Conditions such as rheumatic heart disease have a tremendous impact on our Indigenous people, and it is research done here that will help. MRIs are only going from strength to strength on clinical trials, which is good news for us all."

"MRIs also generate three times as much revenue per license, option and assignment than universities do."

Professor Cunningham said the report showed less than half of MRI revenue came from government, with international grants and philanthropy being another key source of funding.

"Our members are grateful for the more than \$190 million in philanthropy they received in the past year. This money supports research that the community cares about – many donations are made due to a loved one falling ill or dying from a condition that they want to see treated, or even better, cured, or in the very best scenario, prevented in the first place. Our research can offer them that hope," he said.

As Australia moved to a more knowledge-intensive economy and with an ageing population, the work done by MRIs was only going to gain in importance, Professor Cunningham said.

"That's why initiatives such as the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) are so imperative. The research the MRFF will support in MRIs, and more broadly, will bring even greater discoveries worth more money to Australia through savings to the health system, the commercialisation of this research and helping Australians live healthier, more productive lives," he said.

"Health and medical research leading to the prevention of injury and disease is one of the best ways we can save the health system money. For example, more than 50,000 lives have been saved thanks to medical research that led to the introduction of compulsory seatbelts, improved child restraints and advancements in trauma medicine.

"Research into cardiovascular diseases is also saving the health system money through prevention, along with research into Type 2 diabetes. But these conditions are still far more prevalent in Australia than they should be, and we have a lot more work to do. The same goes for mental illness and dementia, and of course, cancer."

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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 15,000 staff and students.

AAMRI Members

