

8 May 2019

Professor Vlado Perkovic
Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes Ltd
president@aamri.org.au

Dear Prof Perkovic,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES LTD (AAMRI)

As one of the four pillars of the Morrison Government's *Long-Term National Health Plan*, health and medical research is one of the best ways forward to deliver better health care for future generations. Through investment in health and medical research the best testing, diagnosis, treatments and technologies can improve the health of all Australians.

The Coalition has backed our belief in Australian research with actions. The Morrison Government is making record investments, securing future funding, and forging a new era of research collaboration, clinical trials, and translation into clinical applications and commercial products.

This investment will produce better health outcomes for ourselves and our children and power up our medical, biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector—creating jobs, economic growth, and exports.

The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) is the single largest boost in health and medical research funding in Australia's history. It is a capital-preserved endowment fund, which means only the interest on the capital is used.

As outlined in the 2019-20 Budget, under the Morrison Government the MRFF endowment fund will mature at \$20 billion in 2020-21, providing a sustainable, ongoing source of funding for vital medical research.

Its impact is already being felt. More than \$2 billion in disbursements from the MRFF has been announced to date.

Decisions on MRFF funding are made by the Government in line with the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-2021* and *current related Priorities 2018-20*. These were developed by the MRFF's independent *Australian Medical Research Advisory Board*, chaired by Professor Ian Frazer AC.

Current investments from the MRFF are focused on four themes: patients, researchers, missions and translation. Together they aim to improve patient care, directly support our world class research talent, harness national research efforts to achieve breakthroughs in key areas, and maximise returns on investment by translating research to clinical practice.

Eight significant health research missions have so far received funding from the MRFF:

- *the Genomics Health Futures Mission*—\$500 million over 10 years to help save or transform the lives of more than 200,000 Australians through research into better testing, diagnosis and treatment;
- *the Australian Brain Cancer Mission*—over \$100 million worth of co-investment between the Australian Government and philanthropy to beat brain cancer, double survival rates in 10 years, and improve patients' quality of life;
- *the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission*—\$125 million investment to assist a million people who might otherwise not be part of mental health research and clinical trials to access new approaches to diagnosis, treatment and recovery;
- *the Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Research Mission*—\$185 million over 10 years, including \$10 million to the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research at the Queensland Brain Institute for research into Alzheimer's disease;

- *the Mission for Cardiovascular Health*—\$220 million over 10 years, to tackle the nation's two biggest killers, heart disease and stroke, inclusive of a dedicate \$20 million to defeat congenital heart disease;
- *the Indigenous Health Research Fund*—\$160 million over 10 years, focussing on ending avoidable blindness, deafness and rheumatic heart disease, which includes an initial \$35 million towards the development of a vaccine to eliminate rheumatic heart disease;
- *the Stem Cell Therapies Mission*—\$150 million over 10 years to advance stem cell research that could potentially grow kidneys, repair damaged spinal cords and cure dementia; and
- *the Traumatic Brain Injury Mission*—\$50 million over 10 years for nationally co-ordinated medical research to improve the recovery of patients with a traumatic brain injury.

Another of the Government's important innovations to bolster the research sector is *the Biomedical Translation Fund* (BTF).

The Government is contributing \$250 million to the BTF, which has been at least matched by private investment. The resulting \$500 million will be used to fast track investment in late-stage medical innovations with commercial potential.

It specifically targets the 'second valley of death' along the research pipeline—the phase in development where research ideas can fail due to lack of funding.

The BTF will create new jobs and develop innovative businesses delivering breakthrough drugs, medical devices and clinical therapies to improve health around the world.

The MRFF works closely with the BTF and also with *the National Health and Medical Research Council* (NHMRC). The NHMRC remains the nation's leading health expert body, providing research funding, and setting standards and guidelines for health and ethics.

The NHMRC makes grants from *its Medical Research Endowment Account*. The Government is committed to increasing this account over the forward estimates in line with indexation.

Over the four years from 2019–20, this means a total of \$3.5 billion has been committed to the NHMRC. This will provide more than \$800 million a year for competitive, peer-reviewed research grants.

NHMRC's grants are approved by the Minister for Health, as required by its legislation. The NHMRC recommends funding based on the outcomes of impartial and independent assessment of grant applications by expert peer reviewers.

The Morrison Government announced a further \$1.2 billion to progress research ideas from the lab to the clinic in the 2019 Budget, ensuring new medical discoveries are part of the clinical practice of GPs, specialists and hospitals, which importantly includes the following initiatives to boost R&D and commercialisation in Australia:

- *Medical Research Commercialisation*—a further \$254.0 million;
- *National Critical Infrastructure*—a new investment of \$605.0 million; and
- *Data Infrastructure*—focus on registries, biobanks & linkage platforms—a new investment of \$80.0 million.

These new commitments build on *the Governments National Health and Medical Industry Growth Plan* announced in Budget 2018, which continues to deliver \$1.3 billion over 10 years via a suite of initiatives to stimulate the research pipeline from discovery through to commercialisation.

The Industry Growth Plan will inject an extra \$18 billion into the Australian economy, create an estimated 28,000 new jobs, provide at least 130 new clinical trials, and support a 50 per cent increase in exports.

We are also committed to supporting our best health and medical researchers to make breakthrough discoveries, develop their skills and progress their careers in Australia. The Liberal National Government is investing \$793 million over 10 years for the Frontiers program and clinical researcher fellowships to ensure the next generation of talented Australians have the capacity to make and progress great medical discoveries here in Australia.