

AAMRI calls to keep jobs in medical research safe

- The Government's much needed Jobkeeper program is unable to keep jobs in medical research institutes safe due to a one-size-fits all formula
- Medical research institutes are at a disadvantage with the current formula used to work out eligibility
- Research support staff are at risk

The Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) welcomes the Government's **Jobkeeper Program**, which will provide much relief to many sectors. However, it currently appears to unintentionally exclude medical research institutes, and this issue must be immediately addressed to ensure our scientists can continue their critical work.

The proposed Jobkeeper rules make sense for for-profit businesses, and now also has amended rules for not-for-profit organisations, however medical research institutes funding structures do not fit into either category.

Institutes receive about half their funding from government revenue, and the other half they make up with fundraising, philanthropy, commercialisation, contract research and other income sources. When the current formula is applied it doesn't show the decrease of funds in medical research institutes due to the fixed government revenue – but the issue is the government revenue is tied to certain costs and inflexible in how they can be used.

"The current formula used to determine business eligibility does not adequately recognise that institutes receive significant, but tied, revenue from governments," said AAMRI President Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM.

"Government revenue, mainly in the form of research grants, cannot be used for the salary costs of highly skilled support staff, who are essential for medical research to be undertaken."

Research grants in Australia do not pay for the full costs of conducting research, so fundraising is necessary even to cover basic research costs.

"We are set up to usually try and plug these funding gaps and to allow funds for the support costs of research, but this is not business as usual. In some cases, we're already seeing more than a 30% drop off in fundraising in our institutes, which is a lifeline to many of us."

"Without the gap funding and our support staff the wheels fall off and our day to day research can't function. If we do not preserve our medical research capacity during this extraordinary time, then the entire sector, and with it our capacity to discover new treatments, diagnostics and vaccines, is at peril," said Professor Carapetis.

AAMRI welcomes the reduction for the criteria to be 15% of turnover for charities, rather than the previously announced 30%. But this needs to exclude government medical research contracts and have a greater focus on income in areas like fundraising and philanthropy.

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About AAMRI

AAMRI is the peak body representing medical research institutes across Australia. Our 56 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 19,000 staff and students.

AAMRI Members

