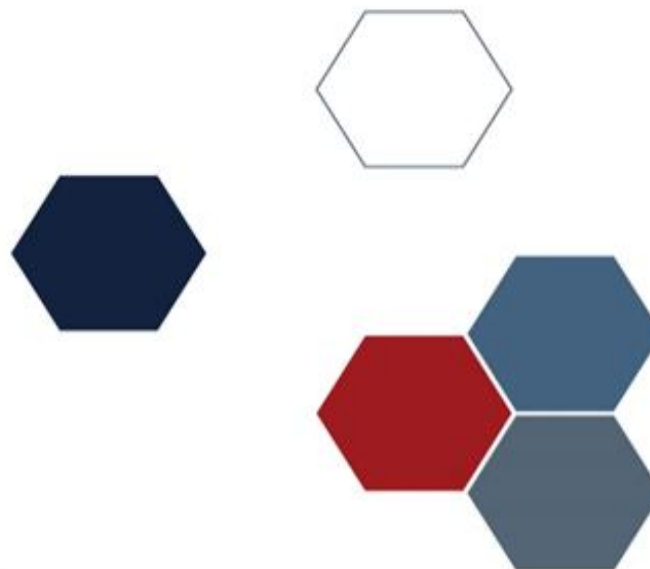




Australian Government



Medical Research **Future Fund**

**National Consultation of the Australian Medical
Research and Innovation Strategy 2021-2026 and the
related Australian Medical Research and Innovation
Priorities**

Webinar



Medical Research Future Fund

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
 - I. Role of the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB)
 - II. Current Strategy and Priorities
 - III. MRFF10-year Investment plan
 - IV. MRFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy
 - V. Investment Funds Legislation Amendment Bill 2021
3. Current consultation – Strategy 2021-2026 & Priorities
4. Open Discussion – Questions & Answers

Reference: *Consultation Guide for the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy and related Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities*





Medical Research Future Fund

Introduction

- Welcome
- Your microphones will be in-active, only hosts are able to speak
- All questions can be sent via the interactive Q&A input
- One hour has been allocated at the end of the presentation to answer questions
- A copy of this presentation will be made available on the MRFF website





Medical Research Future Fund

Introduction: MRFF

- Established in 2015 by the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*.
- The MRFF is an ongoing research fund to support medical research and medical innovation in Australia
- MRFF object is to ‘improve the health and wellbeing of Australians’
- The MRFF offers the opportunity to strategically fund research and address national priorities
- Complements other medical research and innovation funding:
 - MRFF focus on priority driven research, especially research translation and implementation science
 - NHMRC focus on investigator-led research





Medical Research Future Fund

Introduction: MRFF

- Two complementary Government streams for health and medical research in Australia
 - MRFF - awards funding for national **priority areas to address unmet medical needs** with a focus on **research translation and commercialisation** to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians
 - NHMRC - awards funding through a range of **investigator-initiated schemes** to **build capacity and advance health and medical knowledge**
- Complements other Government support to the Sector
 - Research Block Grants to Universities, Australian Research Council, Biomedical Translation Fund, National Critical Research Infrastructure Strategy, Cooperative Research Centres, COVID-19 additional funding





Medical Research Future Fund

Introduction: AMRAB



Prof Ian Frazer AC (Chair)



Prof Caroline Homer AO (Deputy Chair)



Prof Tom Calma AO



Prof Denise Doolan



Mr Yasser El-Ansary



Prof Doug Hilton AO



Prof Anne Kelso AO (NHMRC)



Ms Imelda Lynch

International advisors



Prof Shitij Kapur (UK)



Prof Anna Ranta (NZ)





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Role of AMRAB

- *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* establishes AMRAB to develop:
 - **STRATEGY** (five years)
 - For ensuring that a coherent and consistent approach is adopted in providing MRFF funds for medical research and innovation
 - **PRIORITIES** (two years)
 - Must consider:
 - the burden of disease on the Australian community
 - how to deliver practical benefits from medical research and innovation to as many Australians as possible
 - how to ensure that MRFF funding provides the greatest value for all Australians
 - how to ensure MRFF funding complements and enhances other funding
 - other relevant matters





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: AMRAB-determined Priorities guides MRFF investments

- Government must take into account the PRIORITIES in determining MRFF disbursements/grants (*MRFF Act, 15A(2)*)
- The Health Minister must prepare a report on the financial assistance provide for medical research and medical innovation during the period the Priorities were in force (*MRFF Act, 57A*)
- To date two reports have been published, 2016-2018 and 2018-2020





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Current MRFF Strategy and Priorities

STRATEGIC PLATFORMS	2020-22 PRIORITIES
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL HORIZONS	One Health – Antimicrobial Resistance
	Global Health and Health Security
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
	Ageing and Aged Care
DATA AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Digital Health Intelligence
HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS	Comparative Effectiveness Research
	Primary Care Research
CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION	Clinical Researcher Capacity
	Consumer-Driven Research
TRIALS AND TRANSLATION	Drug Repurposing
	Public Health Interventions
COMMERCIALISATION	Translational Research Infrastructure





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: MRFF 10-year investment plan

- The Australian Government announced a \$5 billion, 10-year investment plan for the MRFF [2019-20 budget]
- 4 themes, 20 initiatives: harness innovation, provide vital infrastructure, improve patient outcomes, and generate jobs and economic growth
- The 10 year plan provides a framework within which MRFF funding is dispersed, with regard to the Strategy and Priorities.
- The Strategy, Priorities and the 10 year plan provide transparency and predictability to researchers and industry about the strategic objectives of MRFF disbursements.





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: MRFF 10-year investment plan

Funding themes of the 10-year plan are used to direct new investments towards particular initiatives and grant opportunities:

 Patients	Funding innovative treatments, supporting clinical trials, and delivering more advanced health care and medical technology to improve the health of all Australians
 Researchers	Supporting our researchers to make breakthrough discoveries, develop their skills and progress their careers in Australia
 Research missions	Helping researchers think big to tackle significant health challenges through investment, leadership and collaboration
 Research translation	Moving research ideas from the lab to the clinic, so that medical discoveries become part of clinical practice for GPs, specialists and hospitals





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: MRFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy, 2020-21 to 2023-24

- Sets out the principles and approach for monitoring and evaluating the MRFF.
- Allows assessment of impact and outcomes from projects to ascertain whether the MRFF is achieving its intended objectives
- Provides a conceptual framework for the MRFF that integrates the aims, visions, objectives and impact measures from the five MRFF outcome measures identified in the Strategy 2016-2021.
- Supports continuous refinement and improvement of MRFF initiatives over the course of the 10-year investment plan





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Performance and evaluation

Medical Research Future Fund outcomes

Vision: A health system fully informed by quality health and medical research
Aim: To transform health and medical research and innovation to improve lives, build the economy and contribute to health system sustainability.

Better health outcomes

Economic growth

Beneficial change to health practice

Increased health efficiency

Increased job and export potential



Measures of success

Increased focus of research on areas of unmet need

More Australians access clinical trials

New health technologies are embedded in health practice

New health interventions are embedded in health practice

Research community has greater capacity and capability to undertake translational research

Health professionals adopt best practices faster

The community engages with and adopts new technologies and treatments

Increased commercialisation of health research outcomes





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Determining the Strategy and Priorities

- The current Strategy was developed to ensure a coherent and consistent approach is adopted in the funding of medical research and innovation from the MRFF.
- In determining the current Priorities, a number of matters were taken into account, such as burden of disease and greatest value for Australians, and complementarity to other financial assistance for medical research.
- Consideration needs to be given in how the Strategy and Priorities aligns with the MRFF 10-year investment plan and Evaluation, Monitoring and Learning Strategy





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Strategy and Priorities within the MRFF



Outlines how the MRFF fits into the system



Identifies the key priority areas for investment



Outlines investment in the identified priority areas

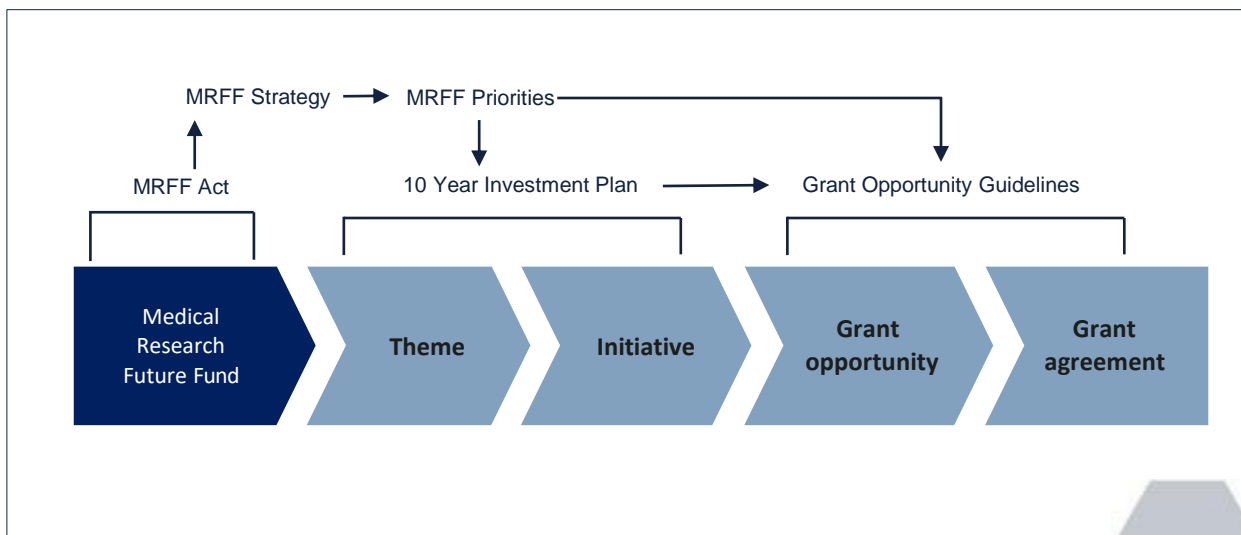


Sets the framework for assessing the impact of the MRFF



Medical Research Future Fund

Background: Strategy and Priorities within the MRFF





Medical Research Future Fund

Background: MRFF Act – proposed changes

- Investment Funds Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (IFLA Bill)
- Introduced into Parliament on 25 August 2021
- Proposed MRFF Act changes:
 - Set a fixed maximum annual disbursement of \$650 million
 - Change (align) the duration of the Strategy and Priorities
 - Clarify that state and territory governments, including state and territory government entities, will be able to receive funding
 - Add a definition of ‘corporation’
 - Clarify that a grant made from the MRFF can be made in instalments





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation: Strategy and Priorities – development opportunities

- MRFF is part of a broader inter-connected system supporting medical research and medical innovation in Australia.
- The object of the MRFF is to ‘improve the health and wellbeing of Australians.’ The MRFF complements other Government, not for profit and industry support for research.
- Opportunity for the next Strategy (and Priorities) to better contextualise and articulate the unique role and contributions of MRFF within the broader support system for health and medical research and strengthen MRFF’s role in supporting the translation of research into impact.
- Opportunity to reflect on MRFF’s current operating context, nationally and internationally, and the challenges and opportunities this poses and propose ways forward.





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Considerations

- Ensure an updated Strategy is:
 - meeting its purpose as described in the MRFF Act
 - accounting for critical current and future issues and factors (e.g. primary prevention)
 - allowing the MRFF to fund research to address national health priorities
 - delivering practical benefits from medical research and medical innovation to Australians.
- MRFF is not the sole funding source for health and medical research in Australia.
 - It is a priority-led fund that is additional, and complementary, to existing medical research and innovation funding, such as the National Health and Medical Research Council, which mainly funds investigator-led projects and programs.



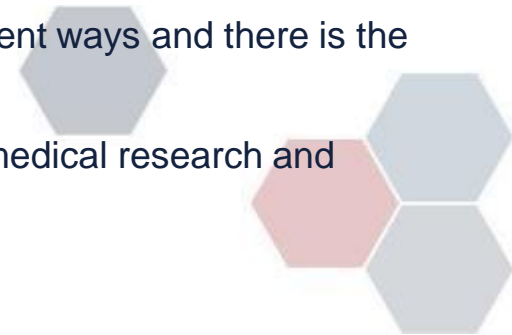


Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation – Context of Strategy and Priority Setting

Impacts of COVID-19

- The health and medical research sector has been at the forefront of contributions to understand and control the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The capacity and ability to progress health and medical research has been significantly impacted by the pandemic.
- The changing financial situation of Australian universities may also impact on health and medical research, especially for early to mid-career researchers. The pandemic has also disproportionately impacted on women and this is likely to have flow-on effects on the health and medical research sector.
- Health services have been modified or required to operate in new or different ways and there is the potential for new and/or emerging health issues to arise over time.
- The pandemic will have direct and indirect influences on how health and medical research and innovation can improve the health and wellbeing of Australians.





Consultation – Context of Strategy and Priority Setting

Considering Burden of Disease (BOD)

- BOD measures the difference between a population's actual health and its ideal health.
- The 5 disease groups that caused the most burden were cancer, musculoskeletal conditions, cardiovascular diseases, mental & substance use disorders and injuries (2018).
 - 38% of disease burden could have been avoided or reduced as modifiable risk factors are involved (tobacco use and obesity for example).
- The most important limitation of BOD for a *research funder* is that it 'measures problems and not the value of solutions'
- BOD data is an important consideration to be taken into account for national health and medical research priority setting. However, other factors need to be accounted for, including comorbidity and multimorbidity or availability of effective preventative measures.





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Considerations

AMRAB is interested in hearing your reflections on the current Strategy and the related Priorities, specifically your views on:

- whether they could be improved to better meet their purpose set out in the MRFF Act
- the critical current and future issues and factors the next Strategy and Priorities should address to guide Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) investments and options to address these, and
- how the Strategy and Priorities can account for the significant impact of COVID-19 on health services and the research sector.





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation: The 2021 consultation process

The consultation process commenced on 20 September 2021 through the opening of an online consultation hub to provide opportunities for written submissions to be considered. This will close **11 October 2021**.

This webinar and a virtual roundtable on specific issues and themes will also provide opportunities to inform AMRAB's deliberation.

AMRAB will consider all feedback from the consultation process, including written submissions, and use your contributions to refresh the Strategy and Priorities.

2020 Consultation on
Priorities

2021 Consultation on Strategy
and related Priorities to
ensure alignment





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Strategy Consultation Questions

1. Could the current Strategy be altered to better meet the purpose set out in the MRFF Act? If so, how?
2. What are the most critical current and future issues and factors impacting on the health system, including primary prevention and the health and medical research sector that the next Strategy needs to address?
3. Suggest options for how the next Strategy could address these critical issues and factors?
4. Given the new and significant impact of COVID-19 on health services and health research, how should the new Strategy address COVID-19 related topics and impacts (direct and indirect)?





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Priorities Consultation Questions

1. Could the current Priorities be improved to better address the requirements under the MRFF Act? If so, how?
 - This could include consideration of what elements of the Priorities work well to guide MRFF investments and what could be improved for research translation and impact?
2. What are the most critical current and future issues for the health system and the health and medical research sector that the next Priorities need to address through research translation/implementation?
3. Suggest options for how the next Priorities could address these critical issues?
4. Given the new and significant impact of COVID-19 on health services and health research, how should the new priorities address COVID-19 related topics?





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Principles for engagement

1. Support for research excellence is paramount – MRFF Funding Principles
2. Appreciate the MRFF is intended to be transformational
3. Avoid duplication, and leverage opportunities through collaboration
4. Appreciate the focus on whole-of-system benefit
5. Promote health and social justice and protect access and equity





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Principles for engagement continued

6. Focus on how a refresh of the current Strategy can continue to allow the MRFF to fund national health priorities that improve research effectiveness, efficacy, quality and safety to deliver improved health outcomes and a sustainable health system for all Australians.
7. Focus on how the Priorities can continue to operate on a refreshed Strategy, including reframing to be more outcome-oriented.
8. Be cognisant of the Government's \$5 billion, MRFF 10-year investment plan and focus on how the Strategy and Priorities may inform funding decisions within the 10-year plan themes and initiatives rather than seek to redefine them.





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Principles for engagement continued

9. Be cognisant of the MRFF Monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 which sets out the principles and approach used to monitor and evaluate the MRFF.
10. Recognise that a whole-of-government approaches are needed to address some complex issues in health and medical research, including indirect costs, research quality and evaluation.
11. Be respectful of other stakeholder perspectives, experiences and opinions.





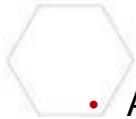
Australian Government

Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Roundtable

30 September 2021

- AMRAB is convening a think-tank of organisations and peak bodies across the health and medical research and innovation sector with the aim to shape the articulation of and contextualise MRFF's unique role/s and contributions within the broader support system for health and medical research.
- A consolidated write-up will be published on the consultation hub to provide an overview of how this group views the MRFF's overarching role and future directions.
- This could help guide interested parties in preparing their submissions.





Medical Research Future Fund

Consultation - Strategy 2021-2026

Open Discussion - Questions & Answers

- One hour allocated
 - Please type questions in the Q&A box provided.
 - Questions and feedback will be collated for the presenters to note or discuss
- The slides for this webinar will be made available on the MRFF webpage.
- All submissions can be made through the Consultation Hub on the Department of Health website.
- **Reminder - online submissions close 11th October 2021.**

Due to legislative requirements (ie to table the 2021-26 Strategy before 8 November 2021), unfortunately it will not be possible to offer extensions or accept submissions made after this date.





Australian Government

Medical Research Future Fund

More information:

www.health.gov.au/MRFF



Interested in accessing MRFF grants:

Register with **GRANTCONNECT** (www.grants.gov.au)



Thank you

