

SRHMRA Submission 101 — Rachel Uren

I think health and medical research is important.

I think all Australians benefit economically and in their health and wellbeing by having an active local medical research community.

I don't mind paying more taxes for answers to the medical problems that cause so much grief everyday. Research is cheap and great value for money.

I think the current system of peer reviewed grant applications to the NHMRC is very inefficient and ineffective. Researchers invest too much time and energy applying for grant funding and reviewing the grants of their peers. Research works best when it is collaborative, but researchers in Australia are too busy competing for too few dollars to genuinely collaborate. Conflict of interest is a serious impediment to the validity of the current grant review system as the local research community is too small to ensure quality expert reviews.

I think Australia needs to support health and medical research that approaches solutions to medical problems across various disciplines including patient oriented research, molecular biology and physical sciences. The key is to facilitate ongoing communication of ideas between these different research communities so that the full benefit can be derived from this hard work.

I think Australia needs to be smarter about making better use of the data that is already available by enhanced support for statistical and bioinformatics research.

Many excellent scientists leave academic research because the career path is so limited due to the current funding structure. We need to acknowledge that not all scientists aspire to become independent laboratory heads and that there is a place for expert knowledge within academia in the form of experienced staff scientists and research assistants.