

## **SRHMRA Submission 11 — Michael Parsons**

It is vitally important to maintain a high-level of health and medical research in Australia because it saves lives and reduces costs. The main argument before the recent budget to maintain or increase funding for medical research was the reduction in costs of public health was greater than the initial investment into medical research. I have recently started working in the medical research field at QIMR, investigating high-risk DNA variants for breast and colorectal cancer. The moment that stood out to me in my short career was during a poster session at the 2011 Familial Aspects of Cancer conference. Three separate clinical geneticists approached me about tumour characteristics used to select patients for genetic screening (as there is currently no national standard). The results from research in our lab suggested that some exclusion criteria be changed to ensure that all patients at risk were not excluded because of lack of updated information. This research was instantly translated into clinics to ensure as many patients as possible with Lynch Syndrome be detected. As a young research I am not encouraged to follow the NHMRC-fellowship research path due to the negative attitude towards the process. It appears that 1-2 months every year is lost writing grants with less than half funded. The pay levels are also no-where near as high as some other careers that require the same or less tertiary education. This does not create much interest in the younger generation to undertake this career path. I believe an increase in funding is required to create more interest in younger generations, allow ground-breaking research to continue and blossom in Australia, and jump-start this industry to a new-level in Australia.