



Submission to the McKeon Review

Lodged by: Cystic Fibrosis Australia

Cystic Fibrosis Australia (CFA) has a long track record of support and funding for research through project funding and post-graduate studentships. This research has been administered by the ACFRT (Australian Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust) and is the springboard for CFA to embark on an expansive and visionary research program. What is proposed will have international impact and attract significant interest.

Although there is much excellent basic medical research in Australia, there is less capacity for translational research and clinical trials. The Government should have a proactive stance on translational research and clinical trials, and should consider whether a joint Commonwealth-State fund, closely linked to the new Local Hospital Networks, Medicare Locals and GP superclinics, would increase our commitment to areas of health and medical research that impact on public health and the patients. This is the solution that is being pursued by the UK.

We believe that government funding organisations should increase their commitment to work with community organisations such as CFA to help with assessment of projects for those groups or to co-fund research projects jointly. Today, there are few projects that use the skills of only one discipline; most projects are multi-disciplinary, yet grants committees and Research Councils are silo-based and appear to find it difficult to facilitate collaboration between disciplines. The fact that collaboration between Universities, MRIs, CSIRO and DSTO is less well established in Australia than in other countries, and the State/Commonwealth divide, further complicate the issues, as does our distance from other major medical research countries such as the UK and USA. Mechanisms must be found to ensure the various agencies in Australia use their limited resources and work together rather than compete.

NHMRC Partnership Grants are a significant opportunity to encourage and facilitate collaboration with organisations such as ours and other medical research charities. We also believe that there is a need to ensure that Australia increases its investment as a percentage of GDP to ensure that we can grow the research community and remain as a high level participant in developing intellectual capital for Australia.

Cystic Fibrosis Australia would value the opportunity appear before the Review and speak further on the issues raised in this submission.

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