

SRHMRA Submission 40 — Miranda Wheen

Australia is a small country, and we are often seen as the bootlickers of more powerful nations. We currently boast a relatively healthy economy and are also seen as a powerhouse when it comes to medical research. Each strength Australia is seen to have adds to our overall influence in world politics, and the more the general public in other countries are likely to gain knowledge about our country and our strong people. Each discovery Australian researchers make which translates into a new treatment or vaccine is money to further strengthen our economy, rather than some other country's. Each advance we make, helps ease the burden of disease on our economy at a time of a widespread epidemic of lifestyle originating diseases.

Grant formats need to be streamlined/simplified to reduce the amount of time taken to write them. An expression of interest system is the first step to maximising the return on the taxpayer dollar invested into medical research. Currently, there is too much time needed in submitting a project for funding. Each extra week we are writing grants is a week we have little to no time for our students and staff leading to reduced research output. Each year, PIs spend months locked away writing fellowships/grants. This is a poor use of their time and taxpayers dollars which pay their salary. It is important that the government does not cave to the pressure to reduce funding into basic research to fund research closer to translation into a clinical setting. Basic research is required to lead to this translational research, and as such, it's funding needs to be continued. Furthermore, mechanisms need to be put in place to protect groups coming to the end of their funding, so that they are not left stranded with no money and an unsuccessful year of grants. Allowing a small amount of money from the total project budget to be carried over would help prevent 'almost there' research with great potential having to be shelved and never completed.