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Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard

MS22-001334

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 14 October 2022

RECEIVED

25 OCT 2022

Parliamentary Section

To: Minister Butler

Subject: s22

Critical date: s22

Recommendations:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6. Agree to publish the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission Review Report (Attachment H).

6. ☒ Agreed/Not agreed/Please discuss

Signature

Date: 25/10 / 2022

Media Release required? YES/ NO

Comments:

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer Health and Medical Research Office
Clearance Officer:	Blair Exell	Deputy Secretary Strategy, Evidence and Research Group

s22

s22

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Issues:

- 1.
- 2.
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- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



- The Mission's governance arrangements vary from other MRFF Missions as it was established prior to the implementation of the Governance framework (i.e. it has no Implementation Plan in place).

4. An external review of the Mission covered its early establishment and the need to bring it into alignment with the other MRFF Missions.

- The review (Attachment H) has been finalised and is ready to be published on the Department's website, pending your approval.
- The report found strong alignment between the Mission investments to date and the existing Mission Roadmap as well as early contributions towards the MRFF's impact measures. It also identified opportunities for strengthening impact.



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Background:**Review of the Mission**

- The *MRFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24*, states that regular reviews are to be undertaken of the 21 MRFF initiatives.
- The University of Technology Sydney was contracted by the Department to undertake a review of the Mission.
- Further information about the review is provided at Attachment L and the final review report is provided at Attachment H.



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Attachments:

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K:
L:

s22

Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission Review – Final Report

s22

Sensitivities:

s22

Consultations:

s22

Communication/Media Activities:

s22

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Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard

MS23-000143

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 24 February 2023

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To: Minister Butler

15 MAR 2023

Subject: Performance Indicators towards the impact of the Medical Research Future Fund
Parliamentary Section

Critical date: 10 March 2023 so the indicators can be published and work on a survey to capture the relevant data progress

Recommendation:

1. That you **Approve** the *Performance indicators towards the impact of the Medical Research Future Fund (Attachment A)*.

2. **Approve/Not approved/Please discuss**

Signature

Date: 14 / 03 / 2023

Comments:

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer, Health and Medical Research Office
Clearance Officer:	Blair Exell	Deputy Secretary, Health Strategy, First Nations and Sport

s22

Issues:

- As part of the implementation of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24 (Evaluation Strategy, **Attachment B**), the Department has developed a set of key performance indicators, in consultation with the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB).
 - These performance indicators will enable assessment of progress made towards the eight MRFF Measures of Success and, ultimately, the impact of the MRFF.
 - There are nine indicators, each of which are underpinned by several measurable outputs (see **Background**).
- To support implementation of the performance indicators, the Department:
 - has prepared a report for publication that explains the indicators and how they will contribute to measuring the outputs, outcomes and eventually the impact of the MRFF – the publication will be promoted through stakeholder engagements including an upcoming webinar (30 March 2023) tailored to Research Administration Officers

- will commence collating data from program sources and prepare for the first of the periodic (3 yearly) surveys of grant recipients to capture the data not available from other sources (eg research workforce) – reporting on the performance indicators is expected to commence in late 2023 or early 2024.

Background:

Measuring the impact of the MRFF promotes accountability of the MRFF, provides policy and research benefit to support translation of research outcomes into practice, helps promote public engagement to support community engagement in research, and provides visibility of MRFF research.

The Evaluation Strategy was developed as an overarching framework for assessing the performance and, ultimately, the impact of the MRFF (**Attachment B**). Further, implementation of this Strategy promotes the establishment of a learning system that supports continuous improvement within the MRFF.

There are 9 proposed MRFF performance indicators: (i) Projects targeting priority populations; (ii) Projects targeting emerging issues; (iii) Clinical trials; (iv) Research workforce indicators; (v) Knowledge gain indicators; (vi) Consumer involvement indicators; (vii) Healthcare change indicators; (viii) Commercialisation pathway indicators; (ix) Case studies.

The key messages contained within the report on the performance indicators include:

- The importance of measuring the impact of the MRFF, to ensure that the MRFF is on track towards achieving its goals and objectives.
- The program logic for the monitoring and evaluation of the MRFF to show how the performance indicators align with the Measures of Success and the Impact Measures.
- A summary of the performance indicators and their rationale.
- The approach for data collection, how the data will be used and what it means for researchers.

Attachments:

A: *Performance indicators towards impact of the MRFF*

B: MRFF Monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24

Sensitivities:

As this level of performance monitoring is new and more comprehensive than other funders, some researchers may consider the reporting requirements burdensome. This particularly true if the merits of collecting, analysing and reporting on the data are not well presented and understood. For this reason, the Department prepared the report on the indicators for publication to explain the need for and use of the performance indicators, which will be used for engagement with the sector. Also, the survey will be designed to minimise responder burden, including by ensuring we leverage data from existing sources.

The Australian Research Council's (ARC) framework for assessing research is under review. The Department sought input from the ARC on the report and is closely monitoring the ARC to consider implications for jointly funded organisations and will consider (in consultation with AMRAB) any refinements required over time.

Consultations:

These performance indicators were developed in consultation with AMRAB. The Australian Research Council, National Health and Medical Research Council, and the NSW Office of Health and Medical Research also provided input to the development of the performance indicators.

Impact on Rural and Regional Australians:

The impact of research projects on people in remote and rural communities will be explicitly measured under the performance indicator: *Projects targeting priority populations.*

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Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard

MS23-000567

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 4 May 2023

RECEIVED

11 MAY 2023

Parliamentary Section

To: Mark Butler

Subject: Medical Research Future Fund Financial Assistance Report 2020 - 2022

Critical date: 12 May 2023 to enable tabling of the Report



Recommendations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Approve the tabling of the report on the financial assistance provided from the <i>Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)</i> during the period the <i>Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2020-2022</i> were in force (<u>Attachment A</u>).</p> | <p>1. Approved/ Not approved/ Please discuss</p> |
| <p>2. Agree to table the report in the Senate out of sitting, if required.</p> | <p>2. Agreed/ Not agreed/ Please discuss</p> |
| <p>3. Should you agree to Recommendation 2, sign the letter to the President of the Senate to table the report out of sitting (<u>Attachment B</u>).</p> | <p>3. Signed/ Not signed</p> |

Signature 

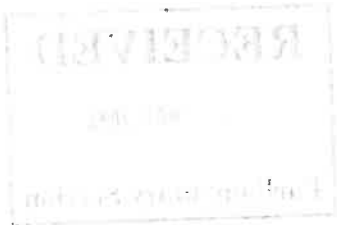
Date: 

Comments

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer Health and Medical Research Office	s22 
Clearance Officer:	Blair Exell	Deputy Secretary, Health Strategy, First Nations and Sport Group	s22 

Issues:

- Section 57A of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (MRFF Act) requires you to submit a report to Parliament regarding all financial assistance provided for medical research and medical innovation from the Medical Research Future Fund Special Account as soon as practicable after the biennial *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities* cease to be in force.



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- a. This is known as the Financial Assistance Report (FAR) and the document covering the Priorities period 2020 to 2022 is attached for your approval to table in the Parliament (Attachment A).
- b. The FAR is of an administrative nature and can be tabled out of sitting with your agreement. As the Senate may not be sitting for a period of time following your approval, a letter from you to the President of the Senate has been prepared for your signature (Attachment B).

Background:

The FAR must include:

- a description of how the financial assistance provided was consistent with the Priorities
- a description of the processes for determining the grants of financial assistance
- information about any other financial assistance provided by the Commonwealth for medical research and innovation.

This FAR covers the period when the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2020-2022* (2020-2022 Priorities) were in effect, from 7 November 2020 until 5 November 2022.

In addition to meeting the legislated reporting requirements, this FAR also provides updates on the operation of the MRFF and analysis of grant opportunities and grants provided by the MRFF since inception, as well as during the period of the 2020-2022 Priorities.

After you approve the tabling of the FAR, a copy is required to be tabled in each House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days of that House.

If tabled out of sitting in the Senate, upon receipt by the President of the Senate, the FAR is deemed to have been presented to the Senate and can be published on the Department's website (Senate Standing Order 166). If tabled out of sitting in the Senate, the FAR will be tabled in the House of Representatives at the earliest opportunity when it next meets.

Attachments:

A: Financial Assistance Report 2020-2022

B: Letter to the President of the Senate

Sensitivities:

Stakeholders, including the research sector and media, have requested information in relation to funding provided by the MRFF. The tabling of this report will assist in meeting these requests.

Consultations:

The Department consulted with the Chair (Professor Ian Frazer AC) and Deputy Chair (Professor Caroline Homer AC) of the Australian Research Advisory Board in preparing the FAR.

Communications/Media Activities:

The Department will publish the FAR on the Department's website as soon as practicable after it has been tabled.

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Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard
MS23-000788

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 14 July 2023

To: Minister Butler

Subject: Evaluation of the Medical Research Future Fund Clinical Trial Activity initiative - outcomes and approval to publish

Critical date: 28 July 2023 to allow publication of the evaluation report

Recommendations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Agree to publish on the Department's website the final report of the evaluation of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Clinical Trial Activity (CTA) initiative (Attachment A).</p> <p>2. Sign letters of appreciation to Professors Denise Doolan and Ian Frazer AC to acknowledge their guidance and support for the evaluation (Attachment B).</p> | <p>1. Agreed/Not agreed/Please discuss</p> <p>2. Signed/Not signed</p> |
|---|--|

Signature

Comments:

Date: 26/07/2023

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer Health & Medical Research Office	s22
Clearance Officer:	Blair Exell	Deputy Secretary Health Strategy, First Nations & Sport Group	s22

Issues:

- Following completion of an independent evaluation of the MRFF's CTA initiative, the Department is seeking your approval to publish the final report (**Attachment A**) on the Department's website. This approach is consistent with previous MRFF evaluations.
- A key finding of the evaluation is that the CTA initiative has increased research into unmet need. This has been highly valued by stakeholders who consider the MRFF CTA initiative 'as an additional – perhaps even a dominant – source of funding and support for conducting trials in Australia, and filling in a gap in the rarer disease areas which may not be fundable through other avenues.'

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3. There is an opportunity to use the outcomes of the evaluation, along with advice from key stakeholders, to update the MRFF's approaches for investing in clinical trials.
4. Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB) members Professor Denise Doolan and Professor Ian Frazer AC provided expert advice to the independent contractor throughout the evaluation. To acknowledge their contribution letters of appreciation have been drafted on your behalf (**Attachment B**).

Background:*Evaluation of the Clinical Trials Activity initiative*

The Institute for Evidence-Based Healthcare (IEBH) at Bond University was engaged to undertake the evaluation in 2021, following an open, competitive tender process.

The evaluation assessed the progress of the CTA initiative in achieving the objectives set out in the MRFF 10-year Investment Plan and the progress towards the 8 Measures of Success as set out in the MRFF Monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24.

The intention of the evaluation was to:

- consider all existing investments on clinical trials made through the MRFF
- consider approaches and the current landscape for clinical trials internationally and nationally in Australia
- suggest opportunities for improving funding and granting arrangements for clinical trials through the initiative and the MRFF more broadly.

In April 2022, the evaluation's scope was expanded to include National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funded clinical trials.

Outcomes of the evaluation

The evaluation found that MRFF-funded trials are broadly comparable to or better than other national and key international funders in terms of study design, characteristics and quality.

The evaluation also assessed progress towards the MRFF's Measures of Success, and found that the MRFF CTA initiative has:

- increased research into unmet need, particularly in rare cancers which may not be fundable via other avenues
- enabled more Australians access to clinical trials
- significantly involved key stakeholders e.g. professional or non-government organisations, industry, consumers and early-to-mid career researchers, which enhances the research community's capacity and capability for research translation. Several opportunities for improvement were identified, including to:
 - encourage more efficient or innovative trial designs, such as factorial and adaptive or platform trials
 - explore using standardised methodologies to set priorities for funding
 - encourage open science and transparency via trial registration, protocol availability and use of standardised outcome sets which are considered best practice.

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MRFF Clinical Trials Activity initiative

The CTA initiative is providing \$750 million over 10 years between 2022-23 and 2031-32 to increase clinical trial activity in Australia. The initial focus of this initiative was on clinical trials addressing rare cancers, rare diseases, and unmet needs, and on bringing investigator-led international clinical trials to Australia. The initiative's focus has now been expanded to enable funding of research projects focused on any disease or condition that meets the objective specified in each grant opportunity.

Attachments:

- A:** Evaluation of MRFF Clinical Trials Activity initiative – Final Findings Report
- B:** Letters of appreciation to Professor Denise Doolan and Professor Ian Frazer AC

Sensitivities:

None

Consultations:

The National Health and Medical Research Council and Professors Doolan and Frazer were consulted during the development of the evaluation report.

Communication/Media Activities:

If you agree with the recommendation, the Department will publish the Clinical Trials Activity Evaluation Final Report on the Department's website. The Department will also disseminate the report to stakeholders, including through the MRFF newsletter.

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Department of Health and Aged Care

Meeting Brief

MB23-002490

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 9/08/2023

To: Minister Butler

Adviser: s22

Subject: MEETING BRIEF - MRFF CORRESPONDENCES SENT TO MINISTERS GALLAGHER AND BUTLER

Comments:			
Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	CEO, Health and Medical Research Office, Health Economics and Research Division	s22
Clearance Officer:	Dr Phillip Gould	First Assistant Secretary, Health Economics and Research Division	s22

Date / Time: 11:30 AM AEST, Thursday 10 August 2023

Location: Minister Butler's Office, Parliament House, Canberra

Traditional Custodians: Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra Region

Purpose: To discuss the letter from Dr Ryan MP and colleagues (Attachment A)

Desired Outcomes: To note that the governance and administration of the MRFF is largely effective.

Key Attendees/Speakers:	Title:	Organisation:	Mobile No:
Dr Monique Ryan MP	Member for Kooyong	House of Representatives for Kooyong, Victoria	
s47F	Advisor	Office of Dr Monique Ryan MP	

Key Matters/Issues:

- On 21 July 2023, Dr Monique Ryan MP and parliamentary colleagues wrote to you and Minister Gallagher ([Attachment A](#)) proposing amendments to the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (the MRFF Act).
- A list of, and comments on, the proposed amendments is provided at Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed amendments and corresponding response

Proposed legislative amendment	Response
Set out merit selection criteria and guidelines, making it unlawful for the Minister to allocate grants that do not meet these criteria and guidelines;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MRFF is administered according to the MRFF Act <u>and</u> the <i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017</i> (CGRGs), which are issued under the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act). • The CGRGs already require publication of guidelines covering assessment criteria and the selection process to allocate grants. • While a decision could be made to award a grant that does not meet the criteria to be recommended for funding, the Minister is required to report this to the Finance Minister annually. <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CGRGs articulate the requirements and expectations for Ministers, accountable authorities and officials undertaking grants administration, including legislative requirements. • Consistent with the CGRGs, the Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ develops and publishes guidelines for all MRFF grant opportunities, which include the selection criteria and the selection process to allocate grants ○ uses the outcomes of an independent assessment process to make a recommendation for funding to the Minister or an appropriate Delegate ○ advises the Minister/Delegate of the application and selection process followed (including the selection criteria that were used to select potential grantees) and the merits of the proposed grants relative to the guidelines and the key principle of achieving value with relevant money. • Consistent with the CGRGs, the Minister/Delegate then considers this written advice and records the basis for approving grants relative to the guidelines and the key principle of achieving value with relevant money. • The former Minister for Health directly approved the first 7 grants funded from the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission in 2018. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The decision to award MRFF grants has in all other instances been made by an appropriate Delegate, who is a senior official in the Department.
Require the Minister to report to Parliament quarterly with the details of any grants the administration of which deviates from departmental advice;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the CGRGs, Ministers are required to report annually to the Finance Minister on all instances where they have decided to approve a particular grant which the relevant official has recommended be rejected. • To date, there has not been an instance of the Minister approving an MRFF grant that an official has recommended be rejected.
Require the department to periodically table documentation about how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MRFF Act, CGRGs and other Parliamentary processes already require periodic publication of public expenditure.

<p>money has been spent under the MRFF.</p>	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with section 57A of the MRFF Act, the Health Minister reports to Parliament every two years on the financial assistance provided from the MRFF Special Account. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The report includes a description of how the financial assistance provided was consistent with the MRFF Priorities that were in force at the time, and the processes for determining the grants of financial assistance. ○ This requirement has been met in full. To date, three reports have been tabled, the latest of which was in May 2023. • In accordance with Senate Order 16 – Departmental and Agency Grants (Minchin Motion), the Department also tables a list of approved grants three times a year, which includes the value of the grants, recipients of the grants and the program from which the grants were made (i.e. the MRFF). • In accordance with the Senate Order for Entity Contracts (Murray Motion), the Department also tables a letter in the Senate twice a year that identifies contracts entered into during the preceding calendar or financial year, valued at or above \$100,000 (GST inclusive), along with details relating to each of those contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This includes MRFF grants valued at or above \$100,000 (GST inclusive). • The Department also maintains and regularly updates a list on its website of all MRFF grants awarded to date, including the selection process followed as specified in the CGRGs (e.g. competitive, one-off/ad hoc, targeted non-competitive, etc). • Consistent with the CGRGs, details of MRFF grants are also published on GrantConnect, which is a public resource.
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Discussion Guide:

- Appreciate your interest in the effective operation of the MRFF and am also keen to see the program operate transparently and with the confidence of the sector.
- The MRFF operates under the MRFF Act however is also governed by the PGPA Act and supporting CGRGs.
- Some of the items you are calling for are covered under the PGPA Act and are already in train, including:
 - requiring publication of grant guidelines that set the parameters for funding, and requiring Ministers and officials to adhere to them
 - reporting to Parliament whenever a Minister decides to fund a grant against the advice of officials.
- The final item (reporting to Parliament on MRFF grants) is covered in the MRFF Act – to date 3 reports have been tabled to Parliament, most recently in May 2023.
- A legislated review of the MRFF is due in June 2023 – the review offers an opportunity to consider any amendments that are required.
 - The review will account for the outcomes of the consultation on reforming the administration and governance of the MRFF and National Health and Medical Research Council's Medical Research Endowment Account.
 - We are currently analysing submissions and will produce and publish a report outlining what we have heard as soon as possible.
- A performance audit of the MRFF in 2021 assessed the Department's management of the MRFF, including testing whether it complied with legislative frameworks.

- The audit found management is largely effective and 3 administrative recommendations have been addressed by the Department.

Stakeholder Objective:

- Legislative amendments focused on transparency of MRFF processes, including the involvement of the Minister for Health and Aged Care in decision making.

Sensitivities or Contentious Issues:

- The letter at Attachment A was in response to articles in the Nine Entertainment Group newspapers (Attachments B-E).
- The role of the former Health Minister in the administration of the MRFF has been the subject of recent media.

Attachments:

- A. Letter from Dr Monique Ryan MP and ministerial colleagues – 21 July 2023
- B. Media - Calls to overhaul \$20b medical research fund – 16 July 2023
- C. Media - 'A shambles': Scientists want fix for \$20b fund – 17 July 2023
- D. Media – 'Funding went to 'captain's picks'' – 17 July 2023
- E. Media – 'Stronger checks on research grants needed' – 17 July 2023

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Minister	Minister Butler
PDR Number	MB23-002490
Subject	Meeting brief - MRFF correspondences sent to Ministers Gallagher and Butler
Contact Officer	Dr Masha Somi s22 [REDACTED]
Clearance Officer	Dr Phillip Gould s22 [REDACTED]
Division/Branch	Health Economics & Research Health and Medical Research Office
Has Budget Branch been consulted if there are financial implications?	Not Applicable

Adviser/DLO comments:	Returned to Dept for: REDRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> NFA <input type="checkbox"/>
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Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard

MS23-000512

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 14 April 2023

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19 APR 2023

To: Minister Butler

cc: Assistant Minister Kearney Parliamentary Secretary

Subject: Consultation on reforms to the Medical Research Endowment Account and the Medical Research Future Fund

Critical date: 19 April 2023 so the consultation can occur between late April and late May.

Recommendations:

1. Approve the Discussion paper (Attachment A).

1. Approved/Not approved/
Please discuss

2. Approve the invitation letter for the Ministerial forums (Attachment B) and for your electronic signature to be used once final lists have been negotiated with your Office.

2. Approved/Not approved/
Please discuss

3. Sign the letter to the Prime Minister (Attachment D) seeking agreement to undertake a two-stage national consultation focussed on optimising the government's funding arrangements for health and medical research.

3. Signed/Not signed/
Please discuss

4. Sign the letter to the Minister for Finance and Treasurer (Attachment E) requesting the review of the Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015 be deferred until June 2024.

4. Signed/Not signed/
Please discuss

Signature

Date: 19 / 04 / 2023

Comments: Please work with my office to refine the consultation approach on p10 of the DP

Contact Officer:	Dr Phillip Gould	First Assistant Secretary, Health Economics and Research Division	s22
Clearance Officer:	Blair Exell	Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Aged Care	s22

Issues:

1. In February 2023, you agreed to consult on reforms to improve alignment and coordination between the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Medical Research Endowment Account and Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF, MS23-000295).

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2. To support this consultation, the Department has:
 - a. drafted a Discussion paper (Attachment A) to guide the consultation
 - b. developed a consultation strategy, including Ministerial and Commonwealth roundtables, webinars and a public submission process
 - c. drafted an invitation letter (Attachment B) to the Ministerial roundtables for key national stakeholders (indicative list at Attachment C, with details to be resolved with your Office), which you and/or Assistant Minister Kearney are proposed to Chair.
 - d. drafted a letter to the Prime Minister seeking his agreement to initiate the consultation process (Attachment D).
3. A review of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* is due by June 2023. Given the work in train to review current arrangements, the Department recommends seeking an extension to the review's due date by writing to the Minister for Finance and Treasurer (Attachment E).

Background:

Following your agreement to MS23-000265, Health and NHMRC have worked together to prepare the Discussion paper at Attachment A. Parts of the medical research sector have put forward proposals for governance and administrative reform – the Discussion paper takes account of these proposals.

Should you approve it for release, it will be published on the Department's website and promoted to stakeholders.

The Department has prepared invitation letters (Attachment B) for the proposed Ministerial roundtables. Should you approve the proforma, the Department proposes working with your office to apply your electronic signature to the letters to participants once a final invitation list is approved by your Office.

The Discussion paper notes consultation to support the development of a national strategy for health and medical research in Australia will follow this reform process. The Department will provide you with further advice on the national strategy once the consultation is finalised and the Government has resolved its approach for investing in health and medical research.

A review of the operation of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (MRFF Act) is required before 30 June 2023. The review can be deferred under section 62(1)(b) of the MRFF Act if the Minister for Finance and the Treasurer consider another date to be appropriate.

The Department has held initial officer-level discussions with the Department of Finance and the Treasury. The Department considers a deferral until July 2024 would allow sufficient time to consider the outcomes of the national consultation process as part of a review of the MRFF Act, while also allowing for sufficient time for drafting and passing legislation to give effect to any agreed reforms. Should you agree, we recommend that you write to the Minister for Finance and Treasurer seeking this deferral (Attachment D).

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Attachments:

- A: Draft Discussion Paper
- B: Draft Invitation letter to Ministerial forums
- C: Draft invitation list for Ministerial forums
- D: Letter to the Prime Minister
- E: Letter to the Minister for Finance and Treasurer

Sensitivities: Some stakeholders may prefer the concurrent development of a national strategy. The Department proposes finalising the review of the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account and MRFF before commencing development of the national strategy to ensure that each issue receives adequate attention and focus.

Consultations: The CEO of NHMRC, Professor Anne Kelso, has contributed to the development of the Discussion Paper and consultation approach. The Department consulted with officials from the Department of Finance and the Treasury on the approach to the review of the MRFF Act.

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Department of Health and Aged Care

**Ministerial Submission – Standard
MS23-000295**

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 27 February 2023

To: Minister Butler

cc: Assistant Minister Kearney

Subject: Consultation on Reforms to the Administration and Governance of the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Fund and Medical Research Future Fund

Critical date: 28 February, to support a briefing on this matter

Recommendations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Agree to consult stakeholders on options for reforming the administration and governance of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Medical Research Endowment Account and the Medical Research Future Fund to improve alignment and coordination.</p> | <p>1. <u>Agreed/Not agreed/</u>
Please discuss</p> |
| <p>2. Should you agree to 1, Approve the proposed Terms of Reference for the consultation set out in <u>Attachment A</u>.</p> | <p>2. <u>Approved/Not approved/</u>
Please discuss</p> |

Signature

Date: 28 / 02 / 2023

Comments:

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer, Health and Medical Research Office	s22
Clearance Officer:	Prof Brendan Murphy	Secretary, Department of Health and Aged Care	s22

Issues:

1. The scale of Australian Government investment in health and medical research warrants regular assessment of the effectiveness of policies, processes and structures.
 - a. As the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) matures, there is an opportunity to consider its alignment and coordination with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Medical Research Endowment Fund to ensure that the Australian community receives the greatest benefit from this substantial investment.
2. While there is general agreement that there is value in having two complementary funds – one priority led and the other investigator led – feedback from researchers suggests the current systems and processes supporting the two funds are confusing and duplicative.

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- a. This view has been particularly expressed through peak organisations such as the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI), the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences, and Research Australia.
3. Now is a good time to re-consider arrangements to ensure they are effective and efficient and maximise outcomes for the community.
 - a. You could leverage this opportunity by consulting broadly across the sector on options for reforming administrative and governance arrangements between the MREA and MRFF, with a focus on improving alignment and coordination.
 - b. A broad review would allow all key stakeholders (including those outside the academic medical research sector) to consider and advise on the impacts of proposed reforms and build consensus that would enable effective implementation of your preferred option.
4. Should you wish to undertake this consultation, you and Assistant Minister Kearney could lead the process, supported by the Department and NHMRC.
 - a. Your involvement would be a strong indication of your intent to hear all views across the sector, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.
 - b. The Department has drafted terms of reference, including a consultation approach and timeline for your consideration (Attachment A).
5. Consultation is proposed to occur in the first half of 2023. Following its completion and your decision on your preferred approach to reform, the Department proposes to seek your agreement to develop a national strategy for health and medical research, commencing later in 2023, taking approximately a year, in consultation with the sector.

Background:

We briefed you in August 2022 on options for optimising the Australian Government's investment in health and medical research and you sought advice on how these could be progressed (MB22-002324 refers).

A further paper was provided to your office in December 2022 which included proposals for undertaking consultations on:

- the governance and administration arrangements for the MREA and MRFF to provide you with options for improving administrative and strategic alignment between the two funds
- the development of a long-term national health and medical research strategy.

Proposals from the research sector

The medical research community has put forward other proposals which seek to promote a specific model of governance reform, and a sector-driven approach to developing a national strategy. We recently briefed you in relation to a proposal from s47F and s47F on behalf of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) (MB23-000029 refers). AAMRI has also written to you about how you might undertake limited consultation regarding their proposal, on the assumption that you support their model.

Department's proposal to consult on a range of models of reform

Proposals from peak bodies necessarily reflect the views of member organisations. The Department recommends a broad national consultation that allows the full breadth of health and medical researchers and interested groups (industry, consumers, health services, states, advocacy, and philanthropy) to be involved in developing solutions.

The Department proposes allowing consideration of several reform models, rather than presenting a single option. A single model risks stifling debate (by appearing to be a preferred approach) and limiting the generation of innovative solutions and approaches.

As a result, we suggest consulting on three broad models – constituting small, medium and large-scale reform.

The Terms of Reference (Attachment A) and draft outline for the proposed discussion paper (Attachment B) reflect the Department's proposed approach.

Attachments:

- A:** Proposed Terms of Reference for the consultation, including consultation approach and timeline
- B:** Proposed Discussion Paper outline

Sensitivities: Peak bodies that have put forward reform proposals may consider that they are best placed to lead the consultation and that it should be narrower in scope and scale. This is balanced by the risk of excluding key stakeholders from this formative process, who may be critical of any outcomes arising from the consultation. AAMRI is calling for the concurrent development of the national medical research strategy. The Department proposes finalising the review of the MREA and MREF before commencing development of the strategy – this will ensure each issue receives adequate attention and focus.

Consultations: The CEO of NHMRC, Professor Anne Kelso, was consulted on the Ministerial Submission.



Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

Ministerial Submission – Standard

MS23-000170

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 6 June 2023

RECEIVED

15 JUN 2023

Parliamentary Section

To: Mark Butler

Subject: Review of the Medical Research Future Fund Genomics Health Futures Mission

Critical date: 15 Jun 2023, so the outcomes of the review can inform the 2024 grant opportunity

Recommendations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Approve the review of the Medical Research Future Fund Genomics Health Futures Mission (GHFM), and approach as set out in the draft Terms of Reference (<u>Attachment A</u>).</p> <p>2. Should you approve recommendation 1, Annotate your preferred candidates for an independent GHFM Review Panel to oversee and guide the review (<u>Attachment B</u>).</p> | <p>1. <u>Approve</u>/Not approved</p> <p>2. <u>Annotated</u>/Please discuss</p> |
|---|---|

Signature
Comments:

Date: 15 / 06 / 2023

Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer Health and Medical Research Office	s22
Clearance Officer:	Mary Wood	Acting Deputy Secretary Health Strategy, First Nations and Sport	s22

Issues:

- The genomics research landscape in Australia has changed since the establishment of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) GHFM in 2018.
 - A mid-term review is timely as we are now 5 years into a 10 year mission and a review would assess progress and inform remaining investments.
- Consistent with previous reviews of MRFF missions, the department recommends establishment of an independent expert panel to guide the review.
 - A list of potential members for the panel is provided at Attachment B, for your consideration.

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- Members of the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board usually participate in MRFF mission reviews and Professors Doug Hilton AO and Denise Doolan have volunteered this time.

Background:*Proposed approach for the review*

The proposed approach for the review is outlined in the Terms of Reference at Attachment A. The review would consider:

- how the MRFF has contributed to genomics research in Australia,
- how MRFF-funded genomics research sits within the national and international genomics research funding landscape
- alignment and progress of MRFF-funded genomics research towards:
 - the GHFM [Roadmap](#) and [Implementation Plan](#)
 - the [Australian Government's 10-year MRFF investment plan](#) and the MRFF's Evaluation Strategy
- opportunities (if any) to enhance MRFF funding and granting arrangements to improve the impact of MRFF funded genomics research

Consistent with previous MRFF mission reviews, the Department proposes a three-stage approach:

- conduct a desktop scan of the national and international genomics research landscape (in collaboration with Australian Genomics)
- engage an independent contractor to review funded grants and gather views from stakeholders in genomics research
- produce a report with key findings and opportunities for future funding.

To leverage existing funding arrangements, the Department proposes working with Australian Genomics under an existing grant agreement, under which they are provided \$5 million per annum. Australian Genomics would conduct the desktop scan of the genomics landscape.

An independent contractor would be engaged via an open, competitive procurement process, to conduct the other elements of the review. Having an independent contractor review funded grants and conduct interviews will give assurance of confidentiality to MRFF grant recipients (noting Australian Genomics is sometimes viewed as a competitor) and also stakeholders (Attachment C, who would be more likely to provide frank feedback and advice through a confidential process).

To avoid any perception of conflict of interest, members of the expert panels that set MRFF mission roadmaps and implementation plans do not participate in their subsequent review. As almost all eminent Australian genomics researchers were involved in the original panel or have received funding from the GHFM, the Department recommends the GHFM Review Panel comprises mostly international experts. The list at Attachment B provides you with options for consideration, including identifying international experts with experience in the Australian system. It also includes options for consumer and First Nations members.

Consistent with all MRFF advisory groups, all members will have to comply with the MRFF Declarations of Interest Policy Statement.

The review is expected to commence in Quarter 3 2023 and conducted over a period of 8 months. The report of the review would be provided to a new GHFM Expert Advisory Panel, to be appointed by you (likely in 2024) for the purpose of revising the GHFM Roadmap and Implementation Plan.

MRFF investments in genomics and progress of the GHFM

The MRFF GHFM was established in 2018, investing \$500.1 million over 10 years to improve the lives of Australians by accelerating research that delivers more effective testing, diagnosis and treatment; facilitating the adoption of new interventions; and consolidating Australia's international leadership in genomics.

At the request of First Nations members of the first Expert Advisory Panel (ie the group that established the current Roadmap and Implementation Panel), the acronym (GHFM) is used to avoid the use of the term 'mission'.

To date, the GHFM has disbursed \$207.2 million in funding via 63 projects (as at 28 March 2023). There have also been 75 genomics-related MRFF projects funded outside the GHFM, with a total value of \$249.5 million (Attachment D).

The review will provide the next Expert Advisory Committee with a sound evidence base to refresh the GHFM Roadmap (Attachment E) and Implementation Plan (Attachment F), to guide the design of grant opportunities from 2024-25 onwards.

Attachments:

- A:** Draft Terms of Reference
- B:** Potential GHFM Review Panel nominees
- C:** Potential key stakeholders for consultation
- D:** List of funded projects and preliminary analyses of MRFF-funded genomics research
- E:** GHFM Roadmap
- F:** GHFM Implementation Plan

Budget/Financial Implications:

Members of the Panel will be remunerated for both preparation and meeting attendance time in accordance with the Departmental Remuneration Framework. These costs, as well as the cost to engage a contractor, will be funded through the Health and Medical Research Office's existing Departmental allocation.

Sensitivities

Australian Genomics is a key stakeholder within the genomics landscape and has members who have received MRFF funding. Thus, their involvement in the review may be seen as a conflict. This will be managed by limiting their role to the desktop scan.

Consultations:

In developing the approach to the Review, the Health and Medical Research Office has consulted with Professors Hilton and Doolan. Professor Kathryn North AC, the lead of Australian Genomics, has also agreed to the potential involvement of Australian Genomics in the review.

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Department of Health and Aged Care

Information Brief

MB23-000029

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 24/01/2023

To: Minister Butler

**Subject: PROPOSAL FOR AN AUSTRALIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY
MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT
(MC22-016266)**

Comments:		
Contact Officer:	Helen Rickards	A/g Chief Executive Officer, Health and Medical Research Office
Clearance Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Health Economics and Research Division

s22

Key Issues:

1. s47F [REDACTED] have put forward a proposal for an Australian Health and Medical Research Strategy, which describes a unified health and medical research funding system with a single accountable officer (MC22-016266 refers). The proposal includes a suggestion that the NHMRC CEO should oversee medical research funding from both the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHRMC) and the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).
2. The proposal is predicated on the contestable view that there is no process for strategic coordination of health and medical research funding and priorities in Australia, with a particular focus on making changes to the governance of the MRFF to remediate this.
3. This includes reliance on the findings of a 2021 ANAO audit of the administration of the MRFF as evidence for systemic inefficiencies; however, the audit findings were that the administration of the MRFF was largely effective. The audit made no findings regarding systemic inefficiencies arising from the establishment of the MRFF.
4. The proposal reflects the views of some in the academic research community and does not include those from other stakeholders in the sector as well as industry and consumers.
5. Aspects of the proposal give rise to potentially extensive legislative and administrative implications, including the expansion of powers for the NHMRC CEO.
6. We briefed you on options for optimising Australian Government investment in health and medical research on 2 August 2022 (MB22-002324 refers) and have subsequently provided a paper to your office in response to your request for options on how to progress these. This paper takes account of the proposals by sector stakeholders, including those of s47F [REDACTED]

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7. We consider that the proposals put forward by s47F [REDACTED] can be given proper consideration through the options for action outlined in the paper currently with your office, including:
- a. a rapid review of the governance of NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account and the MRFF in order to provide you with options for improving administrative and strategic alignment between the two funds by end April 2023
 - b. the development of a long-term national health and medical research strategy. The Department has provided an option of tasking a refreshed and repurposed Vision 2040 Strategic Advisory Committee to deliver a report by June 2024.
8. Given that the MRFF is a priority-led fund with a translational focus, and is expected to deliver both health and economic benefits to all Australians, it is important that any consideration of changes to the MRFF take account of the views of all stakeholders, and not only a subsection of the academic research community. The Department's proposed approach enables this.

Background:

- The key elements of the AAMRI proposal are:
 - the development of a national Australian Health and Medical Research Strategy that unifies and coordinates investments for the NHMRC and the MRFF and other funders, overseen and maintained by a strategic committee
 - expanding the powers of the CEO of the NHMRC to encompass:
 - oversight of the Medical Research Endowment Account and the MRFF Special Account
 - the provision of advice to governments, parliaments, the public service and the Australian community on matters relating to all health and medical research and innovation
 - the dissolution of the MRFF's Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB) with its functions to be absorbed by the strategic committee.
- The proposal is one of several that have been put forward since the 2022 election, from within the research community. These have generally been reflective of the specific interests of the academic research community, and have not taken account of other perspectives, particularly those of industry, health service providers and consumers.

- s47C [REDACTED]

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Minister	Minister Butler
PDR Number	MB23-000029
Subject	Info Brief: proposal for an Australian Health and Medical Research Strategy maximising the impact of Australia's health and medical research investment (MC22-016266)
Contact Officer	Helen Rickards s22
Clearance Officer	Dr Masha Somi s22
Division/Branch	Strategy Evidence & Research Health Economics & Research

Adviser/DLO comments:	<p>Returned to Dept for:</p> <p>REDRAFT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NFA <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Department of Health and Aged Care

Information Brief

MB22-002324

Version (1)

Date sent to MO: 2/08/2022

RECEIVED

09 AUG 2022

Parliamentary Section

To: Minister Butler

Subject: DEPARTMENT INITIATED INFORMATION BRIEF: OPTIONS FOR OPTIMISING AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

Comments: Did like some options presented about how to progress this - including with a reference to the legislated review of MRFF due in 2023		
Contact Officer:	Dr Masha Somi	Chief Executive Officer Health and Medical Research Office
Clearance Officer:	Paul McBride	Acting Deputy Secretary Strategy, Evidence and Research Group

7/8

s22

Key Issues:

1. There is an opportunity for the Government to consider options for optimising the Government's investment in health and medical research. Between the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), more than \$1.5 billion is expected to be available each year from 2022-23.
2. A slide deck outlining the current state and options for your consideration is provided at Attachment A and summarised below.
3. An optimal health and medical research sector that is forward looking needs to produce research that translates into better quality care, improved health outcomes and offers value for money from research investment.
4. There is also opportunity to consider ways to maximise funding and investment outcomes, by building on strengths and capitalising on opportunities.
 - While the NHMRC and MRFF are complementary funds, there are some areas of funding overlap across the research pipeline. There are two options for your consideration in setting future directions for Australian Government investment in health and medical research:
 - Option 1: acknowledge the benefits of the overlap and improve coordination between NHMRC and MRFF to maximise efficiencies and outcomes

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- Option 2: aligning roles and set clearer and distinct funding focuses or merging NHMRC and MRFF to reduce overlap.
 - There is also an opportunity to review policies and frameworks to improve coordination and maximise value of investments, for example by establishing structures that enable more effective partnerships between the Australian Government, state/territory governments, industry and philanthropic organisations.
5. As the Minister for Health and Aged Care, you have the power under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* to make decisions on MRFF expenditure.

Background:

The NHMRC and MRFF are the main Australian Government funders of health and medical research, with \$6.3 billion available over 4 years from 2022–23.

The NHMRC and MRFF take complementary approaches to fund health and medical research:

- NHMRC takes a bottom-up approach to fund research across all areas of human health and support broad foundation of national research capability
- MRFF takes a top-down approach to fund priority-led research to address identified national needs and emerging health challenges, and has a focus on translation and commercialisation.

Under the previous Government's MRFF 2nd 10-year Investment Plan (2nd Plan), \$6.3 billion is available from 2022–23 to 2031–32 across 21 initiatives. While the plan allows for flexibility in funding decisions, it can be replaced or altered at your discretion. The current status of these funds is as follows:

A total of \$614.5 million has been allocated (in 2022–23 and future years) to advertised grant opportunities. These funds could be reprioritised; however, there is a public expectation for these grant opportunities to proceed as advertised.

In 2022–23, of the available budget of \$650.0 million:

- \$246.0 million is contractually committed to existing grants and cannot be reprioritised
- \$277.6 million has been allocated to advertised grant opportunities
- \$126.4 million is currently unallocated, noting that the Department has already commenced development and undergone stakeholder consultation for several grant opportunities that could utilise the majority of this funding. If you agree to proceed with these new grant opportunities, separate ministerial submissions seeking your formal approval will be provided to you.

From 2023–24 to 2031–32:

- \$5.1 billion, which is assigned to specific MRFF initiatives, has not yet been committed under any grant agreements or advertised grant opportunities. All or part of this could be reprioritised.
- \$195.4 million is not assigned to specific MRFF initiatives (i.e. it can be used to fund grants under any of the 21 initiatives), and could be reprioritised.

Attachments:

- A. Slide deck - Optimising Australian Government investment in health and medical research

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Minister	Minister Butler
PDR Number	MB22-002324
Subject	Department Initiated Information Brief: Options for optimising Australian Government investment in health and medical research
Contact Officer	Dr Masha Somi s22
Clearance Officer	Paul McBride s22
Division/Branch	Strategy Evidence & Research Health Economics & Research

Adviser/DLO comments:	Returned to Dept for: REDRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> NFA <input type="checkbox"/>
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