NHMRC’s roles

• Functions set down in the NHMRC Act 1992.
• Mission: *Working to build a healthy Australia*
• Overall purposes of NHMRC are to:
  o fund high quality health and medical research and build research capability
  o support the translation of health and medical research into better health outcomes
  o promote the highest ethical standards in health and medical research.
• Roles in guidance, ethics and research integrity
Medical Research Endowment Account, 2015 – 2016

- Project Grants: $421.6m (51.1%)
- Program Grants: $108.7m (13.2%)
- Research Fellowships: $61.2m (7.4%)
- Centres of Research Excellence: $42.2m (5.1%)
- Early Career Fellowships: $38.2m (4.6%)
- Independent Research Institute Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIISS): $30.5m (3.7%)
- Career Development Fellowships: $25.8m (3.1%)
- Partnership Projects: $15.7m (1.9%)
- Development Grants: $14.2m (1.7%)
- Targeted Calls for Research: $10.5m (1.3%)
- Postgraduate Scholarships: $9.1m (1.1%)
- Other Funding Schemes (<$10m): $47.8m (5.8%)
NHMRC funding for research

• Goal of all NHMRC funding is the improvement of human health.

• All funding is awarded based on independent expert review:
  o significance and/or innovation
  o scientific merit and feasibility of the proposal
  o track record of the investigators
  o other scheme-specific criteria.

• Most NHMRC funding is investigator-initiated; some is targeted to specific research fields, topics or gaps in capacity.

• NHMRC is committed to spending at least 5% of the MREA on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.
NHMRC expenditure by broad research area

Expenditure

- Basic Science
- Clinical Medicine and Science
- Health Services Research
- Public Health

Year: 2000 to 2016

Expenditure ranges:
- $0 to $100,000,000
- $100,000,000 to $200,000,000
- $200,000,000 to $300,000,000
- $300,000,000 to $400,000,000
- $400,000,000 to $500,000,000
- $500,000,000 to $600,000,000
- $600,000,000 to $700,000,000
- $700,000,000 to $800,000,000
- $800,000,000 to $900,000,000
- $900,000,000 and above
Please note that this and the next three slides report grants with a focus on rural, remote and regional health research based on searching grant titles, key words and summaries. They under-estimate total expenditure on research related to rural and remote health.
NHMRC funding for rural and remote health research

Expenditure

- Public Health
- Health Services Research
- Clinical Medicine and Science
- Basic Science

Year

NHMRC funding for rural and remote health research

Translating Research into Practice Fellowships
Targeted Calls for Research
Targeted Calls for People
Research Fellowships
Project Grants
Program Grants
Practitioner Fellowships

Expenditure

$0
$5,000,000
$10,000,000
$15,000,000
$20,000,000
$25,000,000

Location of Administering Institution (2011–2016)

130 grants awarded to 92 urban + 38 regional Administering Institutions

- Menzies School (22)
- JCU (10)
- CQU (2)
- Griffith (1)
- Wollongong (1)
- Deakin (2)
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.

**Ten of the Best 2013**

Project Grant on effectiveness of rotavirus vaccines

Ross Andrews et al. (Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin)
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.

**Ten of the Best 2014**

Project Grant on improving Indigenous maternal and infant health in remote communities in Northern Territory

Lesley Barclay et al.

(Charles Darwin University and University of Sydney)
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.

Ten of the Best 2015

Project Grant on Indigenous health: understanding the health gap

Louisa Jorm et al. (Western Sydney University and UNSW)
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.
- Partnership Projects
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

• All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc.

• Partnership Projects

  o Support collaboration between researchers, service providers and policy makers
  
  o Translate research evidence into policy and practice to improve health services and programs
  
  o Partners are involved at all stages of the research project and contribute at least 50% of total cost: health care providers, NGOs and charities, government departments and agencies, and private sector and community organisations
  
  o NHMRC accepts applications all year (3 peer review cycles) and awards up to $1.5 million per grant.
## NHMRC Partnership Projects in rural health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CIA</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>A/Prof Louise Maple-Brown</td>
<td>Menzies School of Health Research</td>
<td>Northern Territory Diabetes in Pregnancy Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Prof Judith Walker</td>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>Aged Support and Aged Care: program and policy structures to support ageing well in rural and regional Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Prof Jane Hocking</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Should Australia introduce a national chlamydia testing program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Prof Mark Dadds</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>An evidence-based intervention for mental health disorders in rural children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Prof Jane Farmer</td>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>Community Participation Method for Rural Medicare Local population health planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Prof John Kaldor</td>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>Long-term assessment of a program to improve the quality of sexual health services in remote communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Prof Alan Cass</td>
<td>Menzies School of Health Research</td>
<td>To improve the quality and access to dialysis treatments by Indigenous Australians from remote areas by using a patient-centred approach to determine the cost-effectiveness of treatment models that include the health, social and economic impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>A/Prof Rebecca Guy</td>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>Uptake, sustainability and impact of scaling up point-of-care testing for sexually transmissible infections in remote and regional Aboriginal communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Prof David Simmons</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Longitudinal study of health, disease and access to care in rural Victoria: the Crossroads follow up study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Prof Timothy Skinner</td>
<td>Menzies School of Health Research</td>
<td>Acceptability and effectiveness of the DESMOND diabetes self-management program for Indigenous Australians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Prof Len Gray</td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Exploring the value of telehealth in primary care: A controlled trial within the Royal Flying Doctor Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Dr Peter Arrow</td>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Minimally invasive approach to the management of early childhood caries among Aboriginal pre-schoolers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Prof David Mackey</td>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Targeting at-risk relatives of glaucoma patients for early diagnosis and treatment (TARRGET)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NHMRC Partnership Project: National Child Oral Health Study 2012-14

• Cross-sectional study of children aged 5–14 years in Australia

• 24,664 children from 841 participating schools

• Substantial social patterning of oral health status, service use and behaviours

• Impact of parents’ education and income, Indigenous identity and living in remote areas – especially for untreated dental caries and tooth loss

NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc
- Partnership Projects
- Centres of Research Excellence
- Targeted Calls for Research
- Northern Australia Collaborative Research Program
- Centres for Innovation in Regional Health
NHMRC support for rural and remote health research

- All standard grant schemes: Projects, Programs, Fellowships etc
- Partnership Projects
- Centres of Research Excellence
- Targeted Calls for Research
- Northern Australia Collaborative Research Program
- Centres for Innovation in Regional Health
  - Built on model of NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres
  - Recognition of national leadership in health research and translation of direct relevance and benefit to regional and remote areas of Australia
  - Excellence in research collaboration, translation, education/training and health care
Medical Research Future Fund: a $20 billion fund to support medical research in perpetuity

Source: Budget Paper 2, 2014-15
MRFF Strategy and Priorities

Australian Medical Research Advisory Board consults then determines:

• 5-year Strategy:
  o must ensure coherent and consistent approach is adopted
  o must take NHMRC strategy into account

• 2-year Priorities:
  o must be consistent with the Strategy
  o must take into account several factors

Minister for Health takes the Priorities into account and may seek expert advice in making decisions on MRFF expenditure.
MRFF: first round of disbursements

- Extensive consultation in 2016.
- AMRAB’s first Strategy and Priorities announced by the Prime Minister 9 November 2016
- Investment plan developed by Government taking Strategy and Priorities into account
- $61 million to be allocated in 2016–2017: announcements pending
The future of rural health research

• Rural and remote communities and health care providers are at the frontline:
  • Indigenous health
  • extreme climate events, emerging infectious diseases
  • importance of preventive health and well-being

• Opportunities to develop innovative technologies for remote diagnosis, treatment and care, and public health and social interventions to improve health and well-being

• New opportunities for recognition and support:
  • NHMRC Centres for Innovation in Regional Health
  • Medical Research Future Fund

• Need for multidisciplinary teams, capacity building and community engagement in public health and health services research – get involved!
Thank you