

Medical Research Future Fund set to put high quality evidence at the heart of healthcare – historic moment for all Australians

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Australian healthcare entered a new era this week with release of the Government's five-year strategy for the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) as well as a list of key priorities for investment in the next two years.

Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) Chair, Professor John Zalcborg said "This is a watershed moment for healthcare in Australia and we congratulate Minister Ley and the Federal Government, the members of the Medical Research Advisory Board (MRAB) and the Department of Health on bringing such a visionary plan together."

The need to embed research as a core component of the health system is clearly a key understanding behind the Government's plan to strategically invest in nationally coordinated clinical and health services research via the MRFF with patients and consumers the focal point.

"For the first time, we have a national investment strategy focused on building our capacity to undertake high impact research to determine which treatments deliver the best outcomes for patients and which represent the best value for the health system.

We are tremendously pleased to see investments flagged for a number of critical areas including clinical trials networks and registry infrastructure, public good trials and comparative effectiveness studies, clinical research fellowships, optimising health data linkage and improving the translation of research into practice and policy." Professor Zalcborg said.

Professor Zalcborg also emphasized that a key component of the announcement is the commitment to measuring and reporting the economic returns from MRFF investments.

"The MRFF, once fully capitalised, will distribute \$1 billion of public funds each year. It will be beholden on those accessing these funds to conduct research to be able to demonstrate that the research advances healthcare and represents a good use of public dollars – either through more effective treatments or more cost-effective care."

The ACTA Summit 2016 to be held in Melbourne later this month will address this very issue as top minds across the country come together to discuss ways to measure and maximise the direct health and economic returns of public investment in clinical trials and clinical quality registries.

"We look forward to working with the MRAB and the Government to support the development of metrics that will ensure that we are able to demonstrate the impact of the MRFF in a way that is meaningful to the Australian public."

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About ACTA

The Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) is the national peak advisory body supporting high-quality investigator-driven clinical trials and clinical quality registries within the Australian health system.

Our mission is to promote effective and cost-effective healthcare in Australia through investigator-driven clinical trials and registries that generate evidence to support decisions made by health practitioners, policymakers and consumers.

ACTA brings together more than 60 clinical trials networks, large trial coordinating centres and clinical quality registries working to generate robust evidence for the effectiveness of treatments and to measure their outcomes for patients treated everyday across Australia.

Over the last decade ACTA members have conducted or initiated more than 1,000 studies, involving more than 1 million participants and representing over \$1 billion in total research investment.

These are the types of studies that are designed to influence clinical practice, inform health policy, and most importantly, improve outcomes for patients.

Collectively, ACTA's represents well over 10,000 senior clinicians working within the Australian healthcare system to improve outcomes and the quality of care in areas that include (but are not limited to):

Anaesthesia	Neonatal Medicine
Burns	Neuromuscular Disease
Cancer (all tumor streams)	Neuroscience
Cardiac Surgery	Obesity
Diabetes	Orthopaedic Surgery
Emergency Medicine	Paediatrics
General Practice & Primary Care	Palliative Care
Health Services Research	Patient Blood Management
Healthy Ageing	Pre-hospital Care
Immunology	Public Health Research
Infectious Diseases	Radiation Therapy
Intensive Care	Radiopharmaceuticals
Kidney Disease	Sleep Health
Maternal and Fetal Medicine	Spinal Cord Injury
Mental Health	Stroke
Musculoskeletal Conditions	Trauma

More about ACTA at www.clinicaltrialsalliance.org.au