

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015

Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2020-2022

Authority

Section 32E of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (the MRFF Act) provides that the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB) must determine the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities (the Priorities). The Act determines that the Priorities are in force for two years and that subsequent Priorities must be determined and in force as soon as the current Priorities cease to be in force.

Purpose

In accordance with the MRFF Act, the Australian Government must take into account the Priorities that are in force at the time of making disbursements from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). The Advisory Board has constructed the Priorities as a document that should be read and considered in conjunction with the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-2021* (the Strategy), also required by the Act, as there is alignment with the identified strategic platforms.

Background

The MRFF was established under the MRFF Act to provide financial assistance to support health and medical research and innovation, with the objective of improving the health and wellbeing of Australians.

The first disbursements from the MRFF were made in the 2016-17 financial year by the Australian Government following consideration of the inaugural Strategy and Priorities.

The Advisory Board currently comprises of:

- Professor Ian Frazer AC (Chair)
- Mr Yasser El-Ansary
- Dr Deborah Rathjen
- Professor Karen Reynolds
- Ms Jennifer Williams AM
- Professor Anne Kelso AO

In developing the next set of Priorities, the Advisory Board has taken into consideration:

- a) the burden of disease on the Australian community;
- b) how to deliver practical benefits from medical research and medical innovation to as many Australians as possible;

- c) how to ensure that financial assistance provided under this Act provides the greatest value for all Australians;
- d) how to ensure that financial assistance provided under this Act complements and enhances other financial assistance provided for medical research and medical innovation; and
- e) other relevant matters.

Details

The Priorities guide the provision of financial assistance from the MRFF. Program level funding decisions, informed by the Priorities are proposed by the Australian Minister for Health through the Budget process.

The Priorities must be consistent with the Strategy that is in force. The Priorities have been organised according to the overarching strategic platforms identified in the Strategy.

The Priorities that are in force are published on the Department of Health's Medical Research Future Fund website.

Consultation

Section 32EA of the Act requires the Advisory Board to consult with organisations with expertise in medical research and innovation, organisations that represent consumers who benefit from health and medical research and innovation, and any other person or organisation.

These Priorities have been developed following extensive national consultation with consumers, healthcare providers, researchers, organisations and individuals. The consultation process included a call for written submissions and several public webinars.

The consultation process commenced on 9 September 2020 with the release of a Consultation Guide and opening of an online submission process. Two public webinars were also held to inform the consultation. The Advisory Board engaged with more than 500 people and organisations through this consultation process, including receiving approximately 250 submissions from a range of interested parties including peak bodies, universities, medical research institutions, clinicians and consumers.

The submissions and feedback received through the consultation process were considered in the development of the Priorities.

The Priorities commence the day after registration on the Federal Register of Legislation.

The Priorities is a legislative instrument for the purposes of the *Legislation Act 2003*.