

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015

Medical Research Future Fund (Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026) Determination 2024

Purpose and operation

The *Medical Research Future Fund (Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026) Determination 2024* (the 2024-2026 Priorities) determines the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities (the Priorities) for 2024 to 2026.

The Priorities guides the provision of financial assistance from the Medical Research Future Fund (the MRFF).

Background

The MRFF was established under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (the MRFF Act) to provide financial assistance to support medical research and medical innovation, with the objective of improving the health and wellbeing of Australians.

The Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (the Advisory Board) was established to determine the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy and the Priorities. Pursuant to paragraph 15A(2)(a) of the MRFF Act, the Minister of Health and Aged Care takes the Priorities into account in making decisions about the financial assistance that is provided from the Medical Research Future Fund Special Account. Program level funding decisions, informed by the Priorities, are proposed by the Minister of Health and Aged Care through the Budget process.

Pursuant to subsection 32E(3) of the MRFF Act, in determining the 2024-2026 Priorities, the Advisory Board has taken into consideration the following:

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

In determining the 2024-2026 Priorities, the Advisory Board is also able to consider ‘any other relevant matter’. In addition to the above matters, Advisory Board has also considered the following matters:

- Priorities of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- Feedback gathered from the consultation in 2023 on the alignment and coordination of the MRFF and NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account and
- Feedback received during the informal consultation process in the development of National Health and Medical Research Strategy.

Authority

The MRFF Act provides the legal framework for the Australian Government to establish and administer the Medical Research Future Fund to fund medical research and medical innovation to the benefit of all Australians.

Subsection 32E(1) of the MRFF Act provides that the Advisory Board must determine the Priorities.

Pursuant to subsection 32E(6) of the MRFF Act, the 2024-2026 Priorities is a legislative instrument, and section 42 (disallowance) of the *Legislation Act 2003* does not apply to the 2024-2026 Priorities.

Commencement

The 2024-2026 Priorities commences on 6 November 2024.

The 2024-2026 Priorities that is in force will be published on the Department of Health and Aged Care's Medical Research Future Fund website. The 2024-2026 Priorities is required under subsection 32E(4) of the MRFF Act to be determined and in force as soon as the current Priorities (i.e. the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2022-2024 Determination 2022*) cease to be in force on 5 November 2024.

Consultation

Subsection 32E(1) of the MRFF Act requires the Priorities to be determined by the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board must be comprised of members with appropriate experience or knowledge in scientific and technical fields (subsection 32G(2) of the MRFF Act refers).

Subsection 32EA(1) of the MRFF Act requires that the Advisory Board, before determining the Priorities, provide a process for consulting:

- organisations with expertise in medical research or medical innovation; and
- organisations representing consumers who benefit from medical research and medical innovation; and
- any other person or organisation.

The current Advisory Board comprises of the below appointments, all due to expire in February 2026:

- Professor Ian Frazer AC (Chair)
- Professor Caroline Homer AO (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Steve Wesselingh
- Professor Denise Doolan
- Professor Douglas Hilton AO
- Ms Imelda Lynch
- Professor Tom Calma AO
- Mr Yasser El-Ansary.

Taking the current development of a National Health and Medical Research Strategy into consideration, the Advisory Board identified 39 organisations or individuals as key

stakeholders to ensure that the consultation process was appropriate and practicable. These stakeholders were invited to participate in a targeted roundtable discussion. The stakeholders were also provided an online survey link to provide further feedback, either from them directly or their networks.

30 participants from 24 organisations participated in the roundtable discussion, and 41 respondents made submissions in response to the online survey. In combination, 42 organisations and 19 individuals provided input to this consultation. The participants represent a variety of work sectors, encompassing researchers/academics, health professionals, industry representatives, health services, consumers, policymakers, and philanthropy. There was an even distribution between organisations and individuals, as well as between recipients of MRFF grants and those who have not received one. The submissions and feedback received through the consultation process were considered in the development of the Priorities.

General

Details of the 2024-2026 Priorities are set out in **Attachment A**.

Details of the *Medical Research Future Fund (Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026) Determination 2024*

Section 1 – Name

Section 1 provides that the name of the instrument is the *Medical Research Future Fund (Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026) Determination 2024*.

Section 2 – Commencement

Section 2 provides that the instrument commences on 6 November 2024.

Section 3 – Authority

Section 3 provides that the instrument is made under subsection 32E(1) of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*.

Section 4 – Cessation

Section 4 states that the instrument will cease at the end of two years beginning on 6 November 2024 under subsection 32E(5) of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*.

Section 5 – Schedules

Section 5 provides that Schedule 1 of the instrument contains the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026.

Schedule 1 – Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2024-2026

Schedule 1 contains the entire Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities for 2024-2026 as required under subsection 32E(1) of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*.