


## Working to Build Highways to Better Health

**Professor Warwick Anderson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



## Translational Research: an international trend



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## The gulf between research and health practice



Nature, 12 June 2008, 453, 840-842



"There is a widening gap between basic and clinical research."  
*Elias Zerhouni*  
 Director, US-NIH

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## NHMRC Act, amended 2006

Establishes NHMRC as an independent statutory agency within the health portfolio

- (a) To raise the standard of individual and public health throughout Australia
- (b) To foster the development of consistent health standards between the various States and Territories
- (c) To foster medical research and training and public health research and training throughout Australia; and
- (d) To foster consideration of ethical issues relating to health

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## NHMRC Act changed 2006

**Function of the NHMRC**  
The function of the NHMRC ..... is to assist the CEO in the performance of his or her functions.

**Functions of the CEO**

1. To inquire into and issue **guidelines and advice** on matters relating to:
  - i. improvement of health;
  - ii. prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease;
  - iii. public health and medical research;
  - iv. ethical issues relating to health.
2. To make recommendations to the Minister on **research expenditure**:
  - i. on public health research and training; and
  - ii. on medical research and training.

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## Functions of the CEO

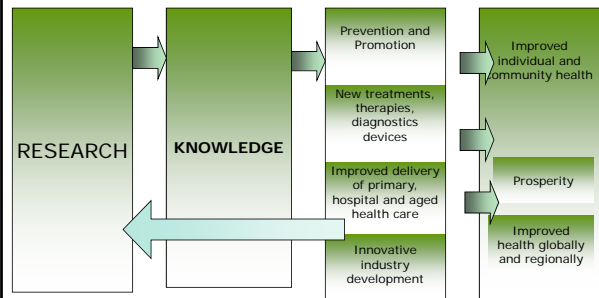
3. Develop three year **strategic plans** that set out:
  - (a) The CEO's assessment of the major health issues that are likely to arise;
  - (b) The manner in which the CEO proposes to perform his or her functions in dealing with these issues during the period
  - (c) A national strategy for medical research and public health research.

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The future for health and medical research in Australia?

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### Research Translation and Knowledge Exchange



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### NHMRC Funding Schemes - Summary

**Support for health and medical research –**

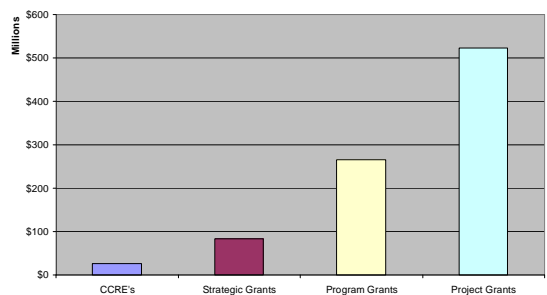
- Program Grants
- Project Grants
- Development awards

**Building Australia's Research capacity**

- People:
  - Fellowships
  - Career Development Awards
  - Training Fellowships
  - Scholarships
- Capacity
  - Population health Research
  - Health services Research
  - Centres of Clinical Research Excellence
- Research Facilities:

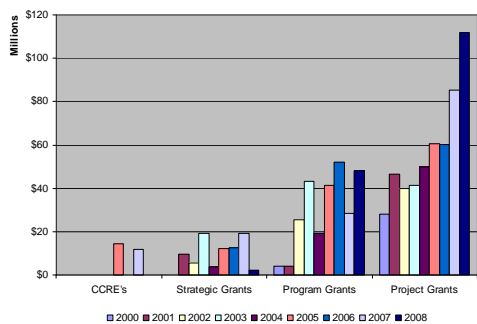
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### Research Support Total Funding for Clinical Research (2000-2008)



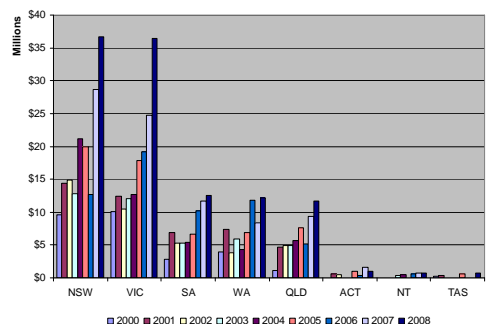
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### Research Support Annual funding for Clinical Research (2000-2008)



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### Research Support Total funding for Clinical Research Projects Grants by State (2000-2008)



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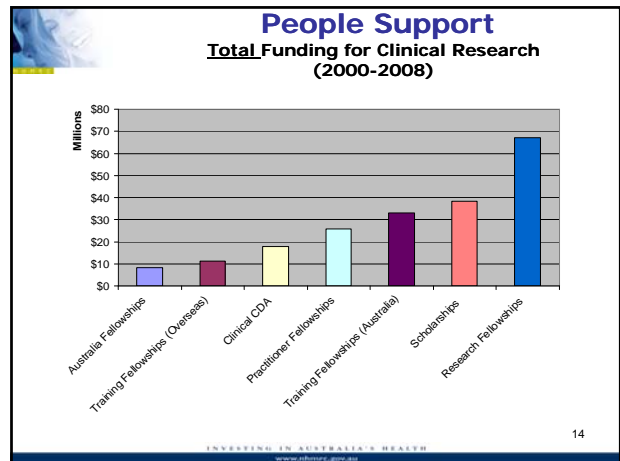
## NHMRC Centres for Clinical Research Excellence

The aims of the NHMRC CCRE programs are:

- To support clinical (human) research with potential to lead to improved health outcomes for the community;
- To foster training of clinical researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles; and
- To ensure effective translation of research outcomes into clinical practice.

Murdoch Childrens Research Institute	Child and Adolescent Immunisation
Murdoch Childrens Research Institute	Clinical Gait Analysis and Gait Rehabilitation
University of Melbourne	Preventive and early intervention strategies in emerging mental disorders in young people
University of Melbourne	Clinical Science in Diabetes
Monash University	Circulatory and Associated Conditions in Urban Indigenous Peoples
Flinders University	Ophthalmology Outcomes Research
University of Adelaide	Nutritional physiology, interventions, and outcomes
University of Sydney	Interdisciplinary clinical and health ethic research and training to improve outcomes in immunosuppressed haematology
University of Sydney	Respiratory and Sleep Medicine
University of New South Wales	Anxiety and Neuroscience
University of Queensland	Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases
University of Queensland	Spinal Pain, Injury and Health
University of Western Australia	Pulmonary and Environmental Medicine.

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## People Support Practitioner Fellowships (2002-2008)

Institution	No	Total	Institution	No	Total
Alfred Hospital	4	\$1,195,528	Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	1	\$323,700
Austin Hospital Medical Research Foundation	2	\$410,850	Royal North Shore Hospital	1	\$307,650
Brain Research Institute	1	\$407,550	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	1	\$289,750
Flinders University	3	\$975,775	Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne	1	\$396,375
James Cook University	1	\$293,250	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	1	\$332,875
Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research	2	\$765,250	University of Adelaide	2	\$834,300
Mater Medical Research Institute Ltd	1	\$70,000	University of Melbourne	6	\$2,205,950
Menzies Research Institute	1	\$351,750	University of New South Wales	5	\$2,173,550
Menzies School of Health Research	3	\$1,358,126	University of Newcastle	1	\$332,625
Monash University	6	\$2,266,675	University of Queensland	6	\$2,171,338
Murdoch Childrens Research Institute	3	\$1,033,750	University of Sydney	7	\$2,419,925
National Stroke Research Institute	1	\$287,625	University of Tasmania	1	\$323,625
Prince Charles Hospital	1	\$486,675	University of Western Australia	7	\$2,282,925
Queensland Institute of Medical Research	2	\$701,775	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute	3	\$909,125

From 2002, NHMRC has supported 74 Practitioner Fellowships receiving over \$28.8 million in funding.

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## People Support Clinical Career Development Award (2002-2008)

Institution	No	Total	Institution	No	Total
Australian National University	1	\$370,000	Queensland Institute of Medical Research	1	\$460,500
Baker Heart Research Institute	4	\$1,866,625	Royal Adelaide Hospital	1	\$367,625
Brain Research Institute	1	\$348,400	The Children's Hospital at Westmead	1	\$237,750
Flinders University	1	\$460,500	University of Adelaide	3	\$1,252,625
La Trobe University	1	\$460,500	University of Melbourne	6	\$2,588,400
Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research	1	\$285,000	University of New South Wales	2	\$600,250
Menzies Research Institute	1	\$511,250	University of Newcastle	1	\$485,500
Menzies School of Health Research	1	\$501,750	University of Queensland	5	\$1,789,774
Monash University	4	\$1,087,350	University of Sydney	1	\$409,000
Murdoch Childrens Research Institute	4	\$1,254,250	University of Western Australia	5	\$1,541,310
National Stroke Research Institute	1	\$444,500	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute	1	\$501,750

From 2002, NHMRC has supported 47 Clinical Career Development Awards receiving over \$17.8 million in funding.

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<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/partnerships.htm>

**NHMRC Partnerships: Creating effective collaboration between policy and research**

**Funding policy**

Download: The NHMRC Partnership Projects Funding Policy (PDF 586k)  
 Download: The NHMRC Partnership Projects Funding Policy (PDF 518k)

**Why partnerships matter?**

The health and health care of Australians could benefit enormously from a more effective integration of evidence into policy. It has the potential to improve the quality of health policy, services and programs and to make better use of limited resources.

In the past, the gap between policy makers and researchers has impeded the development of policy informed by the results of high quality research. Policy makers have often had to make decisions in the absence of reliable evidence. They have frequently struggled to identify research that is relevant and timely in addressing the questions that they need answered. Often they have found that research has not been designed or reported with policy and business needs in mind.

It is important to have good networks that embrace both policy makers and researchers, and this initiative will help to build those networks by bringing together both groups to address current and future policy challenges. (Philip Davies, Deputy Secretary, Australian Department of Health and Ageing)

On the other hand, researchers have faced significant barriers in attempting to have their research influence the policy and decision making process. There has been a lack of systems and structures to support researchers engaging in the policy development process. They have sometimes felt that their contributions are not appreciated or welcome.

These problems have been identified in many places around the world. Many countries have recognised the need for concerted, systematic efforts to build better connections between the two worlds of research and policy. (Professor Christopher, Australian Commission on Health Research and Innovation)

## Professor Warwick Anderson

[www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)