The Competition for NHMRC Funding
Faculty Research Day 2012

Professor Roy Goldie
Senior Principal Research Scientist
Head: Strategic Research Cluster

75 YEARS OF WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA
MREA Forward Estimates

Year  | Estimate
----- | --------
2009-10 | $703,065.00
2010-11 | $715,479.00
2011-12 | $746,075.00
2012-13 | $760,463.00
2013-14 | $774,227.00
2014-15 | $788,958.00
2015-16 | $804,165.00
Project Grants 2004-2013: annual average grant size
The competition for the available Project Grant research $ continues to get tougher, with no signs that this will ease in the foreseeable future.

If application numbers continue to grow at the rate of 5-7% annually as has been the case over the past 5 years, and if the average grant size grows over time while growth in the MREA continues to be slow, then the funding rate will fall below the current 20%.
Historical Total State Funding Comparisons

Prof Alan Pettigrew, 2004

NSW
QLD
SA
VIC
WA
## Investigator-driven NHMRC Funding Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
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## NHMRC People Support Funding Totals

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<th>2011 %</th>
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**Totals** | $141.5m | $168.5m | $151.6m | $127.9m | $168.9m | 100.0   |
### NHMRC Funding Totals 2007-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$ million</th>
<th>2007</th>
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# NHMRC Funding Support WA & SA

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Cathy O’Leary, Medical Editor wrote:

“WA risks health brain drain”

“Health Groups say WA risks becoming Australia’s “dumbest State”, with second rate medical treatments because of its dwindling share of research funding.”

“AMA WA president Richard Choong said the State needed to spend an extra $40 million a year to put WA in a stronger position to attract Federal funding.

WA is not getting its fair share on a per capita basis and risks dumbing down its doctors and getting the embarrassing reputation as the dumbest State” he said.

Health Minister Kim Hames said WA deserved a bigger share of NHMRC funding but his department gave $14.1 million to research in 2011-12.”
You need more money!

- $30 million recently distributed to researchers from non-NHMRC sources
- New research infrastructure on the SCGH site which co-locates several centres, plus the Fiona Stanley Hospital in the south
- Do you really need more money, or do you need to re-think the way you distribute and spend the available resources e.g. allocating $ in a strategic manner to only support research excellence and attract, mentor and develop your future research leaders (CDFs, NHMRC Fellows)?
- Are your available sources of research funding outside of the NHMRC framework such that you don’t perceive the urgency of enhancing your competitive positions?
WA is not getting its “fair share” of NHMRC funding…!

• There is no such thing as a “fair share”, or a rational reason for believing that “WA deserves a bigger share” of funding within a national competitive peer review process.

• The WA health & medical research sector receives what it can successfully compete for within this national scheme.

• Perhaps WA needs to put more emphasis on becoming more competitive across all 4 H & M research pillars and in multiple domains, including in capacity building.
What Does “competitive” look like?

Early Career Fellowships (Guide only):

- Average age (26 - 54)
- Average years postdoc = 0.9, with 50% in last year completing
- Average number of publications = 11 (2 - 60)
- The majority had given international oral presentations
- 50% had supervised Ph.D., Masters or Honours students
- 10% had been successful as a CI on applications to NHMRC
- 69% had been a reviewer for an international journal
What Does “competitive” look like?

Career Development Fellowships Level 1 (Guide only):

Biomedical (age range 31 - 42)
- Average years postdoc = 6
- Average number of publications = 16 (4 - 40)
- All had given international oral presentations and most had been a session Chair
- 87% had supervised Ph.D. students
- 96% had been successful as a CIA on an average of 5 grants total = about $0.8 million
- About 50% had international training

Clinical Medicine (age range 29 - 46)
- Average postdoc (Ph.D.) years = 3 for 25% of candidates; 75% had > 3 years postdoc
- Average number of publications = 21 (6 - 37)
- Average number of international/national oral presentations = 6
- All had been successful as a CIA on an average of 7 grants total = about $0.8 million
- Most are on Editorial Boards of International journals
What Does “competitive” look like?

Career Development Fellowships Level 1 (Guide only):

Population Health (age range 30 - 54)
- Average number of publications = 22 (16 - 32)
- All were emerging leaders and had given international/national oral presentations
- 87% had supervised Ph.D. students
- All had been successful as a CIA on an average of 6 grants total = about $0.9 million
- About 25% had international training

Industry (age range 31 – 32)
- Average number of publications = 14 (7 - 19)
- Average number of international/national oral presentations = 6
- All had been successful as a CIA on an average of 4 grants total = about $0.5 million
- 67% had successful patent applications
- None had international training
What Does “competitive” look like?

NHMRC Senior Research Fellowship Level A (Guide only): Biomedical

Last 5 years
• Publications: 22 journal pubs; 6 reviews; 1 book chapter; 2 patents
  Average career total journal pubs = 70

• Journals: Nature, JBC; Oncogene; PloSOne; Genes Devel; BBC Genomics; EMBO J.; Stem Cells; Cancer Res; Cloning & Stem Cells; Xenotransplantation; J Reprod & Devel; J Mol Cell Cardiol; Stem Cells & Devel; PNAS

• Editorial Board memberships: 2
• International speaking invitations: 11
• Current Ph.D. students: 3; total supervised = 3; Postdocs in lab = 3
• Grants income: up to $3 million
• NHMRC Peer review service: up to 4 GRP memberships
How to win friends & influence people!

• Do you have a plan/strategy to turn this around?
• Are you maximising your opportunities and potential to collaborate?
• Should you be taking a more strategic approach to the way you distribute your non-NHMRC-based funding?
• Are you mentoring and supporting the State’s young talent using a “tough luv” approach - time-limited support to achieve research targets, after which time the well runs dry?
• Should you be creating strategic funding pools for capacity building through fixed term “people support” to attract interstate and international research talent who can be developed to a stage where they are competitive for NHMRC funding?
Professor Roy Goldie
02 6217 9544
roy.goldie@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC 16 Marcus Clarke St,
Canberra ACT 2600
GPO Box 1421 CANBERRA ACT 2600
T: 61 2 6217 9020