MEDIA RELEASE

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Implementing the Federal Government’s dementia research boost

Sixty of Australia’s leading dementia experts made a commitment today to ensure that the government’s $200 million dementia research boost would make a lasting difference in the prevention, treatment and management of dementia for all Australians.

In a meeting hosted by the National Health and Medical Research Council, research leaders, community advocates and federal and state government representatives presented ideas on how Australia could best direct its research efforts in dementia.

NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said the meeting was essential to ensure that the funding would have as much benefit as possible for people with dementia, their carers and families.

“We need to ensure this funding builds on our strengths in dementia research and that we offer a meaningful contribution to other research already underway, both in Australia and around the world,” Professor Anderson said.

“What we do with this investment should break new ground for patient care and leave a legacy for future dementia research,” he said.

Key directions from the forum included:

- The need for strong involvement from people with dementia, their carers and families in all aspects of research, translation and care; and the need to address the stigma of dementia.
- The importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration to develop and address the key questions for dementia research – including other areas not traditionally involved in medical research such as engineering and physics.
- Acknowledgement of other major international efforts to combat dementia, and the need for Australians to be involved in these to ensure patients benefit from all cutting-edge research.
- The need to involve clinicians, including allied health practitioners, to translate research findings into practice and policy.

Federal Health Minister Peter Dutton acknowledged the forum’s discussions and reiterated the importance of finding new treatments and better ways of preventing dementia.

“Finding ways to prevent dementia, as well as developing new treatments and models of care for those already suffering dementia is no easy task, but one that I am certain our research community is up to,” Mr Dutton said.

“The Government’s $200 million boost is the first of its kind for dementia research in Australia and links our research with key international initiatives underway in the US and Europe,” he said.

The $200 million includes funding for the NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research as well as large scale research projects and funding to build the dementia research workforce, including $26 million...
of Australian Research Council funding.

Dementia affects more than 320,000 Australians – including one in four over the age of 85 – making it the third leading cause of death in Australia.

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