

**Question on Notice
Science and Medical Research
Budget Estimates Hearing**

Question from Mr Gay

1. In relation to Medical Research:

- a. Can you confirm that investment through the Medical Research Support Program in 2009-10 is \$2.7 million less than it was in 2008-09 as advised in a press release issued by Minister McKay on June 16 this year?
- b. Given that one of the goals of the program is to attract more funds from the NHMRC yet this year NSW obtained only 26% of total funds compared to 41% going to Victoria despite having one third of Australia's population – are you satisfied you are meeting your stated goals?
- c. Are you aware that respected institutes in this State have warned that the 'viability of the medical research sector in NSW is at stake', due to 'stagnation' of NSW Government funding?
- d. The nine leading Medical Research Institutes pointed out in October 2008 submission that the 'Medical Research Support Program rate has fallen to around 17 cents per dollar of competitive review grants, which is well below MRI infrastructure costs and accepted benchmarks, because total funding has remained relatively constant while competitive peer-review grants won by NSW MRIs have grown substantially' – What is the current MRSP rate per dollar of competitive review grants?
- e. Can you nominate the five goals in the NSW Government 'Statement on Innovation'?
- f. How much money is invested in meeting each of these innovation goals
 - i. Improve human capital
 - ii. Upgrade knowledge and information infrastructure
 - iii. Reduce the cost to business of utilising science and technology
 - iv. Encourage capital allocation to invest in innovation, and
 - v. Reduce regulatory barriers to innovative NSW companies.
- g. What are the key performance indicators by which attainment of these goals is measured?
- h. How are they monitored?
- i. What are the outcomes?

ANSWER

I am advised:

- (a) Funding for the Medical Research Support Program for expenditure in 2009-10 was \$26 million, allocated to 17 research organisations.

The average annual expenditure between 2006 and 2009 was \$21.3 million.

\$64 million was allocated to the program between 2006 and 2009.

- (b) The Medical Research Support Program aims to promote excellence in NSW health and medical research and to provide funding and support to health and medical research groups in NSW.

For grants commencing in 2009, NSW researchers were awarded 30 per cent or \$225 million of \$750 million in National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding. This includes a 49 per cent share of NHMRC Program Grants, worth \$61 million.

- (c) The Office for Science and Medical Research regularly consults with medical researchers in NSW.

The NSW Government's commitment to science and medical research is demonstrated by significant funding increases including:

- A \$13 million boost to the Medical Research Support Program (MRSP) between 2006 and 2009; and
- An \$8.7 million boost to the MRSP in 2009/10.

The NSW Government has also spent \$228 million on science and medical research capital projects since 2006.

This investment in medical research has leveraged \$251.9 million from the Federal Health and Hospitals Fund for four major infrastructure projects in NSW.

- (d) The NSW Government has maintained funding at 24-25 cents in the dollar for eligible, high quality grants, consistent with criteria for the Medical Research Support Program.

- (e)-(i) The NSW Government's "Statement on Innovation" is available on the website www.business.nsw.gov.au

JODI McKAY MP

Minister for Commerce

Minister for Tourism

Minister for the Hunter

Minister for Science and Medical Research