



Australian Government

NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

NNIDR Expert Advisory Panel Meeting 1 December 2017 COMMUNIQUE

The Expert Advisory Panel met by teleconference on 1 December 2017. This Communique updates stakeholders on meeting deliberations across key strategic areas.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Expert Advisory Panel discussed the particular cautions that must be taken by members, given the new and critical role members play in advising the NHMRC on policy and programs for advancing dementia research in Australia. While members have a key role in advising on policy, neither Panel members or staff of the Institute are involved in the management of Calls for Funding or contribute to the peer review of grants in round. Communiques have been introduced to provide all members with an overview of policy topics under discussion and the opportunity to contribute comments and ideas.

Boosting Dementia Research Initiative (BDRI) – Current Status

The Boosting Dementia Research Initiative (BDRI) is now past its mid-point in terms of both timing and funds, with \$142.2 million of the \$200 million in funding available now signed off by the Minister for Fellowships and projects. Two further funding announcements are anticipated before the end of 2017 or in early 2018, focusing on international collaborations across neurodegenerative diseases, and dementia in Indigenous Australians.

The update from NHMRC Finance at **TAB 3.1** was provided to the October 2017 meeting and has not changed. It shows, in summary (indexed):

Funds committed to date:	\$138.8M (All schemes signed off, awarded and in progress)
Planned commitments 2017:	\$ 34.5M (All schemes signed off and open)
Future investments:	\$ 24.7M (Initiatives under consideration and in development)
Total:	\$198.0M

Funding commitments for competitive grant schemes to date, stratified by strategic priority according to information provided by researchers (total \$120.9M over 132 projects/fellowships), are as follows:

Prevention:	\$32.7M over 27 grants
Diagnosis and assessment:	\$38.4M over 38 grants
Intervention and treatment:	\$21.4M over 36 grants
Living with Dementia:	\$10.0M over 13 grants
Care:	\$18.4M over 18 grants

Members noted that the spread across NNIDR strategic priorities, as delivered through the rigorous peer review framework of NHMRC is reasonable and demonstrated that the Strategic Roadmap for Dementia Research and Translation is being advanced on all fronts.

BDRI Program Monitoring

Members noted the working being done to monitor progress on the BDRI. Initial data used to populate the NNIDR database was publicly available grant information from the NHMRC website. This was complemented by additional data supplied by NHMRC on their identified dementia funding data set (funding for dementia research allocated through general schemes).

NHMRC provided NNIDR with detailed information from RGMS on the BDRI-funded programs in advance of the October EAP/Board meeting. This included information from researchers' CV pages linked to the BDRI grant/fellowship, such as publications and conference presentation data. It was agreed that researchers funded through the BDRI should be asked for further information only as necessary, once all information on progress and outcomes had been gathered through RGMS.

Dementia Care Forum: Involving Consumers in Research Toward Better Care Outcomes

The NNIDR Dementia Care Forum took place on Wednesday 18 October as part of the Dementia Australia National Conference 2017, held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne. The Forum was attended by 29 participants comprising of people with dementia, carers, researchers, and representatives from service providers, research organisations, peak bodies and government.

Participants worked together to answer four questions that were intended to drive conversation about how we can better involve people with dementia, their carers and families, and the wider public in dementia research. The four questions were:

1. How do we ensure our care research delivers optimal outcomes for people with dementia, their carers and families?
2. What's working well? What can be improved?
3. What can we introduce to provide for greater speed of translation and benefit at the "coalface"?
4. What are our priorities for action?

Expert Advisory Panel members endorsed the draft statement of principles drafted by participants, for Board consideration and communication more broadly in 2018.

BDRI Priorities 2017-2019 and Beyond

The Expert Advisory Panel commended the work of the **Statistics and Epidemiology Working Party**, chaired by Professor Annette Dobson, in establishing and developing the case for improvement in available big data (prevalence, incidence) for government policy and planning, as well as scientific purposes. Prof Dobson discussed how Dementia statistics and epidemiology lagged significantly behind other national health priority areas, and the reported on the successful securing of input and engagement from Government agency stakeholders (ABS, AIWH, Department of Health).

The work of the **Brain Banking Working Party**, chaired by Professor Colin Masters and Professor Peter Schofield, was also commended, in establishing the current status of brain banking and the need for a robust, long term approach across Australian jurisdictions.

These priorities will now be advanced by the Secretariat.

Further initiatives are in development and will be detailed in future communiques. Enquiries on NNIDR's strategy and programs should be directed to nnidr@dementia.org.au the first instance. Input to strategy is encouraged.