



**THE HON MARK BUTLER MP  
MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND AGEING**

May 2011

**To everyone who wrote or sent a postcard in support of the Discoveries need Dollars campaign,**

First of all, I'm sorry to not be able to respond to your letters individually.

I hope that by now you are aware that the Gillard Government reconfirmed our commitment to Health and Medical Research by maintaining the all-time high levels of funding to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in this week's budget. The budget commits \$746.1 million to the NHMRC for health and medical research. That's an increase of 4.3% on last years funding of \$715.5 million.

There has never been more money invested in health and medical research in this nation than there is today, right now, under this Government.

Research is experiencing a significant growth phase through ICT developments and the mapping of the human genome, among other things. There is pressure for research institutes, universities, hospitals and health services to work more closely together. The disease burden continues to change with the growth of chronic diseases and the impact of ageing. It's critical that research be translated into improved clinical practice quickly, and that these imperatives be seen as part of the broader health reform agenda.

In light of this and in the context of our health reform agenda, it is timely for the Government to consider how to optimise our future environment for carrying out health and medical research in this country.

I will be talking to the sector in the coming weeks about the terms of reference for a review, and about the composition of the panel to conduct the review.

I welcome your passion and commitment for medical research, and look forward to you participating in the upcoming process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Butler".

**MARK BUTLER**