

Research Australia

An alliance for discoveries in health



What do Australians think about Health & Medical Research?

2012 Opinion Poll – views of over 1000 Australians

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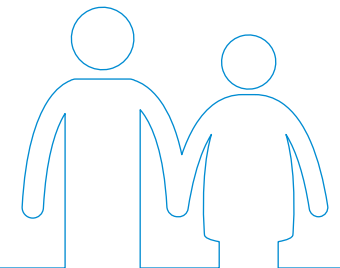
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Introduction

Research Australia is the peak body representing the health and medical research sector in Australia. Research Australia's membership is very broad, encompassing leading research organisations, academic institutions, philanthropy, community special interest groups, peak industry bodies, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, small businesses and corporate Australia.

This year's opinion polling looked at the importance of health and medical research to ordinary Australians, perceptions of who currently pays for health and medical research and opinions on who should fund it. The survey was conducted online by email invitation to a national panel between 19 and 28 June 2012 with a representative sample of 1053 Australians aged 18 and over.

We have sought to understand who makes donations to health and medical research and why, and the barriers that prevent people from donating more when nearly half of respondents think they should do so. We also gauged the response of individuals to the creation of a large government supported foundation for health and medical research, and the factors that would influence people to donate to such a foundation. Our history in conducting opinion polling (the first was conducted in 2004) enabled us to look at trends over time, identifying attitudes that have changed and some that have remained remarkably consistent over that period.



Elizabeth Foley, CEO,



Acknowledgements



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The opinion polling was undertaken on behalf of Research Australia by JWS Research.

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The report is available on the Research Australia website at www.researchaustralia.org

Executive Summary

The following is a brief summary of the results of Research Australia's Opinion Poll 2012

Improving Hospitals and healthcare and funding health and medical research

Improving Hospitals and healthcare remains the highest priority identified by respondents for the Federal Government. Providing funding for health and medical research also remains a high priority. Both these findings are consistent with previous surveys. Conducted by Research Australia.

Primary responsibility for funding Health and medical research rests with governments

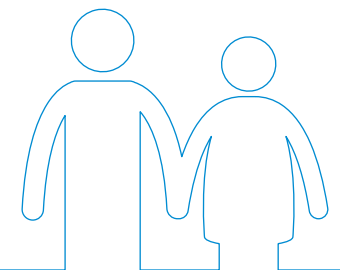
While most people think a strong Australian health and medical research industry is important, Australians generally consider that funding health and medical research is primarily a Federal Government responsibility. Views about who should be the next most important source of funding are more mixed, with the largest number of people nominating state governments.

Participation in clinical trials

The proportion of people who are willing to participate in clinical trials is the same as it was when we asked the same question eight years ago. More importantly for researchers trying to recruit participants in clinical trials, the number of people who are undecided but are willing to consider participating has increased significantly. We have identified a number of different factors that influence this group, including confidentiality, uncertainty about the outcome, and a lack of knowledge and information about clinical trials.

Donating to health and medical research

More than three quarters of Australians make donations at least annually to one or more causes, and nearly half make at least one donation per year to health and medical research. A majority of Australians believe they should donate more to health and medical research, and 40% would be likely to donate more if there was a large government supported fund for health and medical research. Of the possible incentives proposed by Research Australia, the single most influential incentive to increase donations was matching of donations by government. The next most influential were higher tax deductions and an independent Board.



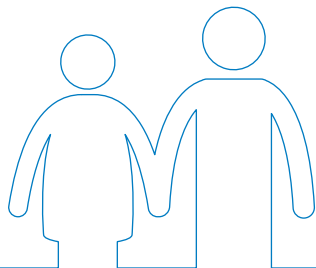
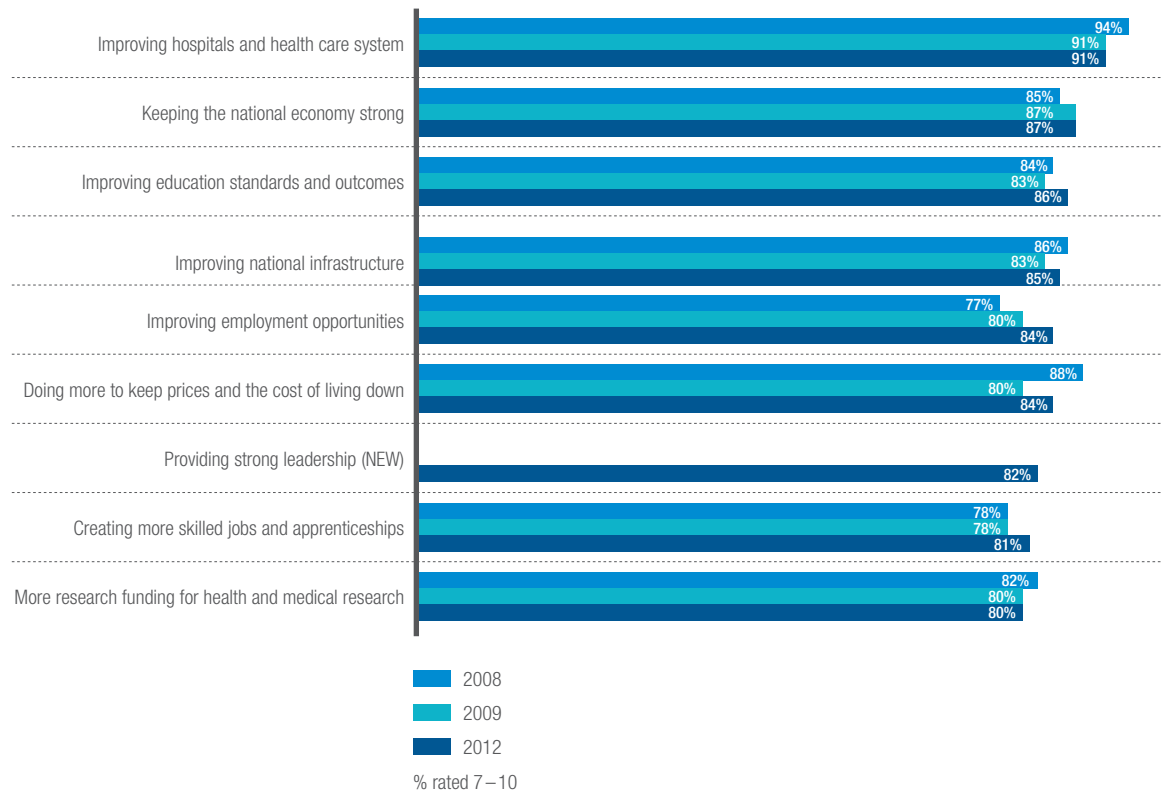
What do we think should be our Federal Governments top priorities?

Improving hospitals and the health care system remains number 1

A high 94% of respondents gave 'Improving Hospitals and the health care system' a rating of 7 or more, the highest of all the listed priorities. (For the purposes of analysis, a score of 7 or more is considered to be a rating of 'Important' to 'Extremely Important'.) This is consistent with Research Australia's polling over previous years, where this has been the highest priority of an extensive list of issues.

'More funding for health and medical research' is the 9th priority in of a list of 26 issues.

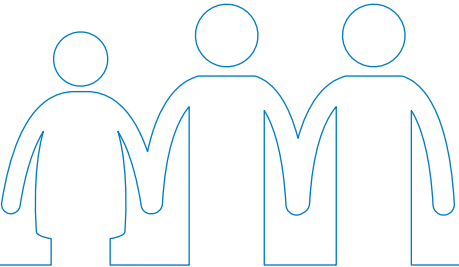
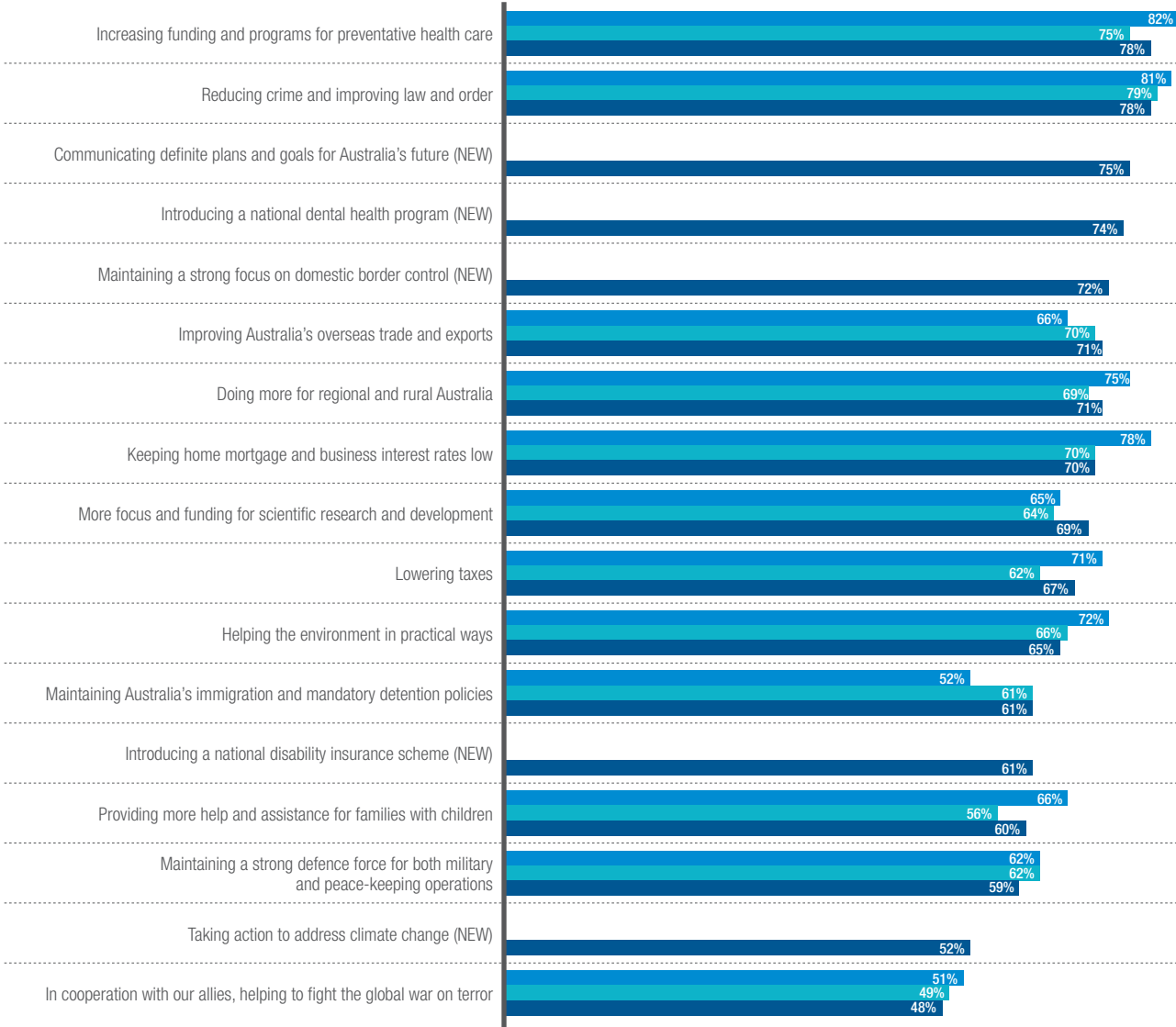
Q: Firstly, please think about what priorities you think the Federal Government should be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. As you read through the following list of issues, please rate how important you personally think each issue is, as a priority for the Federal Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. Please use a 0 to 10 scale where a 0 means that it is not important up to a 10 means that it is an extremely important or critical priority for the Federal Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years.



What didn't make the top 10 priorities for Government?

The 10th through to 26th priorities are listed below. Health related issues occupy the 10th, 13th and 22nd places.

■ 2008
■ 2009
■ 2012
 % rated 7-10

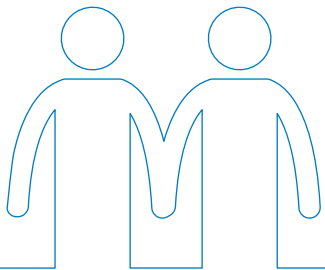
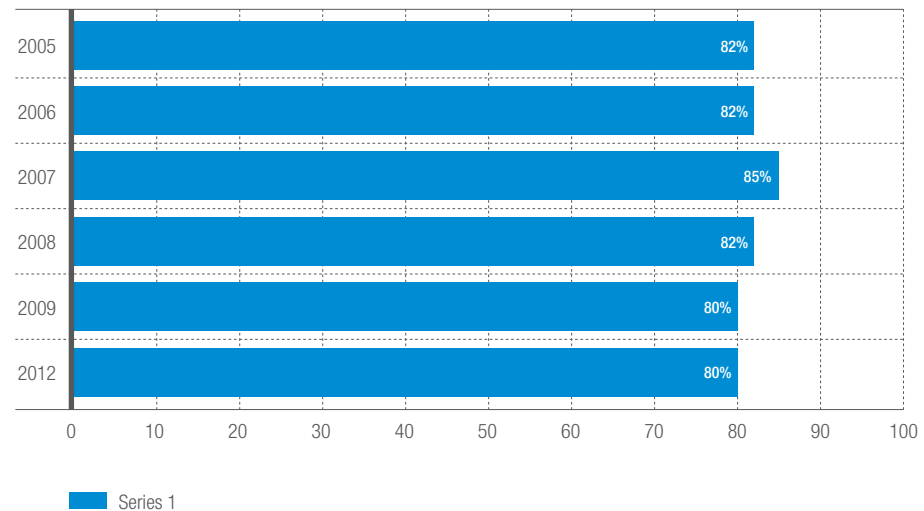


More funding for health and medical research is still considered important

More funding for health and medical research (H&MR) remains a high priority for Commonwealth Government funding. In this year's survey, 82% of respondents gave 'More funding for health and medical research' a rating of 7 or more, making it the 9th priority out of the list of 26 issues.

Research Australia has asked this question in many of its previous annual surveys, and the results have been very consistent, as shown in the table below. (The question was not asked in 2010 and 2011.)

Q: Firstly, please think about what priorities you think the Federal Government should be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. As you read through the following list of issues, please rate how important you personally think each issue is, as a priority for the Federal Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. Please use a 0 to 10 scale where a 0 means that it is not important up to a 10 means that it is an extremely important or critical priority for the Federal Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years.



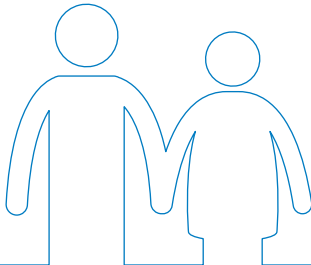
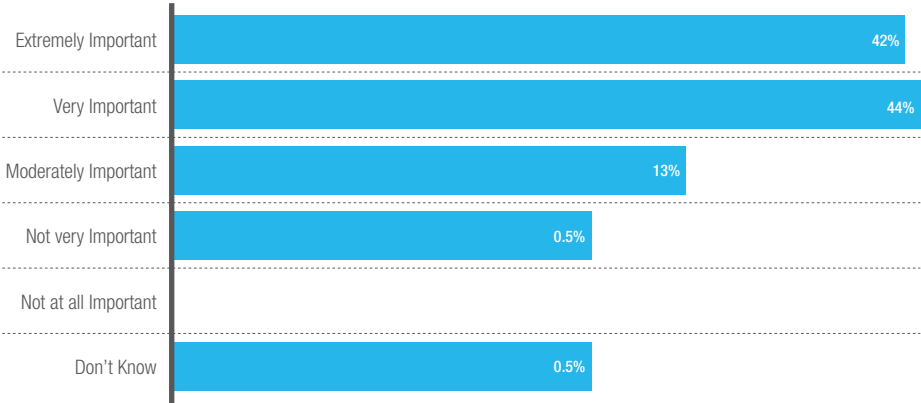
We think a strong health and medical research industry is important

Australians not only consider H&MR should be a priority for Government funding, they also think having a strong H&MR industry is important

Q: Thinking specifically about the health and medical research industry. How important do you think it is for Australia to have a strong health and medical research industry – extremely important, very important, moderately important, not very important or not at all important?

Base: All respondents n=1,052

The importance of a strong health and medical research industry



Who do we think funds research?

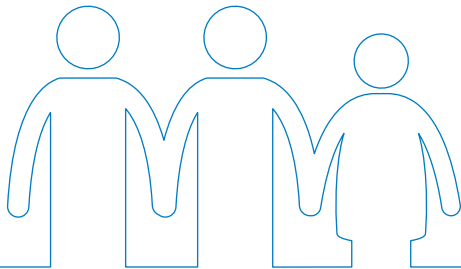
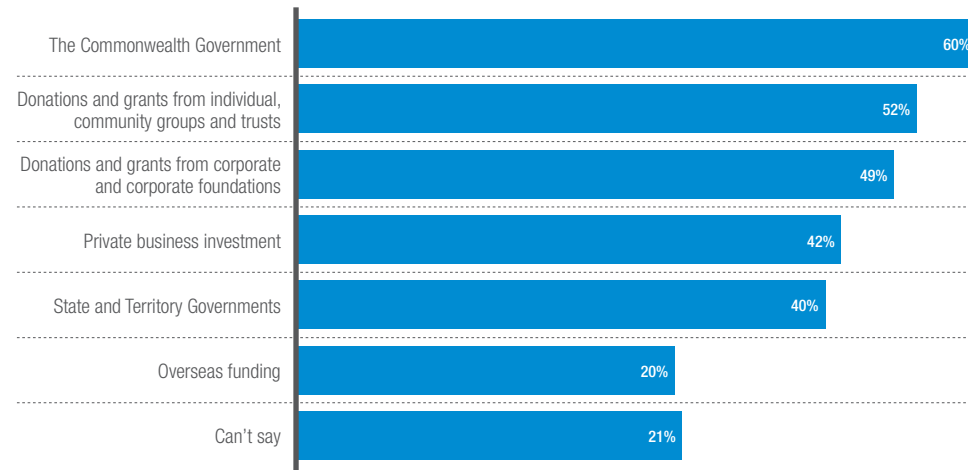
H&MR in Australia is funded by a range of different sources: Commonwealth, state and territory governments, private business investment by Australian and multinational companies, and donations from individuals and corporations (including overseas philanthropists). Research Australia was curious to see if Australians were aware of the diversity of funding sources. Respondents were able to provide multiple responses to the following question from a list of options, and were not asked to rank their importance.

The responses indicate a good overall awareness of the role of the Commonwealth Government and of donations. There was less awareness of the role of state and territory governments and private business investment. A significant minority of the people surveyed (21%) were unable to say how health and medical research in Australia is funded.

Q: Thinking specifically about research funding for health and medical research in Australia. Of the following people, groups and organisations, which do you think: CURRENTLY fund health and medical research in Australia?

Base: All respondents n=1,052

Who do you think funds health and medical research?



We think Governments should pay for health and medical research

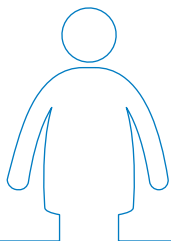
Having been asked about how they think funds health and medical research, we then asked to nominate what they thought should be the two most important funding sources.

A clear majority of people believe the Commonwealth Government should be most responsible for funding health and medical research. In terms of who should be next most responsible, state and territory governments was the most common response, but not a majority. While the previous question indicated many people are aware of the role of personal and corporate donations in funding health and medical research, relatively few people thought these should be the primary or secondary source of funding.

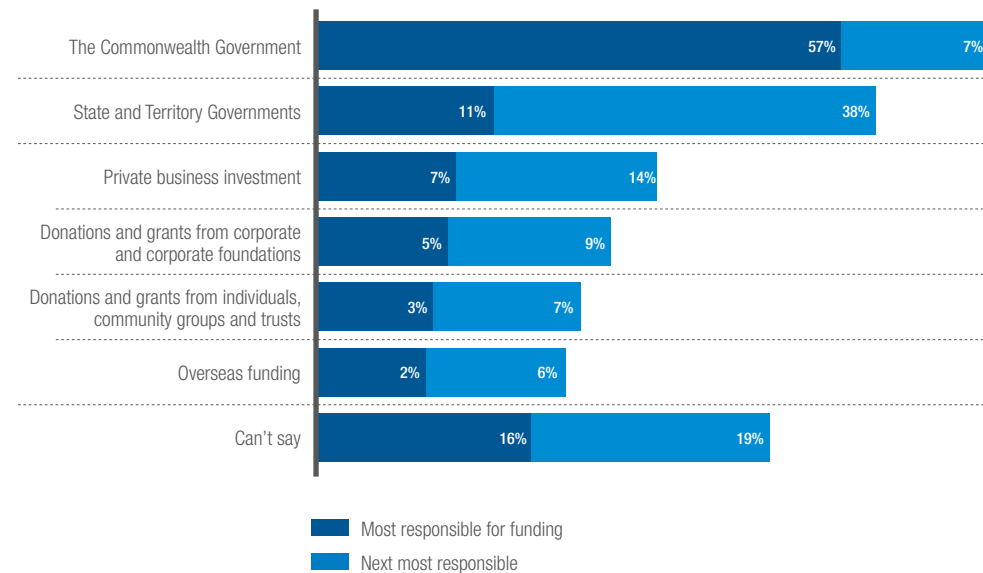
Q: Thinking specifically about research funding for health and medical research in Australia.

Of the following people, groups and organisations, which do you think: Should be MOST responsible for funding health and medical research in Australia?/Should be the NEXT MOST responsible for funding health and medical research in Australia?

Base: All respondents n=1052



Who should fund health and medical research?



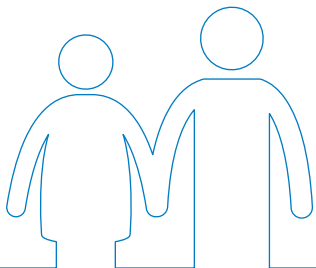
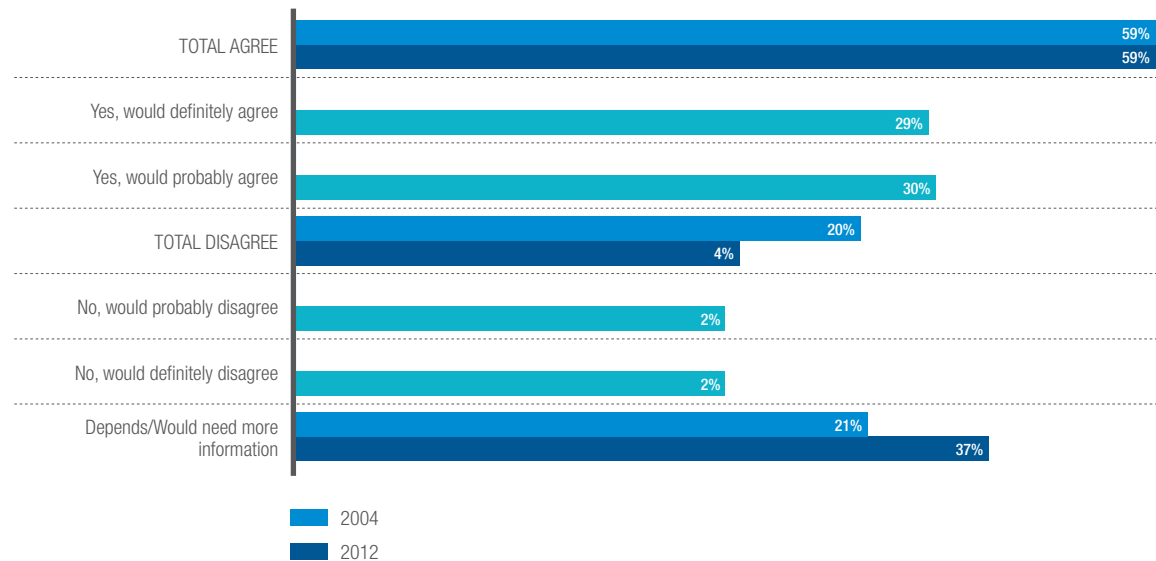
More Australians open to participation in clinical trials

Clinical trials are an important way in which the public can actively support and participate in health and medical research. Clinical trials often require large numbers of people that meet specific, and rare criteria, and so it is important to the success of clinical trials that large numbers of people are willing to participate in clinical trials, even though most of the population will never do so.

Research Australia last surveyed Australians' attitudes to participating in clinical trials in 2004. While the number of people who were willing to participate in a clinical trial is unchanged over that period, the number of people who indicated they would not participate has reduced substantially. More importantly for researchers trying to recruit participants in clinical trials, the number of people who are undecided but are willing to consider participating has increased significantly.

Q: Clinical trials are used to test the effectiveness of new medical treatments and drugs before they are commercially available. If you required treatment and were asked to participate in a clinical trial of a new medical treatment would you agree to be involved?

2012 Base: All respondents n=1,052

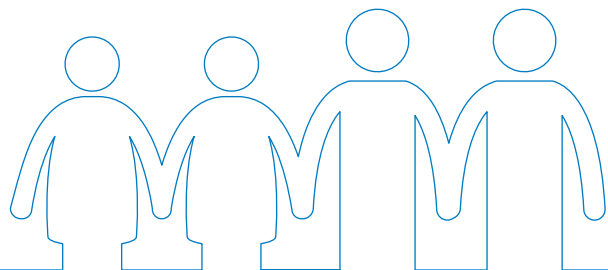
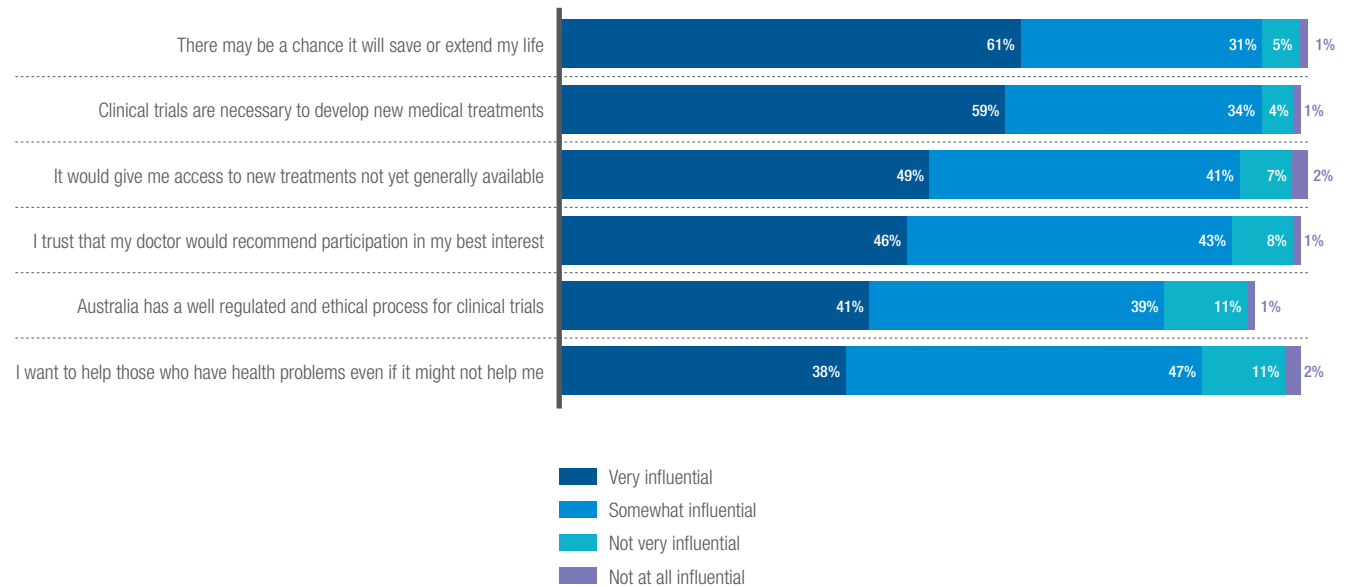


Why we'd participate in a clinical trial

People who were willing to participate in clinical trials provided the following reasons. Self interest and the common good are both important reasons.

Q: How much does each of the following statements influence your agreement to be involved in clinical trials?

Base: Respondents who would agree to participate in a clinical trial n=599

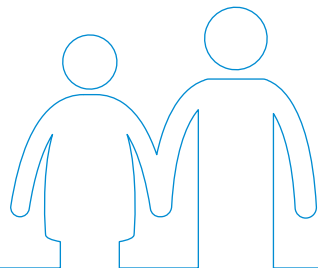
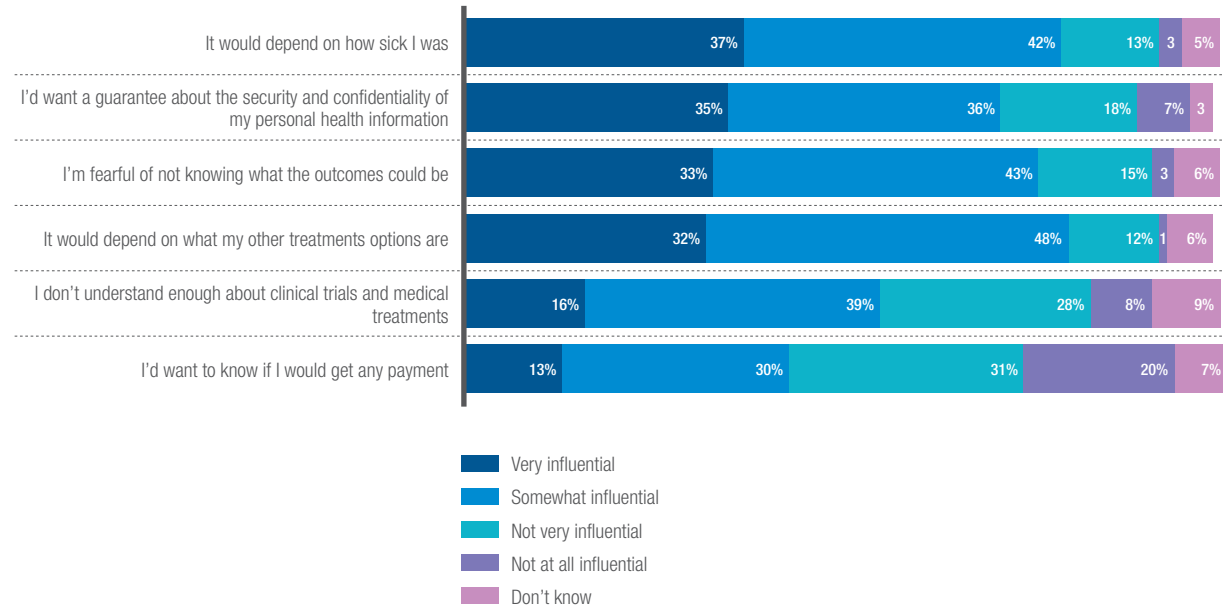


Clinical trial participation: Considerations of ‘fence-sitters’

Those who are undecided gave the following as factors that would influence a decision to participate in clinical trials.

Q: How much does each of the following statements influence you in feeling uncertain or unsure about involvement in a clinical trial?

Base: Respondents who said it depends or they weren't sure if they would participate in a clinical trial n=409



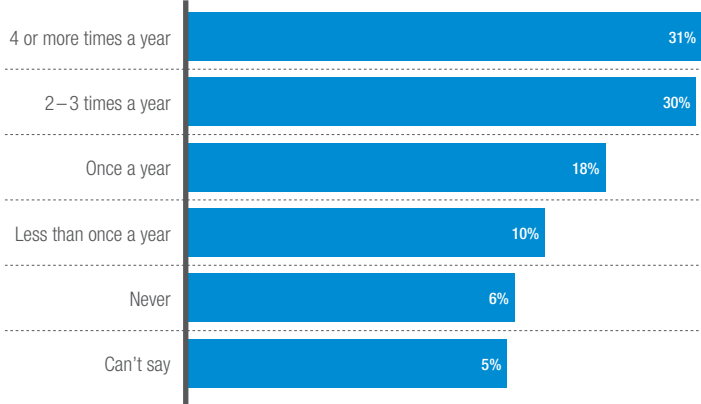
Note: Individuals who indicated that they were not willing to participate in clinical trials were asked about their reasons for not doing so. The reasons are not reported here because the number of respondents who were not willing to participate in clinical trials was too small (n= 44) to be statistically reliable.

Most Australians donate to charity at least once a year

Most respondents (78%) reported making donations to charities at least once per year and 60% reported making more than one donation per year. Of those who donate at least annually, 55% give \$1 – 100 per year in total. 10% donate more than \$500 per year in total.

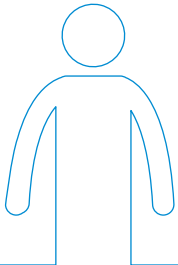
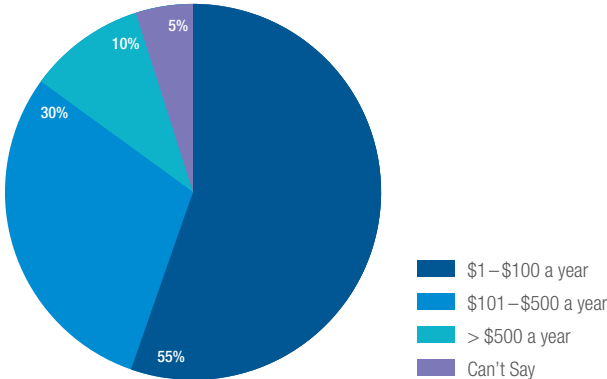
Q: How often do you donate money to charities of any type – welfare, hospitals, universities, health and medical research, arts, sports and disaster and emergency relief? Base: All respondents n=1,052

Donate to Charity



Q: And, on average, about how much money in total each year would you donate to all charities? Base: Respondents who donate to charity at least annually n=828

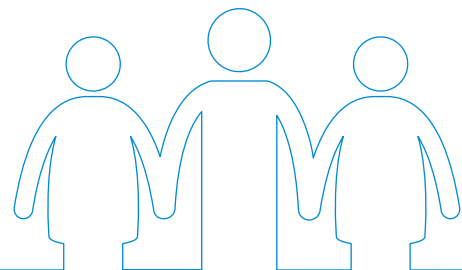
Annual Donations to Charity



Nearly 50% of us make a donation to health and medical research

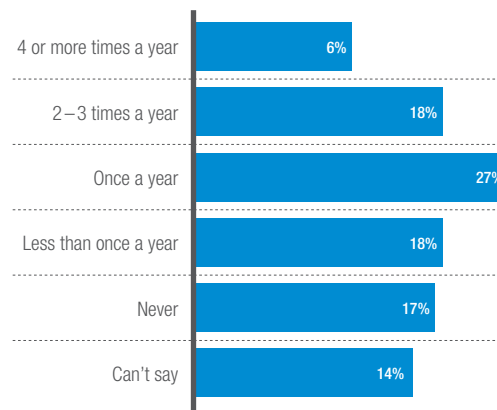
Research Australia asked people specifically about their donations to health and medical research. Almost half of all the people surveyed (48%) indicated that they make at least one donation per year to health and medical research. And among people who make donations at least annually to any cause, 61% will make at least one donation annually to health and medical research. This suggests that the support base for donations to health and medical research (H&MR) in the Australian community is broad.

Among those who donate at least annually to health and medical research, the largest proportion of donations are \$1 – 100 per year. 17% of donations to H&MR are more than \$500 per year. (The numbers are lower than for all donations, because donations to H&MR is a subset of the larger population.)



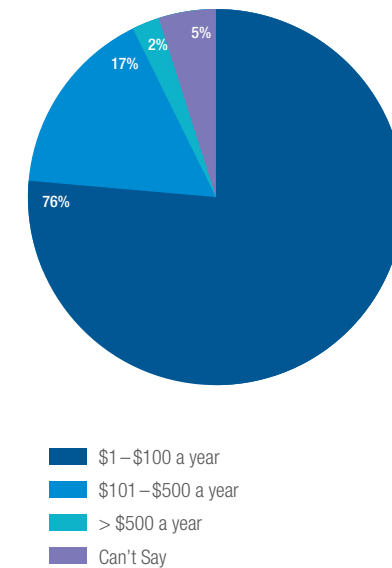
Q: Thinking now specifically about funding for health and medical research in Australia. About how often do you personally donate money to health and medical research? Base: Respondents who donate to charity n=987

Donate to Health & Medical Research



Q: And, on average, about how much money in total each year would you donate to health and medical research? Base: Respondents who donate to H&MR at least annually n=506

Annual Donations to H&MR



What do donors look like?

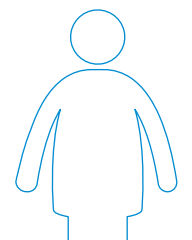
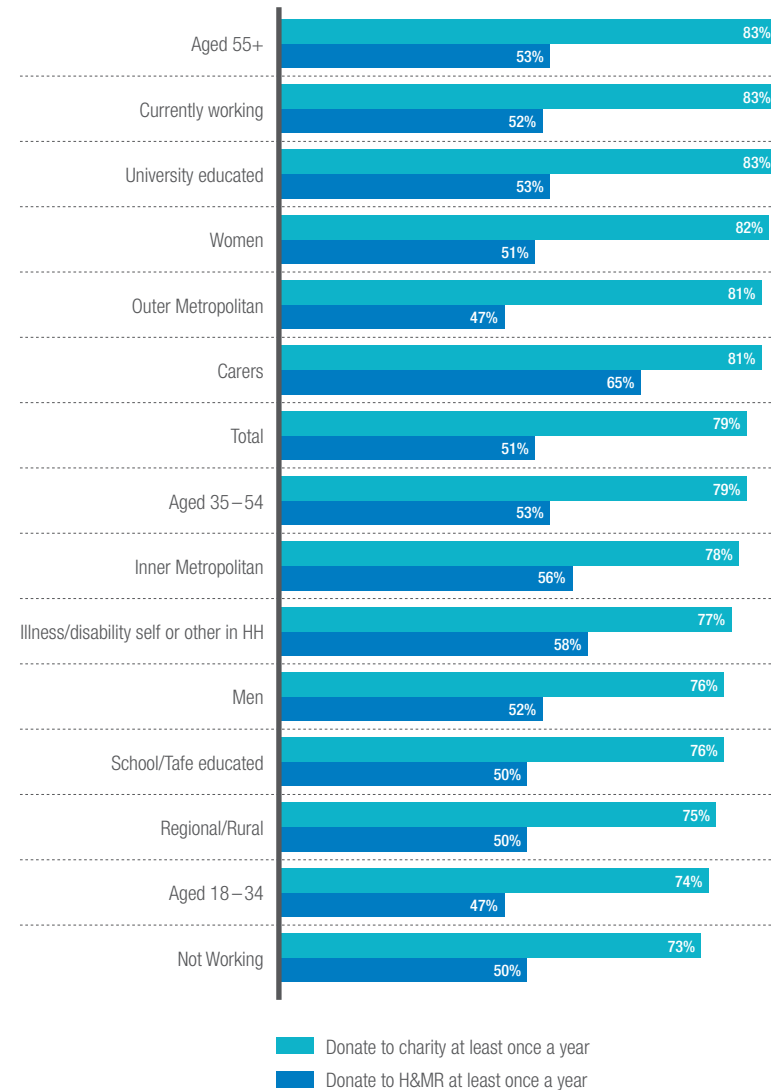
Responses about donation behaviours were analysed against a range of demographic data. For people who donate to any charity at least annually, the factors vary between 73 and 83%; a fairly narrow band around the average of 79%. The greatest difference is between people who are not working (73%) and working (83%). Those who are older and those who are university educated are also more likely to donate. Women are more likely to donate than men.

When it comes to donating to health and medical research, the range is greater. The people most likely to donate annually to health and medical research are those who have a long term illness, a disability, or require assistance because of problems related to old age; share a household with such a person; or are the (unpaid) carer for such a person (typically a spouse, child or parent). Whether a person is working or not working is much less of a determinant of donations to health and medical research than it is for donations generally, and the difference between men and women is almost eliminated.

Q: Thinking now specifically about funding for health and medical research in Australia. About how often do you personally donate money to health and medical research? Base: Respondents who donate to charity n=987

Q: How often do you donate money to charities of any type – welfare, hospitals, universities, health and medical research, arts, sports and disaster and emergency relief? Base: All respondents n=1,052

The demographics of donating



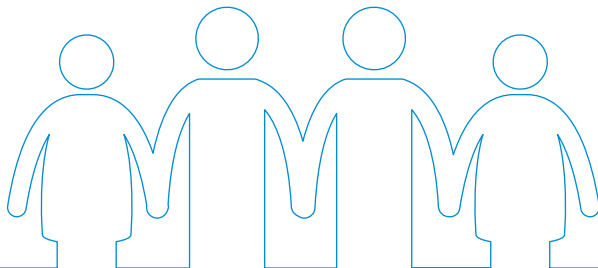
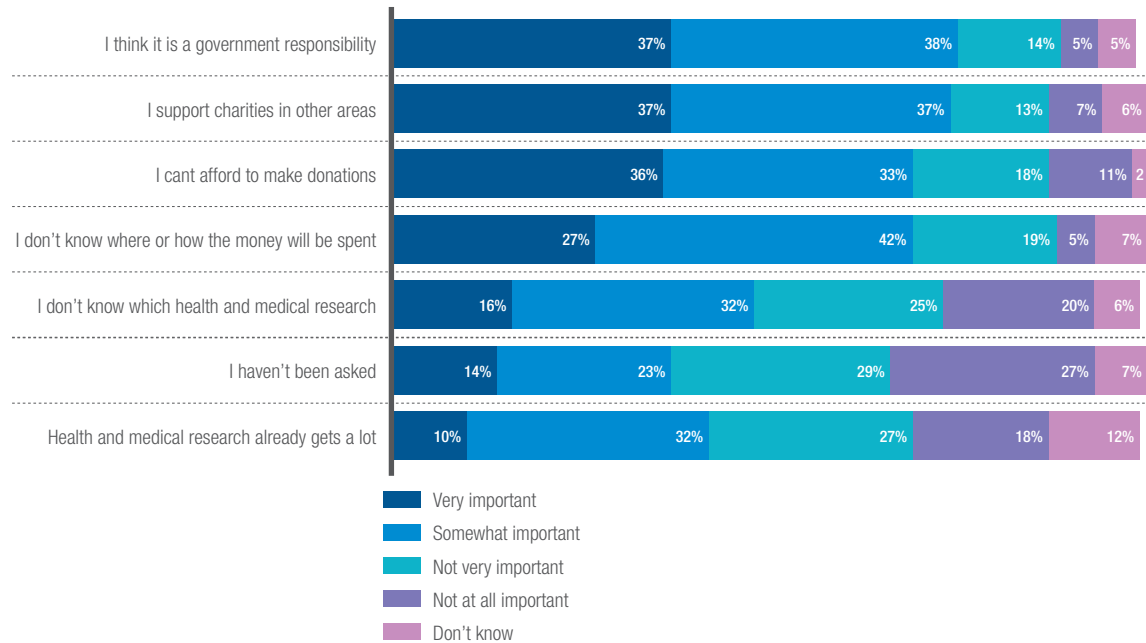
Why not donate to health and medical research?

Of the six reasons respondents could choose for not donating to health and medical research (they were allowed to select more than one), four were selected by a majority.

Q: How important are each of the following as reasons why you have not donated to health and medical research?

Base: People who never donate to health and medical research n=164

Reasons for not donating to H&MR



Most of us think we should donate more to health and medical research

While the earlier questions about who should be most responsible for funding health and medical research showed that most Australians think it is primarily a government responsibility, many Australians think that they should be donating more than they currently are.

Q: Do you think you should give more money than you currently do to funding health and medical research?

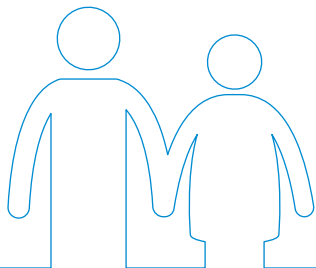
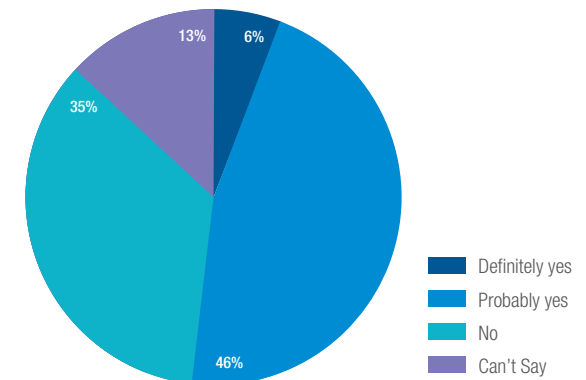
Base: All respondents n=1,052

In 2008, Research Australia asked a different but related question:

Q: Still thinking about funding for health and medical research in Australia. Private individuals and philanthropic organisations currently account for about 9% of the funding provided for health and medical research, with governments and business providing the rest. Do you agree or disagree (and is that strongly or somewhat agree or disagree) that individuals such as you should give more money than you currently give to funding health and medical research?

At that time only 26% of respondents agreed (and only 4% strongly) that individuals should give more to fund health and medical research.

Should you donate more to H&MR?

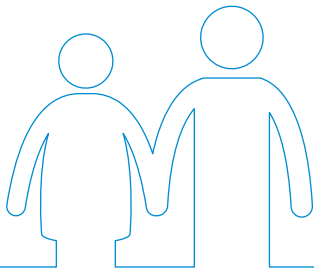


Is a large national health and medical research foundation?

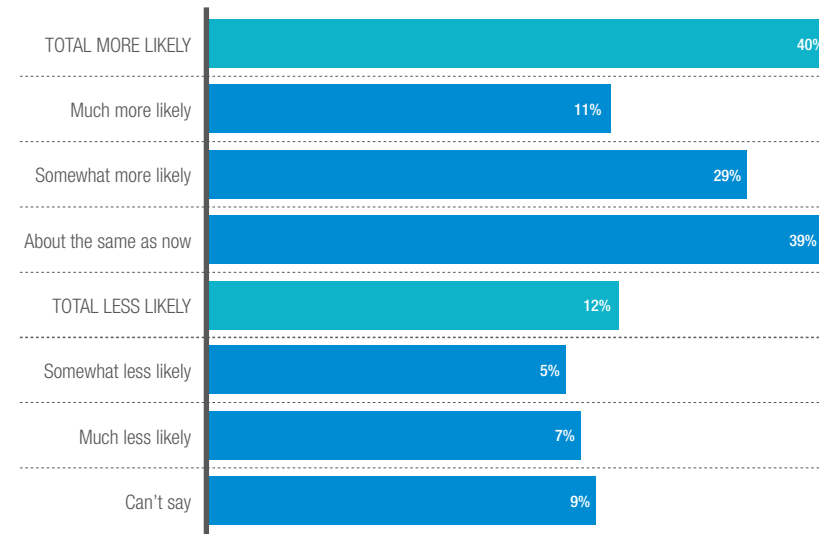
Research Australia was interested to see if different features of a charitable fund would influence the willingness of individuals to donate. In particular we wanted to know if government support would influence people. The clear answer is 'Yes.', with 40% of people more likely to donate to a government supported fund. We can also break this down further based on current donating behaviour. 46% of people who currently donate to health and medical research indicated they would be more likely to donate to a government supported fund. 28% of people who don't currently donate to health and medical research (including people who don't donate to any charity) would be more likely to donate to a government supported fund for health and medical research.

Q: There are currently many different charitable foundations in Australia raising money to fund research into specific health and medical issues. Normally each fund has to cover its own operating costs from the funds it raises. If there was a single large fund established and supported by the Australian Government that you could donate to, would you be more or less likely to donate to health and medical research?

Base: All respondents n=1,052



Likelihood to donate



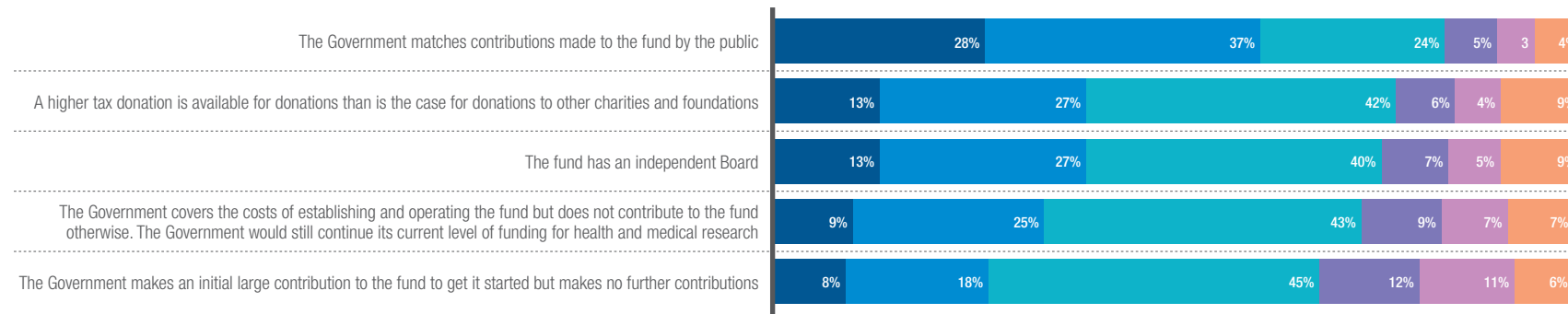
What appeals to donors?

Q: If there was a single large fund established and supported by the Australian Government that you could donate to, would you be more or less likely to donate to health and medical research based on the following considerations? Base: All respondents n=1,052

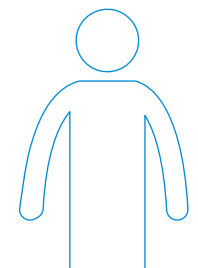
Of the possible incentives proposed by Research Australia, the single most influential incentive to increase donations was matching of donations by government. The next most influential were higher tax deductions and an independent Board.

Covering the establishment and ongoing costs was less influential

Features that influence donations



- Much more likely
- Somewhat more likely
- About the same as now
- Somewhat less likely
- Much less likely
- Can't say



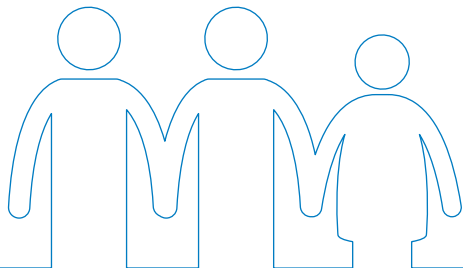
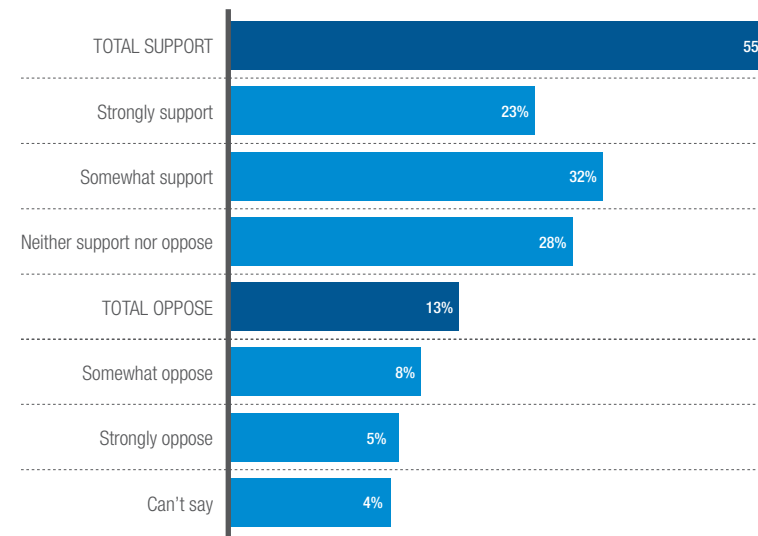
Our willingness to fund overseas research to address health problems in developing countries

Many Australian health and medical research organisations that receive donations collaborate on research with organisations around the world. Some are also engaged in research to address health problems in developing countries. International collaborations and research in developing countries often require some of the donations raised in Australia to be spent overseas. Just over half (55%) of those surveyed supported donations being used in this way; only 12% opposed it.

Q: The Federal Government mostly funds research into health problems that affects Australians, but it also funds research into diseases like malaria that mainly affect people in developing countries. Do you support or oppose tax deductible donations to Australian researchers being used for international collaborations and to address health problems in developing countries?

Base: All respondents n=1,052

Overseas spending on H&MR



How did we do it?

Research methodology

The survey was conducted online by email invitation to a national panel between 19 and 28 June 2012 with a representative sample of Australians aged 18 and over. (Random probability sample of n=1,052.)

The maximum margin of error on a sample of approximately n=1,052 voters is +/-3.0% at the 95% confidence level for results near 50%. Margins of error will be greater for results based on sub samples.

Variations of +/-1% between individual results and sub-totals is due to rounding.

Results have been compared to relevant previous research where possible:

2011: Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey of n=770 nationally.

2010: online survey of n=1,000 nationally

2009: online survey of n=806 nationally

2008: online survey of n=832 nationally

2007: online survey of n=630 nationally

2006: online survey of n=567 nationally

2005: online survey of n=628 nationally

2004: CATI survey of n=1,005 nationally

Major Partners of Research Australia

Foundation Partner



Platinum Partners



Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Research Australia

An alliance for discoveries in health

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