

Media Release

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Proposed budget cuts threaten education of Tasmania's medical students

The Australian Medical Students Association (AMSA) has today voiced concerns that the rumoured budget cuts to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) could have a significant impact on the teaching and training of medical students in Tasmania.

The Government is tipped to make drastic cuts to research spending in the May Budget which could significantly impact the Hobart-based Menzies Research Institute which relies on the NHMRC for a large proportion of its funding.

AMSA President Robert Marshall expressed grave concerns for the research opportunities available to medical students if the proposed cuts came to fruition.

"Research components have become a pivotal part of medical studies throughout Australia and any limit on these opportunities would place students in Tasmania at a severe disadvantage," said Mr Marshall.

"The internationally-renowned Menzies Research Institute is a partner with the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine in the Medical Science Precinct and many of the school staff hold conjoint positions within the Institute.

"The Institute acts as a source of attraction for clinicians and researchers who assist in the education of Tasmanian medical students.

"A cut to the budget of the Menzies Institute could have a large impact on teaching as well as the ability of students to undertake biomedical research, forcing them to either leave Tasmania or not to do research at all. This is of extreme concern to AMSA, especially given the federal governments' commitment to research and innovation in higher education following the Bradley Review.

"A cut to medical research funding means a cut to medical education. Spending money on research should be seen not as an expense but an investment in future doctors and the health of all Australians.

"AMSA calls on the government to protect medical research funding as well as conduct a review of health and medical research in Australia to ensure adequate investment in the longer term," said Mr Marshall.

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