



# The Coalition's Policy

## Key Commitments

The Coalition will build on our record investment in medical research to make it easier to conduct clinical trials in Australia.

We will invest \$7 million to improve Australia's clinical trial landscape.

Australians benefit from the clinical trials that take place in our country. Clinical trials by pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies deliver health benefits, provide jobs, and improve our nation's innovative capacity.

Australia has a strong reputation for the quality of its scientific and medical research and is home to some of the world's best researchers. Our scientific and medical research capabilities contribute to Australia's enormous potential to attract more investment in clinical trials which boosts our health and our economy. Approximately 1,000 new clinical trials commence every year in Australia, representing around \$1 billion in new investment each year.

Over 1,000 companies are in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device sectors, employing more than 70,000 highly-skilled Australians. These pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies generate more than \$5 billion a year in exports for Australia.

Most importantly, clinical trials provide Australians with better and faster access to potentially lifesaving medicines and treatments.

The Coalition will take action to increase the number and value of clinical trials. We will make it easier to do clinical trials in Australia and attract more international investment by:

- making it easier to conduct trials in different states and territories through better regulatory harmonisation and regulatory mutual-recognition
- linking prospective sponsors with research expertise, location and participants
- providing the necessary administrative support to help trials commence more quickly
- adopting new measures to promote patient recruitment
- removing barriers for adolescents and young adult cancer patients in accessing clinical trials for anti-cancer therapies
- supporting demonstration trials to build Australia's capacity to initiate world-class trials for adolescents and young adult patients that will attract industry partnerships in future trials

The Coalition will implement improvements to the clinical trial landscape within 12 months of the election.

## **Our Plan to Encourage More Clinical Trials in Australia**

The Coalition will make it easier to do clinical trial business in Australia and attract more international investment.

Clinical trials make a positive contribution to our health and our economy.

We will remove red tape barriers to conducting clinical trials in Australia.

Australia's clinical trials environment is complex and can vary considerably between jurisdictions. Trial sponsors must often navigate and negotiate with multiple sites which impacts on recruitment and start up timelines.

While the Coalition has already taken significant steps to improve the clinical trial landscape, further improvements can be made.

The Coalition will take a national leadership role in promoting the uptake of current best practices within all jurisdictions.

We will reorganise the existing regulation of clinical trials within, and across, jurisdictions so that there is better regulatory harmonisation and regulatory mutual-recognition.

To achieve this, the Coalition will support a much-needed central point of contact for clinical trial sites to significantly improve communication and coordination across sites and jurisdictions.

The central point of contact will work with trial sponsors to:

- navigate and negotiate with multiple sites to improve recruitment and start-up timelines for large-scale clinical trials in Australia, benefiting the maximum number of Australian patients
- establish and negotiate trial budgets and contracts with sponsors as well as facilitating legal and ethics approvals across multiple sites
- provide ongoing support both administratively and professionally throughout the study
- ensure that clinical trials are promoted to relevant patient groups to maximise patient recruitment

### ***Promoting patient identification and recruitment***

The Coalition will develop a national communications strategy focusing on the benefits of clinical trials to increase participant identification and eligibility.

This work will build on the operation of the digital portal – [AustralianClinicalTrials.gov.au](http://AustralianClinicalTrials.gov.au) – that allows patients to search for clinical trials being undertaken in Australia.

Consistent with the Coalition's digital health strategy we will work with the National Health and Medical Research Council to make this digital portal more interactive for patients. We will make it available on new smart platforms to boost patient awareness, including:

- alerts for new clinical trials being sent straight to your phone or email
- the ability for patients to register their research needs to allow clinicians to better target new trials

By developing and embedding best practice, more clinical trials will take place in Australia. Combined with new measures to promote patient recruitment, more Australians will have immediate access to the lifesaving therapies that clinical trials provide.

Under the Coalition, the National Health and Medical Research Council will continue to provide support for the investigator-initiated trial sector to better understand the comparative effectiveness of commonly used treatments in Australia. We can then target our investment toward the most effective treatments and ensure our health system is self-improving.

### ***Making it easier for adolescents and young adults to access clinical trials***

The Coalition will act to specifically remove barriers for adolescents and young adult cancer patients in accessing clinical trials for anti-cancer therapies.

Currently, only 7 per cent of 16-19 year olds and 4 per cent of 20-24 year olds enrol in a clinical trial in Australia, compared with 45 per cent of younger children. Every year, up to 800 adolescents and young adults are diagnosed with cancers that would benefit from access to clinical trials.

Adolescents and young adult patients are typically too old to participate in paediatric clinical trials and too young to participate in adult clinical trials.

The Coalition will work with pharmaceutical companies and hospitals to remove current age restrictions on trials that can sometimes apply in children's or adult hospitals so as to increase access for adolescents and young adults.

We will also support demonstration trials to build domestic capacity to initiate world-class trials for adolescents and young adult patients. This will attract industry partnerships in future trials.

Using existing cancer networks, we will focus on identifying and recruiting eligible patients in this age group with rare and highly lethal cancers. Streamlining the recruitment process will make it easier and faster for industry to commence trials for rare cancers in this age group, making Australia a more attractive destination to conduct world-leading trials.

Our commitment will ensure that hundreds of adolescents and young adult cancer patients will have immediate access to cutting-edge anti-cancer treatments. It will embed clinical trials processes into standard adolescent and young adult care, bringing more clinical trials and more investment to Australia.

## The Choice

The Coalition spends around \$10 billion every year supporting science and research.

The Coalition's establishment of the landmark Medical Research Future Fund will provide a sustainable source of funding for important medical research, including over \$400 million in the next few years, rising to \$1 billion a year once fully established.

Under the Coalition, funding under the Medical Research Endowment Account increased from \$770 million in 2013 to a record amount of almost \$890 million in 2015.

Our National Innovation and Science Agenda will see \$127 million invested in university research funding to encourage stronger linkages between universities and industry.

We committed an additional \$170 million for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and the Australian Synchrotron.

The Coalition recognises the importance of making Australia an attractive destination for clinical trials. The Coalition also worked closely with the NHMRC to greatly enhance the digital portal ([AustralianClinicalTrials.gov.au](http://AustralianClinicalTrials.gov.au)) by adding more functionality, including a new search tool and the inclusion of e-Learning modules allowing Australian patients and clinical trials to link up much more easily.

We are investing \$200 million to develop a focused, co-ordinated approach to dementia research to improve the diagnosis, treatment and care for those with dementia in Australia.

We also provided almost \$50 million to the Australian Nuclear Science Technology Organisation for the safe management of nuclear waste from nuclear medicine production and research.

We are also working on a new strategy for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and reviewing our research infrastructure to ensure our investments are well-targeted and delivering results.

Labor has a track record of cutting research.

Labor announced cuts of \$6.6 billion to higher education between 2011 and 2013.

In the 2011-12 MYEFO Labor cut \$400 million over three years from students studying mathematics, statistics and science. Six months later, in the 2012 Budget, Labor cut a further \$314 million over four years.

During their last term Labor repeatedly tried to cut funding to medical research.

In 2011, Labor tried to rip \$400 million from medical research but backflipped at the last minute after researchers protested in the street.

## Costs

The Coalition will invest \$7 million to encourage more clinical trials in Australia.



**THE NATIONALS**  
*for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to  
[www.liberal.org.au/our-plan](http://www.liberal.org.au/our-plan)  
[nationals.org.au/our-plan/](http://nationals.org.au/our-plan/)