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## ARTHRITIS RESEARCH

The Australian Government has nominated 8 National Health Priorities (*arthritis, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, injury, mental health and obesity*).

The following graph shows the additional annual expenditure allocated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to the 8 National Health Priorities since 2001.

Over the decade, the annual funds expended by the NHMRC to research arthritis have grown by only \$22 million, compared to annual funding growth of \$119 million for cancer research and \$72 million for cardiovascular disease research.

Yet Australians are more likely to suffer from arthritis than cancer, heart disease, asthma, diabetes or mental illness - and arthritis is the single biggest cause of disability in Australia (ABS National Health Survey 2004-05).

Research Australia polling in 2010 found that:

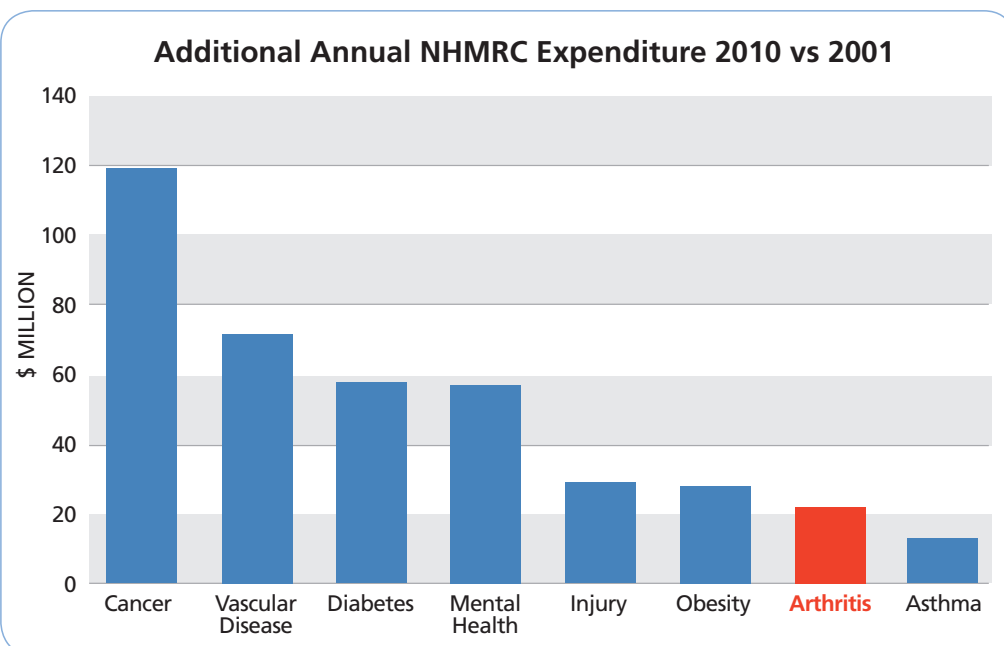
- An overwhelming majority (98%) of voters see 'increasing funding for health and medical research' as important for the Federal Government to be focusing on in the next few years (with 40% of them regarding it as extremely important);
- More than 4 in 5 voters (82%) believe it is unacceptable that Australians are suffering from diseases that could be treatable with more investment in health and medical research (with 85% wanting to see increased funding for health and medical research, and 77% believe that 2% of the health care budget spend on health and medical research is too low).

There are 3.85 million Australians living with arthritis with 62% of working age. In addition, nearly half of all Australians living with cancer, heart disease and diabetes have arthritis, too. (ABS National Health Survey 2004-05).

The total cost of arthritis to the Australian economy was estimated to be \$23.9 billion in 2007 (Access Economics). The average cost of arthritis per person per year is \$6200 and 61% of arthritis costs are borne by the individuals themselves.

Major advancements in the treatment and prevention of arthritis have transformed people's lives. An early and proper diagnosis followed by a successful management plan gives those affected a fair chance to enjoy a meaningful life that may include living independently, remaining in the workforce, and reducing demands on the health system.

It's time the impact of arthritis on the community and the economy was recognised through a better alignment of research funding with the burden of individual National Health Priorities. Through research, better ways to help Australians with major health challenges such as arthritis will be realised.



Source: [www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/dataset/index.htm](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/dataset/index.htm)

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