



For Lyme Disease Awareness & Action

LYME DISEASE
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
ABN 46 417 706 647

7 August 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

\$3mill from Minister Hunt to target Lyme-like research

In September 2016, the Lyme Disease Association of Australia (LDAA) made a submission to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) requesting a Targeted Call for Research (TCR) into Lyme-like illness in Australia. Shortly after being sworn in, Minister Hunt asked the Chief Executive Officer of the NHMRC to fast-track the process. LDAA has recently been advised that there will be a TCR into Lyme-like illness in Australia, with funding of up to \$3 million.

An Advisory Committee, comprising independent experts and a consumer representative has been established to frame the research subject. The committee met for the first time on 1 August 2017. It will identify the specific research needs and will further define the research topic. NHMRC anticipates the call for research submissions on Lyme-like illness will open in 2018.

It will also consider [LDAA's submission](#) which highlighted the knowledge gap, the current research and the dire consequences of the stigma that has developed around this complex illness. The stigma is detrimental to patients who struggle to live with this poorly understood disease. Further doctors are concerned about diagnosing it; pathology tests are unreliable; there is little education or awareness about treatment and there are a growing number of patients who are seriously unwell, many have been abandoned by the public health system and some have taken their own lives.

LDAA President Ms Sharon Whiteman said, 'It is absolutely necessary that Lyme-like research be government funded in order to provide evidence the medical authorities are unable to dismiss. It is very expensive to undertake research that meets the standards of evidence the government requires. To date numerous research papers provide evidence that Lyme-like illness is in Australia yet they have been dismissed due to what we perceive to be a bureaucratic preference for form rather than content. The evidence is found in the patients and in the treatment success achieved by the handful of compassionate doctors who are brave enough to rise above the stigma and fulfil their duty of care.'

LDAA is cautiously optimistic given the protracted lack of action to address this medical travesty. In 2014 Department of Health published a [Consolidated List of Research Projects](#) that were recommended to address this situation. Nothing eventuated. In November 2016 the [Senate Inquiry](#) into 'The growing evidence of an emerging tick-borne disease that causes a Lyme-like illness for many Australian patients' published 12 urgent recommendations to address the heart breaking evidence provided by over 1000 patients of their suffering, neglect, impoverishment and need. Nothing has happened.

INFORMATION | SUPPORT | EDUCATION | AWARENESS

PO Box 137, Stockton NSW 2295
info@lymedisease.org.au | www.lymedisease.org.au

Ms Whiteman said, 'Patients will not accept a response from the government that continues to protect the interests of those who obscure the issues by denying Lyme disease is in Australia. They are culpable for this policy failure that has left thousands of sick Australians without support. The government must show some leadership by providing public health services to all Australians regardless of which illness they have.'

-- END --

Media contact: media@lymedisease.org.au or 0406 378 792

Additional resources for media are available from the Lyme Disease Association of Australia's [website](http://www.lymedisease.org.au)
www.lymedisease.org.au/media

Senate Inquiry page:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Lymelikeillness45