MS Research Australia has welcomed the Federal Government’s commitment to medical research in the 2014-15 Budget and the announcement of a $20 billion Medical Research Future Fund.

MS Research Australia CEO Dr Matthew Miles said the new fund, which will commence with a $1.1 billion commitment in 2015 was a landmark commitment to the Australian medical research sector.

“Multiple sclerosis is the most common acquired neurological disease in young adults in the world, and this research fund has the potential to impact so many,” Dr Miles said.

“Australia is blessed with some brilliant research minds that are making great inroads in the fight against multiple sclerosis.

“This Fund provides these researchers a platform to not only help further our understanding of MS and create better treatments to fight the disease but to also bring us closer to the ultimate goal, which is a cure for MS.”

Dr Miles expressed his concerns that the scheme will be funded by an increase in Medicare co-payments, a move that will disadvantage people with MS who already experience high health-related costs and lower employment.

“There is no denying that a Future Fund for Medical Research is great news for Australian biomedical research and great news in the continued fight against MS,” Dr Miles said.

“However funding the scheme through increased medical costs is a bitter pill for people with MS to swallow. MS Research Australia is encouraging the Government to look at alternative funding sources for this important initiative.”

Since its inception, MS Research Australia has funded more than 150 separate research grants and invested more than $14 million into the best, peer-reviewed, MS research in Australia.

This funding enables Australian MS researchers to get new research ideas off the ground and become highly competitive in leveraging additional research funding from major sources such as Government funding schemes.

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