

## ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: Australia

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

### National/Local Governments

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)  
Australian Research Council (ARC)

### Private funding/Foundations/Charity groups

Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia (ORIA)  
Retina Australia  
Perpetual Trustees

### Industry/pharmaceutical companies

Novartis  
Bayer  
Allergan

2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

The funding for major research projects comes from NHMRC and, to a lesser extent, the ARC. These are extremely competitive and are based on the scientific quality of the project, its feasibility and track record of the team. The decisions are made by expert panels which have broader bases than larger countries - there are no pure ophthalmic/vision science panels. Applications are by invitation only and are once a year.

3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

The Australian Society for Medical Research advocates for medical science.

4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy (advocating for increased research funding/better policies)?

Organizations that advocate for medical research include Science and Technology Australia, the Australian Neuroscience Society, the Macular Disease Foundation and the Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia (ORIA).



5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

Through membership of the above-mentioned societies.

6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

Generally, these are made annually.

7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

Yes.

Do the funding/policy organizations hold open meetings or solicit comments from the public that researchers can participate in?

The NHMRC has a 15-member Community and Consumer Advisory Group of consumer and community leaders in Australia.

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