Leading minds brought together to tackle H1N1 (swine flu) influenza

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Federal and state medical authorities today acknowledged the enormous benefits of the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) H1N1 workshop, held in Canberra last week.

Prof Robert Booy and Prof Elizabeth Elliott, two highly regarded researchers from the Kids Research Institute were invited participants in the workshop, which brought together leading Australian researchers and scientists, public health experts and the Chief Medical Officers from around Australia for two days. The culmination of months of research effort in fighting the pandemic.

NHMRC CEO, Professor Warwick Anderson AM, said earlier this year the Australian Government, through NHMRC, fast-tracked $7 million in funding for 41 Australian medical research teams covering a comprehensive range of research aimed at informing Australia's approach to H1N1.

"These researchers have done an amazing job, pulling together at short notice, the latest thinking and scientific evidence to contribute a vast array of projects aimed at fighting the threat of H1N1," Professor Anderson said.

Some of the research outcomes discussed at the workshop included:
- potential impact of H1N1 on the Australian economy
- improving the detection of swine flu
- the best strategies for anti viral use
- the prospects for swine flu to interact with other flu strains
- risks to children in hospitals
- understanding why some people get more severe flu than others, and
- strategies for containment in rural, remote and Indigenous communities

Professor Anderson said the workshop will inform Australia’s approach to combating H1N1 going forward. "The outcomes of this workshop will build on earlier research and form the basis of Australia’s and the world’s response to combating this and future flu threats both here and in the northern hemisphere," he said.