



Media Release

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Australia is in danger of getting it back to front when it comes to medical innovation

According to Sir Christopher O'Donnell, a member of the UK Healthcare Innovation Council, Australia is in danger of missing a vital opportunity to strengthen medical technology innovation. He commented on the recent Cutler report on Australia's Innovation System as part of his speech at the Medical Technology and Innovation 2008 conference in Sydney.

"It is a tremendous opportunity missed if the Australian Government doesn't build on the strengths of the country's clinical practice" he said during his speech. "It is disappointing that health care and especially medical technology is barely mentioned."

"I think the report's authors have got it back to front in wanting to rationalise and consolidate medical research. It is a very negative way of addressing the opportunities presented in innovative and clinician led medical research" Sir Christopher remarked. "A more positive approach is to focus resources to the leading high quality centres."

In his presentation on *Innovative Pathways to a Healthy Nation*, Sir Christopher gave an overview of the UK experience in strengthening medical technology industry development and innovation. He concluded that Australia has adopted innovative medical technologies more rapidly than the NHS in UK.

Sir Christopher suggested there are three indicators for successful medical innovation: national ability to innovate, access to scientific and clinical knowledge and the influence of global suppliers on a domestic market. In addition successful innovation in medical technology needs strong collaboration between industry, clinician and health services.

Sir Christopher O'Donnell is a member of the Healthcare Innovation Council set up by Lord Darzi, Minister of Health, to accelerate innovation in the National Health Service in England. He is also Chairman of the Council of the University of York.

In October 2003 he was appointed Industry Co-Chair with the Minister of Health of the Health Care Industries Task Force, a joint government/industry initiative to promote the growth and performance of the UK healthcare industry. He held this post for five years. Sir Christopher retired as Chief Executive of Smith & Nephew plc in August 2007, a position he had held for 10 years.

The Medical Technology Association of Australia (MTAA) will formally respond to the Cutler report and continue its advocacy on leveraging innovation in medical technology.

The *Medical Technology and Innovation 2008* is the annual conference of MTAA. This year over 300 industry representatives have gathered at Star City in Sydney on 24/25 September to network and discuss issues affecting the medical technology industry.

The Medical Technology Association of Australia (MTAA) is the national peak industry body representing companies in the medical technology industry. MTAA aims to ensure the benefits of modern, innovative and reliable medical technology are delivered to the community for a healthier Australia.

www.mtaa.org.au

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