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## Reject Howard, says top medical journal

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A LEADING international medical journal has denounced the Prime Minister and urged its Australian readers to vote against him in the election.

In an editorial titled "Australia: the politics of fear and neglect", *The Lancet* said John Howard had jeopardised Australia's enviable reputation in medical science with his suggested ban on HIV-positive migrants. It also censured the Health Minister, Tony Abbott, for saying those who spoke up for indigenous health were "simply establishing politically and morally correct credentials", and criticised the Environment Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, for his stance on climate change. It said Australian politicians were scoring below par on health.

The journal said Australian clinical and health research was "an emblem of excellence" in the Asia-Pacific: "That enviable position is being put at risk by Prime Minister John Howard's indifference to the academic medical community and his profound intolerance to those less secure than himself and his administration."

The latest example was his comment last week that HIV migrants should not be allowed, says the journal, whose editor, Dr Richard Horton, spoke at a conference on global health in Sydney this month. "To any visitor, Australian culture feels progressive and inclusive," *The Lancet* says. "This attractive exterior belies a strong undercurrent of political conservatism, which Howard is ruthlessly tapping into."

*The Lancet* has a significant readership throughout the world and regularly takes a stand on key medical issues.

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