



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

OFFICIAL

# National Health and Medical Research Strategy 2026-2036

Impactful research | Healthier Australians | Stronger nation

**Ms Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM** - Chair, National Health and Medical Research Strategy

**Ms Natasha Ploenges** - CEO, Health and Medical Research Office

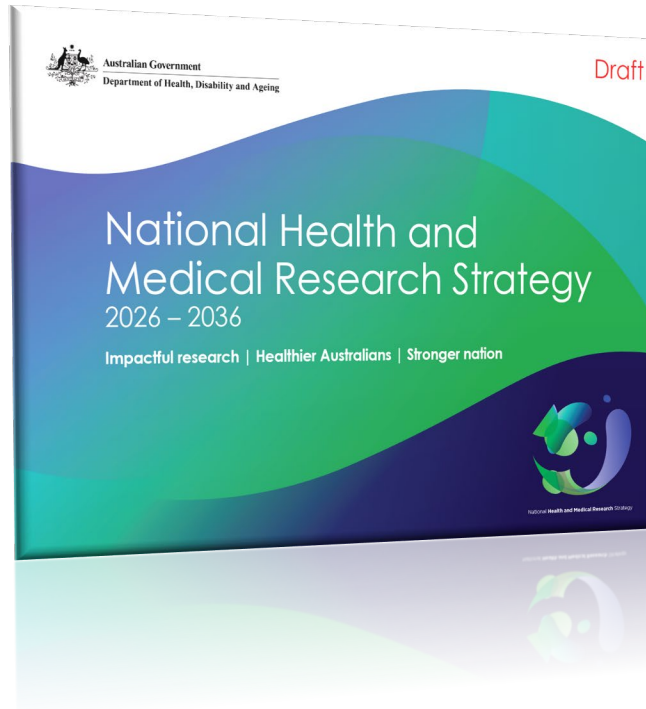
**Prof Steve Wesselingh** - CEO, National Health and Medical Research Council



National Health and Medical Research Strategy

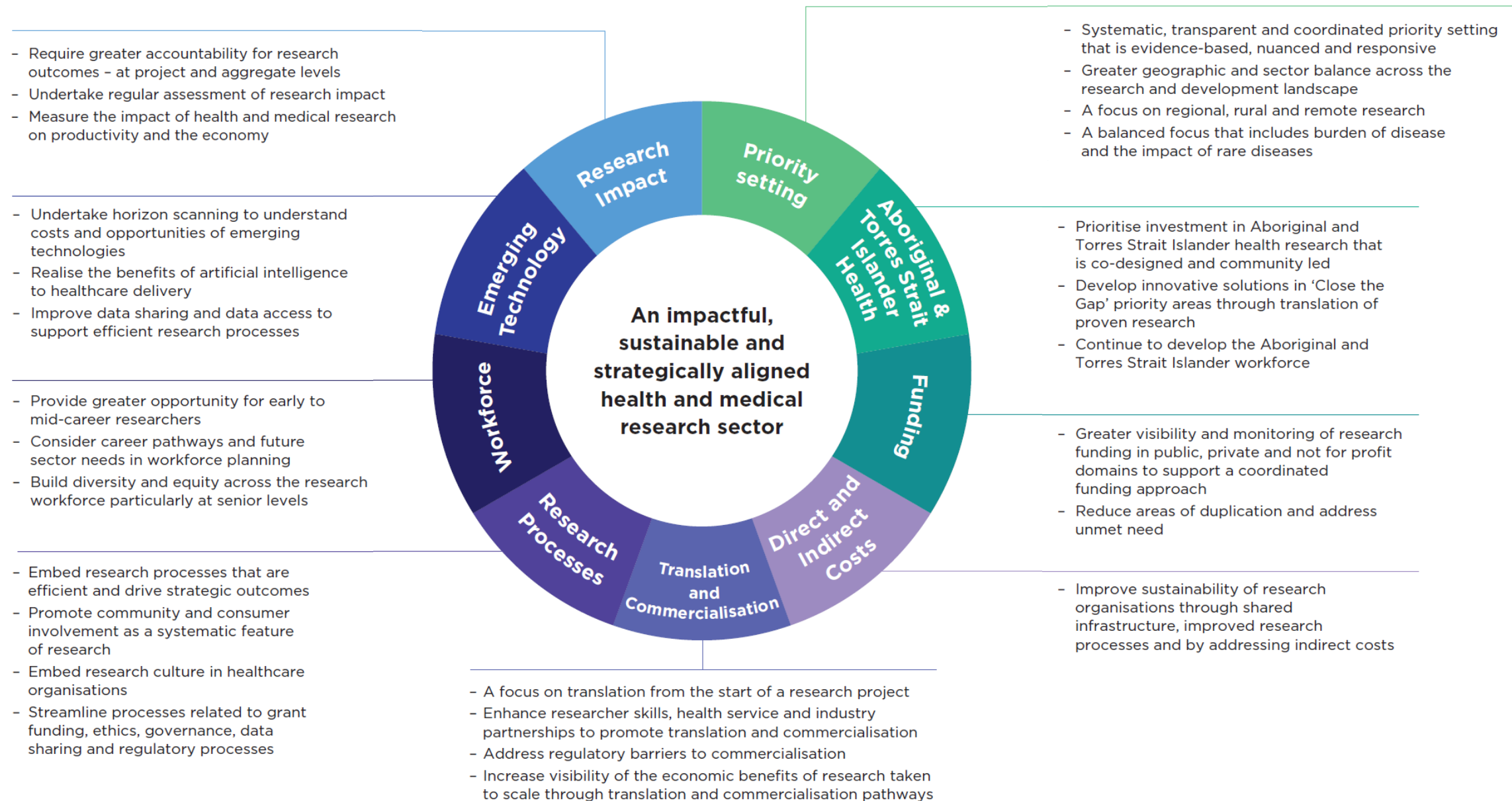
OFFICIAL

# Draft National Strategy- Released for Consultation

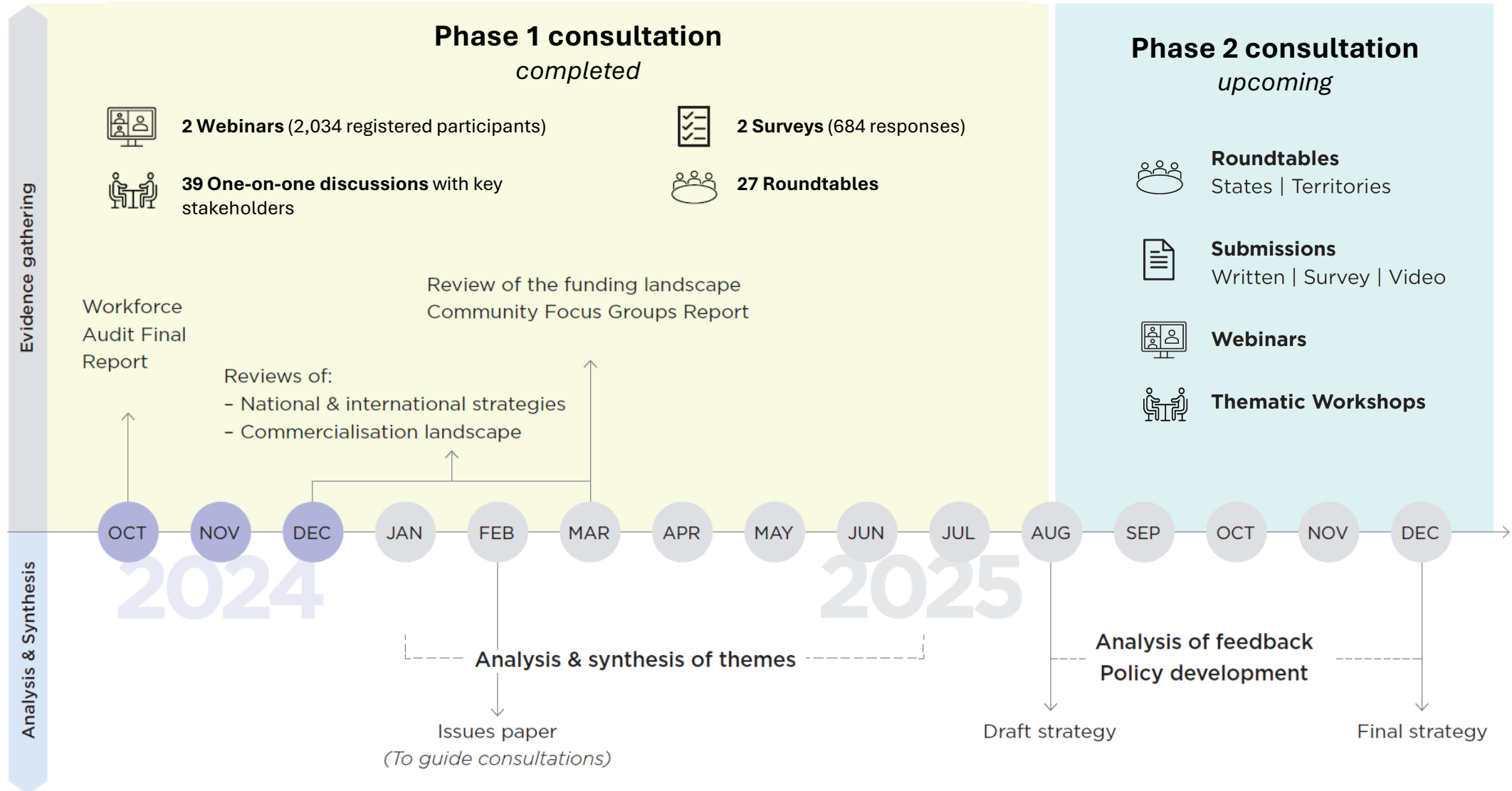


- A transformative 10-year vision to strengthen Australia's health and medical research system - generated through national consultation and evidence gathering.
- A truly national Strategy, encompassing all elements of health and medical research across the Commonwealth, States and Territories, industry and philanthropy.
- Seeks to :
  - establish clear processes for prioritisation and set some long-term priorities
  - work at scale through collaborative platforms and embed efficient transformed research processes
  - create an optimal flow of discovery into translation, development and commercialisation
  - unify national action on funding, workforce, infrastructure and data
  - put in place governance and performance measures to underpin success.

# Reflecting on the issues heard during consultation



# National Strategy development process





# Public consultation questions

## Vision

Does the proposed Vision establish the right aspirations for the future of health and medical research in Australia?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?

## Values

Do you agree with the proposed Values?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?

## Goals

Do you agree with the proposed Goals?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?

## Focus Areas

Do you agree with the proposed Focus Areas?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?

## Actions

Do you agree with the proposed Actions associated with each of the Focus Areas?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?
- What areas of improvement would you identify?

## Enablers

Do you agree with the proposed Enablers? If not, what would you suggest instead?

Do you agree with the proposed Enabling Initiative associated with each of the Enablers?

- If not, what would you suggest instead? What areas of improvement would you identify?

## Metrics

What key indicators do you consider should be used to measure the success and impact of the National Strategy?

Over what time periods should these be measured?

## Governance

Do you agree with the proposed National Strategy Advisory Council?

- If not, what would you suggest instead?

**Other considerations:** Are there other challenges, opportunities or trends that the National Strategy should address?

**Strategy Impact:** How might the National Strategy influence the activities and decision-making at your organisation or in your community? What would be required for it to have a positive impact?

**Example projects:** Do you have suggestions for projects that highlight best practice in the areas highlighted in the Values, Goals, Focus Areas and Enablers in the National Strategy? Please provide links to published information or contact details where available.

# Our Vision

Australia: the healthiest nation – driven by research, delivering for all

## Values

Principles and ideals fundamental to the Australian health and medical research community



Impact & Sustainability



Quality & Integrity



Equity



Collaboration & Partnership

## Goals

- 1 Drive national prosperity and security.
- 2 Lead the world in health outcomes.
- 3 Deliver equity – no one left behind.
- 4 Secure a resilient and sustainable health system.
- 5 Strengthen regional and global partnerships.

## Focus areas

**1. Build** a vibrant research system that delivers for the nation

**2. Embed** research processes that are modern, efficient and consumer centred

**3. Accelerate** research and its translation to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' health and wellbeing

**4. Drive** impact through research translation, innovation and commercial solutions

**5. Position** to be ready for future needs and challenges



## Actions

## Metrics

## Enablers

The health and medical research assets we need: interconnected, available now and ready for the future



Workforce



Funding



Data & advanced technology



Infrastructure

National Strategy Advisory Council

OFFICIAL



# Goals

The Goals of the National Strategy seek to achieve its Vision, with progress against these Goals monitored and measured over time. A successful National Strategy will support the health system to:

1

## Drive national prosperity and security

Boost Australia's economy, sovereign capability and long term security through investment in medical research and innovation.

2

## Lead the world in health outcomes

Make Australia the world's healthiest country through research informed policy and practice.

3

## Deliver equity – no one left behind

Ensure every Australian, regardless of background or postcode, benefits from health and medical research.

4

## Secure a resilient and a sustainable health system

Support a cost-effective, future ready system that meets population needs and economic conditions.

5

## Strengthen regional and global partnerships

Position Australia as a trusted and leading partner in global health, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

# Values

The National Strategy seeks to embed principles and ideals that underpin the National Strategy and serve to orient and guide actions, behaviours and decisions throughout implementation.



## Impact & Sustainability

A sustainable research system that improves the health of the community, powers a high performing health system and delivers productivity benefits.



## Quality & Integrity

A research system that generates a high level of public trust through its integrity, relevance, quality and the ethical conduct of research.



## Equity

A research system that delivers equity by embracing diversity, being inclusive in priority setting, research processes and distribution of resources and promoting a distributed, diverse workforce.



## Collaboration & Partnership

A research system where collaboration and partnership achieve maximum impact for the community, from discovery science to translation, through investigator and priority-driven research.

# Focus Areas and Actions

Focus Areas are the thematic domains for the Actions that will deliver on the Goals of the National Strategy.



# Focus Area

1

## Build a vibrant research system that delivers for the nation.

### Why?

#### Why we propose this Focus Area

Coordination of priorities and investment strategies across all health and research funders, with a focus on horizon scanning, partnerships and shared infrastructure will build a vibrant health and medical research system. This system will deliver impactful research that improves the health of Australians and contributes to national productivity and sustainability, now and in the future.

### How?

#### How we propose to address this Focus Area

**National priority setting and evaluation:** Embed consistent processes to set, fund and evaluate research impact against national priorities, overseen and supported by a National Strategy Advisory Council.

**Horizon scanning:** Establish mechanisms to identifying new and emerging challenges for the health system that inform and guide priority setting, investment, and workforce and infrastructure planning.

**Collaborative platforms and networks:** Prioritise collaborations and sharing of resources, through investment in platforms and networks across the health and medical research ecosystem, to support research, workforce development and translation in areas of national priority.

# Focus Area

2

**Embed research processes that are modern, efficient and consumer centred.**

## Why?

### Why we propose this Focus Area

Well-coordinated, modern, efficient research processes that reduce administrative burden on researchers and drive consumer engagement and co-design will enable a more effective and sustainable health and medical research sector.

## How?

### How we propose to address this Focus Area

**Commonwealth research funding:** Establish unified management of the MREA and MRFF to ensure strategic, coordinated investment, aligned to national health priorities and challenges.

**Clinical trials:** Enable a vibrant clinical trials sector, that improves patient outcomes and supports equitable access to clinical trials, regardless of demography or geography.

**Consumer and community involvement:** Reward inclusivity and embrace diversity - particularly for priority populations - and build community trust in health and medical research.

**Regional, rural, and remote (RRR) research:** Develop research processes that are adaptable and flexible to respond to the unique needs, challenges and opportunities of RRR communities.

# Focus Area

3

## Accelerate research and its translation to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing.

### Why?

#### Why we propose this Focus Area

More community driven research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical researchers and removal of structural inequities to research translation will improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.

### How?

#### How we propose to address this Focus Area

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ways of knowing, being and doing:** Build community led, place based, co-designed research and translation activities, supported by consolidated and coordinated funding opportunities.

**Translation and implementation:** Prioritise community-based, innovative solutions to implement research outcomes that address the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and workforce capacity and capability building:** Enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical research leadership and support emerging researchers, particularly community-based researchers with non-traditional pathways into research.

# Focus Area

4

**Drive impact through research translation, innovation and commercial solutions.**

Why?

## Why we propose this Focus Area

Mechanisms that incentivise and support research translation, commercialisation and industry growth will deliver economic gains, a robust biotech and medtech sector and health system capability, resilience and future preparedness.

How?

## How we propose to address this Focus Area

**Research translation:** Develop and expand on current structural solutions and initiatives, such as Research Translation Centres (RTCs) and hub and spoke models, to embed translation and research expertise in healthcare settings.

**Industry integration and risk sharing:** Establish mechanisms that optimise research-industry exchange and moderate and share risk for industry to stimulate investment attractiveness and drive commercial outcomes.

**Manufacturing and marketing:** Support commercialisation and sovereign capability by building local biotech and medtech manufacturing and industry marketing capabilities and research-industry partnerships for national and international markets.

# Focus Area

5

## Position to be ready for future needs and challenges.

Why?

### Why we propose this Focus Area

Knowledge exchange and harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) will ensure Australia has capacity, trust in science and sovereign capability to monitor and address global risks and opportunities. This capability will support Australia to face future health and environmental challenges and to be a strong contributor to global and regional partnerships.

How?

### How we propose to address this Focus Area

**Emerging technology:** Build capability and capacity to take advantage of innovative emerging technologies including cutting edge approaches for responsible and impactful harnessing of AI.

**Environmental sustainability:** Consider the impact of health and medical research and health system outcomes on climate as a key factor in priority setting and embed research processes that promote environmental sustainability.

**Global partnerships:** Promote strategic collaborations that address shared health priorities and strengthen Australia's leadership globally and in the Indo-Pacific region.

.

# Enablers & Enabling Initiatives

Enablers are the building blocks of a successful health and medical research ecosystem. They are the fundamental assets needed to deliver across all the Actions areas of the National Strategy.

Enabling Initiatives are foundational efforts that create the conditions for success and will support outcomes across all five Focus Areas.



# Workforce

**Improving funding stability and job security through innovative funding models and workforce planning, increasing productivity and creating a research-positive culture.**

## Workforce Enabling Initiative

**Develop an Australian Health and Medical Research Workforce Plan to provide a framework for attracting, retaining and developing a diverse health and medical research and translation workforce.**

- Future-proofing the Australian HMR workforce.
- Building an adaptable and responsive workforce.
- Creating pathways for clinician researcher training and development.
- Clarifying definitions of the people and organisations that form the Australian health and medical research workforce.
- Improving alignment between the current and future workforce needs of the sector and the training of higher degree by research students.
- Improving workforce diversity and security through grant funding





# Funding

**Ensuring sufficient funding that is strategically coordinated across government, industry, not for profit and philanthropic sectors.**

## Funding Enabling Initiative

**Leverage or re-design current funding mechanisms that channel funding for research across healthcare, educational and industry settings.**

- Develop a national health and medical research resourcing statement.
- Re-design current funding models to accommodate an optimally sized health and medical research sector and to leverage and consolidate funds.



# Data and Advanced Technology

**Building capability in emerging technologies, AI and data, that is accessible and linked.**

## Data and Advanced Technology Enabling Initiative

**Build on current initiatives to develop and reform access to data, digital assets and advanced technology across the nation, freeing up secondary use of data for research purposes.**

- Undertake nationwide mapping of data and digital assets and investigate how to overcome barriers currently restricting shared and open access, aligned with the objectives of key national frameworks.
- Create dedicated cross-disciplinary funding schemes.
- Cultivate workforce skillsets and capabilities that adapt to changing environments.
- Outreach and support for data literacy and data citizenship, to improve community, researcher and care provider understanding of personal data and its use, access, sharing and ownership.
- Prioritise research that overcomes technical and systemic barriers to the development and use of AI applications in clinical environments.



# Infrastructure

**Use existing and plan new infrastructure, platforms and networks as shared resources in a sustainable research system.**

## Infrastructure Enabling Initiative

**Develop an Australian Health and Medical Research Infrastructure Roadmap to drive the nationally coordinated development of high performing, fit for purpose and sustainable research infrastructure that supports and encourages whole of ecosystem collaboration.**

- Enhance coordination and development of infrastructure across Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
- Support collaboration with industry.
- Incentivise cooperative, shared approaches to infrastructure development and access across disciplines, institutions and jurisdictions.
- Enhance access to infrastructure and facilities in healthcare settings to support clinical research.
- Ensure a fit for purpose workforce.
- Future-proof Australia's health and medical research infrastructure.

# Establishing a National Strategy Advisory Council

## Governance is essential for the National Strategy

- The National Strategy is a bold, long-term vision with broad scope.
- Health and medical research is inherently multifaceted, involving diverse stakeholders.
- A governance structure is necessary to ensure that activity is sustained, and does not become fragmented, duplicative, or misaligned with the Values and strategic Goals of the Strategy.

## Managing a 10-year framework

- The National Strategy is framed over a 10-year horizon and is not static.
- Implementation milestones will mark progress and guide adjustments, to:
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
  - Reassess priorities based on new evidence or changing health needs.
  - Incorporate technological advances and policy shifts.
  - Engage stakeholders in continuous improvement.

The National Strategy Advisory Council will act as both a guardian and a catalyst, ensuring the National Strategy stays on course while facilitating innovation and responsiveness.

## Inter-governmental coordination

The National Strategy Advisory Council will seek to complement the work of State and Territory governments and potentially be supported through existing arrangements such as the Health Ministers Meeting.

### Action

#### Establish a National Strategy Advisory Council to enable transparent oversight of the National Strategy to provide:

- **Strategic oversight:** Ensuring that all Actions across Focus Areas and Enablers are coherent and contribute to the overarching Vision.
- **Coordination:** Facilitating collaboration across sectors and jurisdictions, and harmonising efforts to avoid silos.
- **Accountability:** Monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, ensuring responsible use of resources, and upholding values.
- **Responsiveness:** Identifying emerging challenges and opportunities and adapting the strategy accordingly.

# Measuring success of the 10-year National Strategy

## How will we know that the National Strategy is successfully achieving our Goals?

Metrics that are co-designed in collaboration with researchers, institutions, communities, and policymakers.

- Input metrics to track resources such as funding and workforce diversity;
- Process metrics to assess collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and consistency;
- Output metrics that may include publications, patents, and policy influence; and
- Outcome metrics to evaluate health improvements, equity gains and economic benefits.

## The National Strategy is expected to deliver short-, mid- and long-term outcomes.

- Short term phase (years 1–3), the focus will broadly be on implementation fidelity and early outputs.
- Mid-term phase (years 4–7) will assess progress toward the strategic Goals and allow for course corrections.
- Long-term phase (years 8–10) will evaluate overall outcomes, sustainability and lasting impact.



### Design a phased approach to monitoring and evaluation across the Strategy's 10-year lifespan.

Progress will vary across Focus Areas and Enabling Initiatives, which each present unique challenges and complexities.

- **Phased evaluation process** to reflect these different challenges whilst also seizing opportunities to deliver meaningful results across short, medium and long-term timeframes.
- **Mixed-methods approach** that combines quantitative tools and data analytics with qualitative methods such as case studies and community feedback, can ensure objectivity and credibility.
- **Integration and alignment** with other activities (outcomes of the SERD).
- **Periodic independent reviews** to inform ongoing improvements and strategic adjustments.

# Next Steps

Consultation to finalise the National Strategy for Health and Medical Research

# Towards a Final Strategy and Implementation

## Phase 2 consultation August – October 2025



**Webinar**



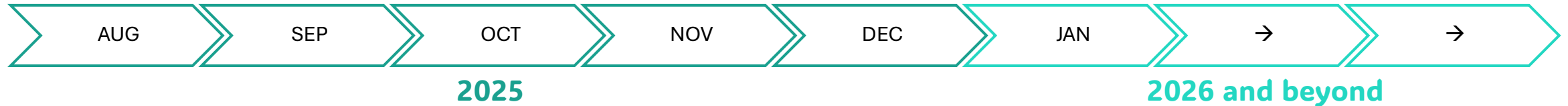
**Submissions** (6 week opening)  
Written | Survey | Video



**Roundtables**  
States | Territories



**Thematic  
Workshops**



**Analysis and Policy  
development**



**Strategy  
finalisation**



**Government  
consideration**

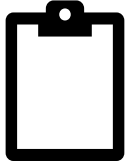


**Implementation**

- *National Strategy Advisory Council*
- *Monitoring and evaluation*



# National Strategy – stay connected and involved



Have your say by providing  
feedback on the National  
Strategy through the  
Consultation Hub

Opened 27 August 2025

Closes 8 October 2025



Check out the National Health  
and Medical Research  
Strategy Website

**[www.health.gov.au/our-  
work/national-health-and-  
medical-research-strategy](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-health-and-medical-research-strategy)**



Send any questions on the  
National Health and Medical  
Research Strategy to

**[HMRStrategy@health.gov.au](mailto:HMRStrategy@health.gov.au)**

# Questions and discussion