



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Medical Research Future Fund Strategy and Priorities 2026 consultation

4 August 2026

Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB)

and

Health and Medical Research Office (HMRO)



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Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB)

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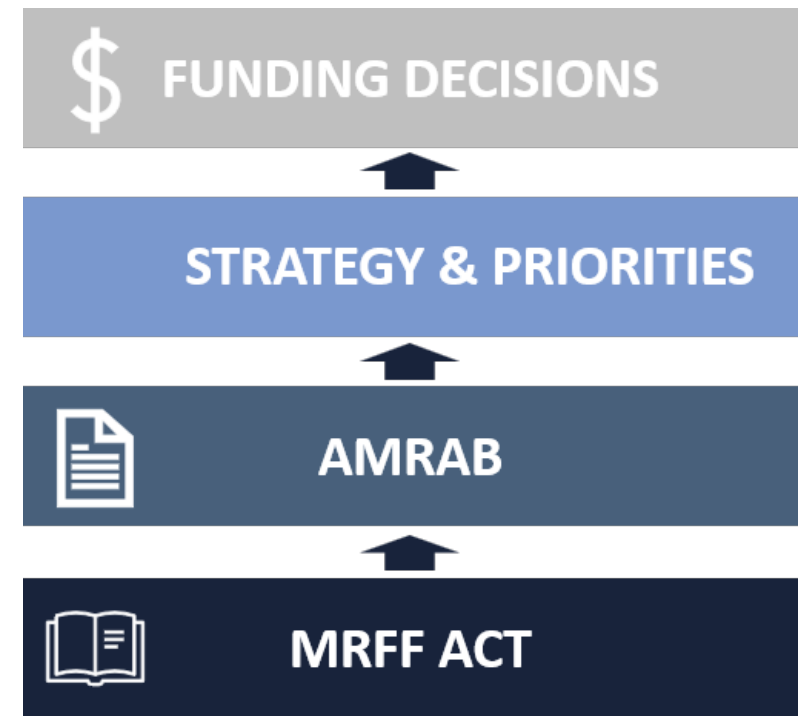
International Advisors

Professor Lucy Chappell (UK)
Dr Tammy Clifford (Canada)



Role of AMRAB

- The MRFF Act established AMRAB
 - An independent expert advisory board responsible for developing the MRFF Strategy and Priorities.
- In determining the next Strategy and Priorities
 - AMRAB must undertake a consultation process.
 - AMRAB is required to consider Australia's health needs and areas where greater or more strategic investment is required.



Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy and Priorities

MRFF STRATEGY & PRIORITIES

The MRFF Strategy and Priorities guide where the Australian Government directs MRFF research funding.

Strategy

Sets the long-term direction for the MRFF over a 5-year horizon.

Priorities

Identify shorter-term areas for focused investment and are updated every 2 years.

Funding decisions

Government must take the current Priorities into account when making MRFF funding decisions.



Updating the MRFF Strategy and Priorities

Why update the MRFF Strategy and Priorities:

- The current MRFF Strategy and Priorities expire in early November 2026.
- The new Strategy and Priorities will guide future MRFF investment decisions.

The update provides the opportunity to:

- Respond to Australia's evolving health system needs
- Reflect advances in research and technological developments
- Strengthen focus on translation, impact and health system sustainability
- The process ensures the MRFF remains responsive, strategic and aligned with national priorities.



Initial Development: Evidence Based Approach

Draft Strategy & Priorities informed by:

- Analysis of the current MRFF investment portfolio
- Broader national and international research and funding landscape
- National and international research priorities



Landscape Analysis

Funding Analysis

01

MRFF investment aligned to priorities

Assess current MRFF investment against the MRFF Strategy and priority areas.

02

Funding benchmark against comparators

Compare with national and international funders:

National

NHMRC

International

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

03

Complementarity case studies

UK

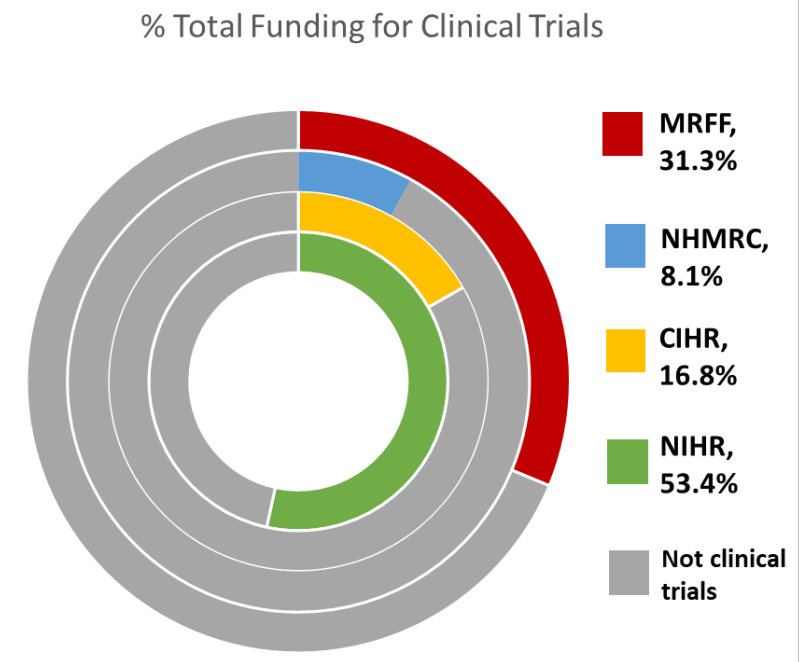
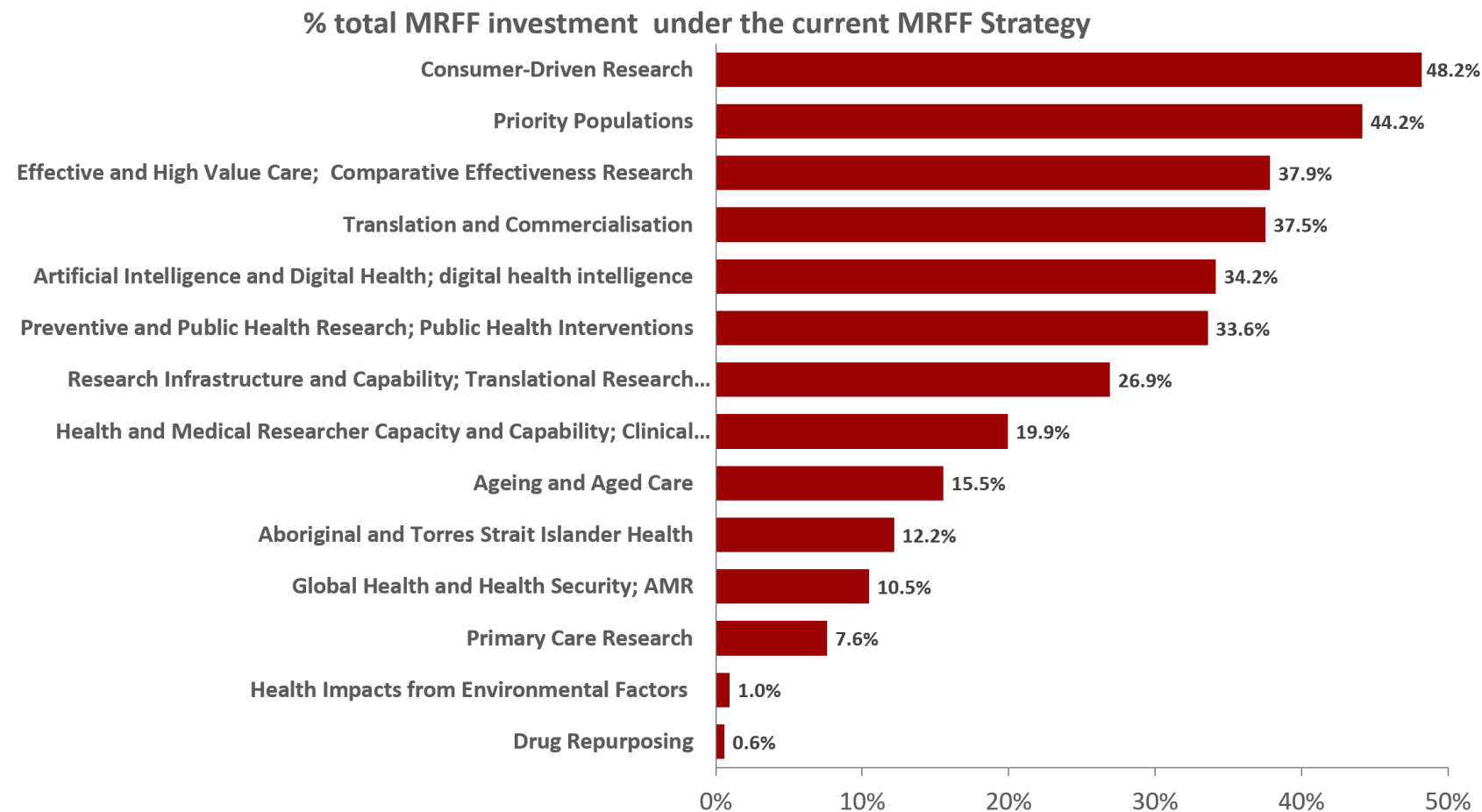
NIHR and Wellcome Trust

CAN

CIHR and Canada Foundation for Innovation

Research Priorities Alignment

MRFF Investment aligned to MRFF Priorities



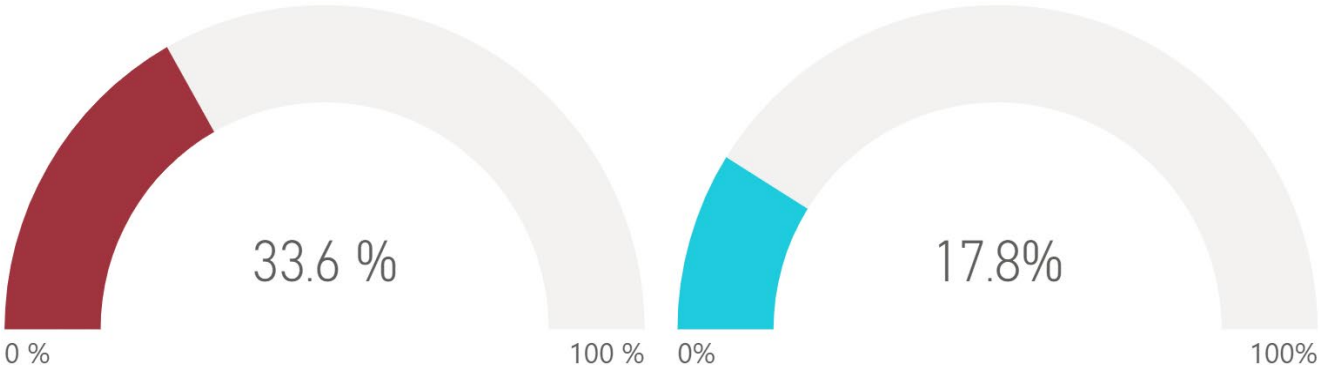
- MRFF Investment data accounting for grant opportunities delivered under the current MRFF Strategy
- Priority alignment performed on MRFF funding data as of January 2026 and at the individual grant level
- Individual grants may align with one or more MRFF Priorities

MRFF Investment aligned to MRFF Priorities

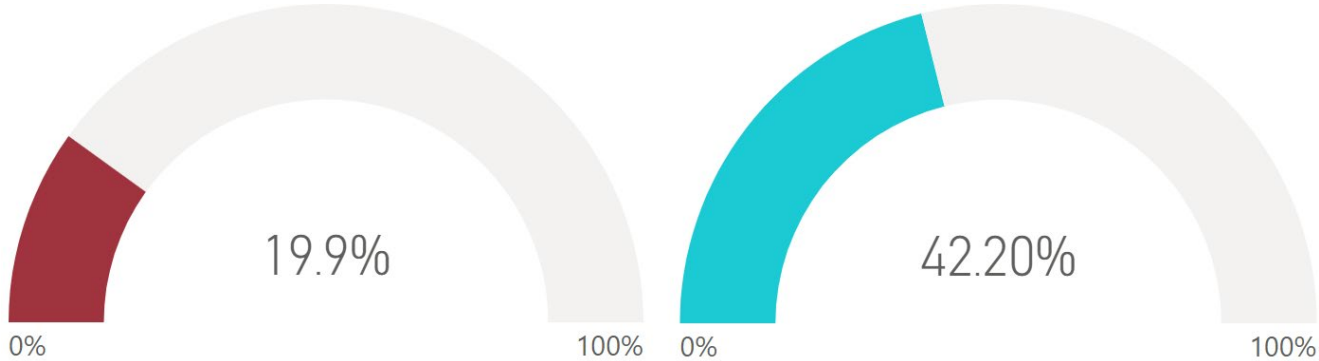
Funding Complementarity with NHMRC



Implementation of interventions in the health system

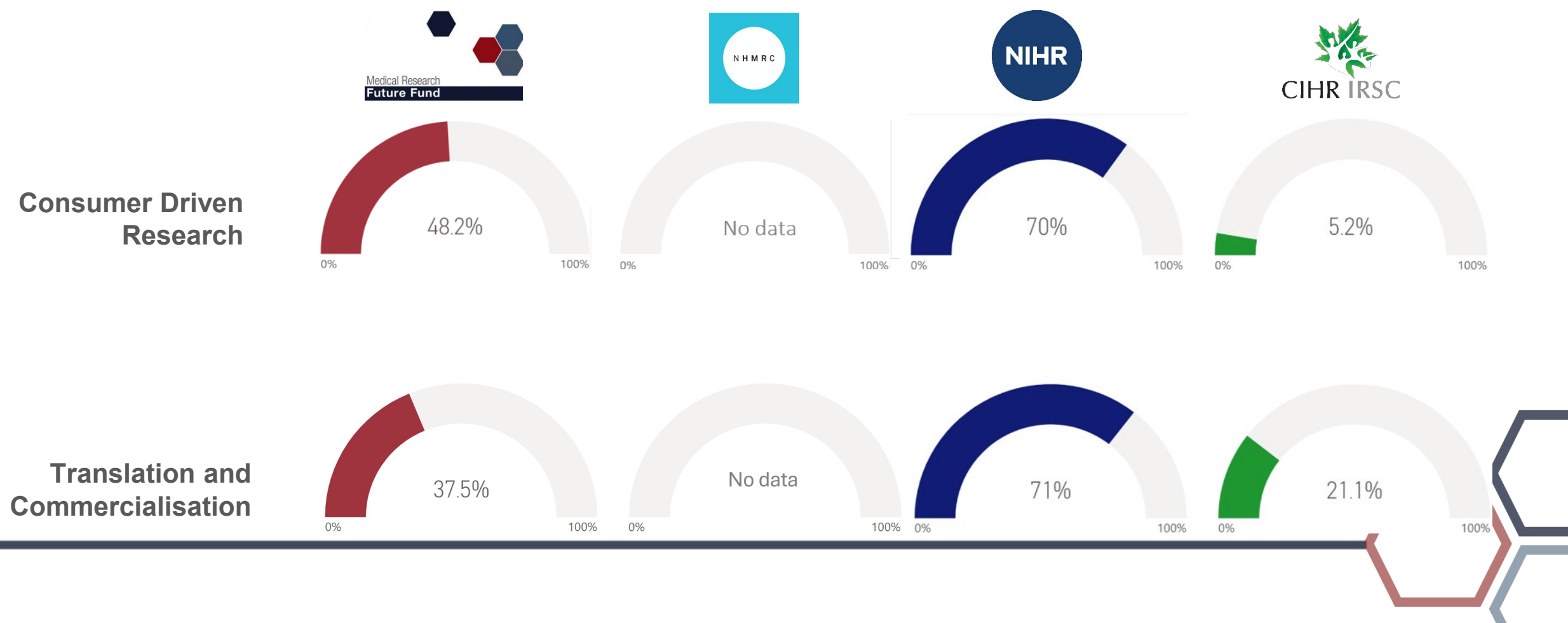


Capacity and capability building for researchers



MRFF Investment aligned to MRFF Priorities

Investment Benchmark against funding comparators



Summary of Findings: Landscape Analysis

- **3 key areas of learning** from comparator funded research:
 - Knowledge Translation, Implementation Science and Evaluation
 - Systems-level focus to research program
 - “Built in” strategic complementarity between funders increases funding impact

Priority Alignment:

- **Key gaps and differences identified are:**
 - Equity and engagement are framed as cross-cutting system principles in the UK and Canada
 - considers AI a key data and system capability enabler; NHMRC places additional emphasis on ethical, safe and equitable use of AI in research
 - emphasize long-term system-wide research
 - embedding research delivery into the health system
 - Focus on national coordination of research ecosystem in addition to research activity funding



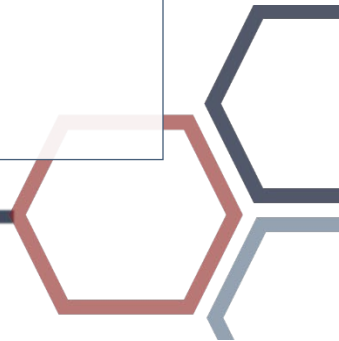
Initial Development: Evidence Based Approach (cont.)

Approach to developing the new MRFF Strategy and Priorities:

- AMRAB's expertise and priorities
- National Health and Medical Research Strategy and associated consultation reports
- Strategic Examination of Research and Development final report
- Key learnings from the funding landscape analysis
- Feedback from past consultation from the development of the 2024-26 MRFF Priorities

Key inputs included:

- Outcomes-based approach with fewer, targeted priorities to direct MRFF investments more strategically
- Ambitious vision with clear continuity across consecutive MRFF Priorities under the MRFF Strategy
- Emphasise complementarity and alignment with the NHMRC to support the research ecosystem from discovery through to translation and implementation



Cross-Cutting Principles

Principles that recognise the unique role of the MRFF within the health and medical research system in Australia



Draft Strategic Objectives

- A research-rich, data-enabled learning health system that continuously improves quality, efficiency, cultural safety, and equity
 - End-to-end translation of discoveries and innovation into real-world impact - building sovereign capability and delivering measurable health and economic benefits
 - A health and medical research sector and health system positioned to understand and respond to determinants of health and wellbeing including emerging and future challenges of climate and environment change
- Transformation of health care through AI and digital health advances that integrate preventive health, diagnostics and therapeutics across the care continuum
 - Thriving health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through research that is community-governed and directed
 - A skilled, sustainable, inclusive and future-ready health and medical research workforce that accelerates innovation, translation and system capability



Draft Priorities

AI in research and health systems

Nationally coordinated, safe, and ethical use of artificial intelligence across research and health systems that accelerates innovation in preventive health, diagnostics, therapeutics, and service delivery across the care continuum.

Advanced Therapeutics and Emerging Technology

Accelerated translation and commercialisation of advanced therapeutics and technologies into effective health products and services

Determinants of Health

Evidence-informed and equity-driven health research that addresses determinants of health and wellbeing, including structural, social, and environmental.

Integrated Digital Health Systems

Research-informed, person-centred and data-driven digital health capabilities that improves the efficiency and quality of the health system through interoperable, secure and high-quality data utilisation, linkages and infrastructure

Health Impacts from Environmental Factors, including Climate Change

A climate-resilient health system that is prepared for and responsive to the health impacts of environmental factors, including climate change

Embedding research in the health system

A research-rich learning health system informed by real-world evidence that drives culturally safe, high-value care and prevention, continuous system-wide learning, equity, and capability building

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community governed and directed research

Community-governed and directed research and capacity building to support thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing

Multiomics-Informed Healthcare

Multiomics-informed research systems that accelerate precision therapeutics, preventive strategies, and early-intervention approaches

Skilled and sustainable health and medical research workforce

Sustainable, skilled and future-ready health and medical research workforce that strengthens research translation, implementation and innovation



Complementarity with the National Health and Medical Research Strategy

MRFF Priorities	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Focus Area 4	Focus Area 5
AI in research and health systems			✓	✓	✓
Integrated Digital Health Systems	✓		✓		✓
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community governed and directed research	✓	✓	✓		
Advanced Therapeutics and Emerging Technology			✓	✓	✓
Health Impacts from Environmental Factors, including Climate Change	✓		✓		✓
Multomics-Informed Healthcare			✓	✓	✓
Determinants of Health	✓	✓	✓		
Embedding research in the health system	✓		✓		✓
Skilled and sustainable health and medical research workforce	✓		✓	✓	

National Health and Medical Research Strategy Focus Areas

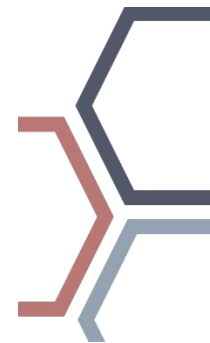
1 Strengthen a vibrant research system that delivers for the nation

2 Accelerate Indigenous-led research and its translation to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing

3 Deliver high-value care through the timely translation and implementation of research findings into healthcare policy and practice

4 Drive impact through strengthened research development and commercialisation

5 Maximise the benefits of advanced technologies and be ready for future challenges



Consultation approach and next steps

Consultation Approach

- 1 Open consultation
(Mid Jul - Aug 2026)** Survey and webinar gather broad input.
- 2 Targeted engagement
(Aug - Early Sep 2026)** Roundtables and advisory committees deepen insights.
- 3 Refinement
(Sep – Oct 2026)** Feedback informs refinement and AMRAB advice to Government.

Provide your input

via Online Survey

Survey window

17 July – 16 August 2026



Scan the QR code to share feedback.

Questions?

Provide your input

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