



**Australian  
Academy of  
Health & Medical  
Sciences**

## **SURVEY RESPONSE**

# SUBMISSION TO SURVEY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY

**MARCH 2025**

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Comprised of the most outstanding scientific leaders, the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences is the independent and authoritative body working to solve the most complex and pressing health challenges facing our nation.

In providing expert advice, the Academy reduces health inequity by enabling high-quality, evidence-based healthcare driven by science and innovation.

From lecture hall to lab bench, and then patient bedside, our Fellows are at the forefront of translating ground-breaking research into real world outcomes that advance healthcare, inform policy, and save lives.

The Academy's unique composition and reach brings together an unparalleled network of Australia's leading health and medical experts across industry, academia and decision-making bodies to advance the health of our nation.

*\* For clarity, only responses to the substantive questions - those directly addressing the National Health and Medical Research Strategy and its development, are published here. Responses to demographic and respondent profile questions have been omitted to focus on the core policy contributions from the Academy.*

**In considering the following list of focus areas [Health and Medical Research Workforce; Funding across the research pipeline; Collaboration across jurisdictions/organisations and individual researchers; Avoiding duplication of research; Regional, rural and remote health; Burden of disease; Data access and sharing facilitation; Community need; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health; Health inequity; Supporting and increasing collaboration; Early-mid career researchers; Commercialisation and translation of research outcomes], please indicate the top three that should be considered in developing a National Health and Medical Research Strategy.**

- i. Funding across the research pipeline
- ii. Health and medical research workforce
- iii. Other

**If you chose 'other', please specify what else you would rank in the top 3 focus areas** (1000-character limit)

The Academy has selected 'Other' because we welcome all of the focus areas identified by HMRO and included in the survey. Each of these areas are critical and interdependent, and they should all be addressed in the Strategy. For example, health equity - including Aboriginal/or Torres Strait Islander Health - can only be strengthened through funding across the research pipeline, an enabled HMR workforce, and targeted resourcing to regional, rural and remote areas. Meanwhile, the commercialisation and translation of research outcomes both depend on research funding but also generate returns that can be reinvested in research and innovation. The complexity of the HMR ecosystem does not lend itself to separating and prioritising three areas from and above any others. While the Academy acknowledges the need for the Strategy to follow an actionable structure, we urge the HMRO to take a holistic approach that recognises the breadth of challenges and opportunities facing Australia's HMR sector.

**Please feel free to elaborate on your response to Q13 or Q14** (1000-character limit)

The Academy supports a Strategy that safeguards the independence and resilience of Australian HMR. The Strategy should build an ecosystem that enables research to secure tangible health and economic benefits by embedding research as a core function of the healthcare system. The Strategy must support areas of national strength and unmet need, avoid duplication and ensure equitable support across disciplines and geographies. Addressing systemic hurdles, e.g. funding disparities, gender inequities, and administrative burdens will be crucial to fostering an agile, innovative and world-leading HMR sector. This approach will ensure that the HMR sector can continue to drive the innovation needed to advance health equity and enhance the sustainability and resilience of the health system.

**How often should a National Health and Medical Research Strategy be reviewed?**

Once every 5 years.

**Please feel free to elaborate on your reason for your response to Q16 or Q17. (1000-character limit)**

The Academy supports a balanced approach to reviewing the Strategy. A five-year review cycle provides the stability needed for relatively long-term investment, implementation and impact assessment. Frequent reviews risk short-term, reactive shifts rather than strategic, sustained progress. However, given the rapid evolution of research, technology and health system challenges, interim light-touch reviews of the Strategy's priority pillars could ensure responsiveness to emerging developments and strengthen public trust in the impacts of HMR investment. The Strategy should be flexible, allowing adjustments in response to major disruptions such as pandemics or breakthroughs in areas such as AI. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will ensure the Strategy is forward-looking, evidence-informed and aligned with national health and research priorities. While relatively long-term planning is essential, regular checkpoints will refine direction without undermining confidence in the sector.

**When a draft National Health and Medical Research Strategy is released to the sector for review and feedback, what is your preferred method of consultation?**

Other

**If you chose 'other', please specify preferred feedback method.**

The Academy's preferred consultation method is a written submission process, allowing for detailed and considered feedback. However, this formal process will be most effective if accompanied by other opportunities for input, including roundtables. It is also crucial that there is transparency and information sharing, for instance through webinars, to ensure the sector is well-informed about the Strategy's development and has opportunities to ask questions or seek clarification on key issues.

**What is the most important benefit which should be achieved through the National Health and Medical Research Strategy? (1000-character limit)**

The most important benefit of the Strategy should be a sustainable, well-supported research sector that drives improved health outcomes for all Australians. The Academy's vision for this is outlined in its 2022 report, *'Research and innovation as core functions in transforming the health system'*. The HMR sector should drive health equity, and can do so through fair and transparent funding, long-term investment, a strong workforce pipeline, and impactful research that aligns with national health needs to secure real-world benefits. Stronger collaboration across sectors, improved research infrastructure, and alignment with global opportunities will enhance Australia's leadership in HMR. Clear priorities, a long-term vision and mechanisms to measure and demonstrate impact are essential to building trust in the HMR system. The Strategy should focus on addressing key health burdens while fostering innovation, consumer involvement, and a research system resilient to future challenges.

**Is there anything you would like to raise that is not otherwise captured by these questions? (1000-character limit)**

- 1) Equity in funding distribution across jurisdictions and infrastructure investment is essential to strengthening national research capacity.
- 2) A balanced approach to funding both disruptive and incremental research is critical for long-term progress. There also needs to be a balance between applied research, basic experimental/discovery research, and investment in people.
- 3) To be successful, the Strategy's development must have bipartisan support.

- 4) The Strategy must be accompanied by a clear implementation plan to ensure its success and long-term sustainability.
- 5) Implementation must involve community engagement and international collaboration enabling Australia to address domestic challenges and respond to geopolitical shifts.