



Securing Australia's Health Future

Statement from the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences ahead of the 2025 Australian Federal Election.

From lecture halls to laboratories and patient bedsides, Australia's health and medical researchers are driving discoveries that save lives, strengthen our health system, and fuel national prosperity.

Health and medical research is not just about discovery. It is a driver of economic growth, and a key way to ease cost-of-living relief through smarter, more affordable, and more accessible healthcare. It also acts as a foundation for building Australia's national resilience and domestic sovereign capability.

Australia currently stands at a pivotal moment for the sector and the nation as it navigates an increasingly unpredictable geopolitical and trade landscape, alongside the ongoing challenges posed by issues such as climate change, pandemics, and an ageing population.

Strategic investment in health and medical sciences can diversify Australia's economy, fortifying it against global uncertainty and ensuring we remain competitive and self-reliant on the world stage.

To secure this future, the Academy urges all parties and candidates to commit to the following priorities:

Future-fit health systems

Australia is home to one of the world's most highly regarded health systems. But to ensure we have a future-fit health system, it must be research-driven, innovation-enabled, and climate-resilient. Now is the time to seize the opportunity to act and invest in a system that is smarter, stronger, and designed to serve Australians well into the decades ahead.

Research and innovation as core functions of the health system

All parties and candidates should commit to an inclusive, continuing mechanism that is empowered to develop and implement strategies for embedding research and innovation as core functions of the health system.

Australia's health system is globally respected, delivering high-quality care to millions. But beneath this strength lies a systemic flaw that limits our ability to innovate and adapt: research is not embedded at the heart of the system.

Research-rich health systems are better for patients and staff. To reap these benefits, Australia needs a coordinated, accountable and enduring mechanism to embed research and innovation as core functions of the health system.

An enabled workforce

All parties and candidates should commit to nurturing Australia's health and medical research workforce, including by developing a national strategy and implementation plan for sustainably building a world-class clinician-researcher workforce.

Australia's evidence-based health system is underpinned by a world-class research workforce. However, we currently risk losing our next generation of health and medical researchers to job insecurity and a lack of clear training and career pathways. Two groups at particular risk are clinician researchers, who bridge the gap between research and practice ensuring that healthcare is continuously informed by the latest evidence to improve patient outcome, and early-to-mid-career researchers (EMCRs).



Trust in health and medical science

Strengthening trust in health and medical science is not just fundamental to safeguarding public confidence and promoting evidence-informed decision-making; it is a national imperative that underpins the resilience and effectiveness of our entire health system. Trust is the foundation on which effective health systems are built. Without public confidence in the integrity of our health and medical research ecosystem, even the most groundbreaking discoveries can fail to achieve their potential impact.

The National Health and Medical Research Council

All parties and candidates should commit to increasing the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) funding beyond indexation over the next five years to offset the real terms decrease that it has seen to its funding since 2010.

To maintain and enhance public trust in Australia's health system, it is essential that this system consistently delivers high value, world-class care to all Australian communities. To ensure the health system can continue to deliver this, it must be supported by a strong foundation of rigorous, high-quality evidence and innovation.

Empowering Australians through health literacy

All parties and candidates should commit to finalising and implementing the National Health Literacy Strategy to enhance public trust in healthcare and strengthen preventive health engagement, ensuring that all Australians can understand their own health and can access and navigate the best care for them.

Health literacy underpins good health outcomes; it empowers people to engage in preventive measures shown to reduce

the risk of chronic disease and to access effective, evidence-based healthcare. Currently, nearly 60% of Australian adults struggle to understand common health information, and the sprawling information ecosystem continues to further complicate the challenge of identifying and evaluating health and medical mis- and dis-information, making low health literacy an urgent public health challenge for Australia.

Access and equity in health and medical research

Access to high-quality health and medical research should not be determined by geography, socioeconomic status, cultural background, gender or any other such factor. Yet, systemic disparities in research funding, participation, and health literacy continue to leave many communities underserved and overlooked. Implementing structural reforms that make research opportunities accessible to all, regardless of background or location, and to ensure the benefits of health and medical research are shared equitably across the nation, is a national imperative.

Coordinating and leveraging research on women's health

All parties and candidates should commit to the development of a comprehensive National Plan for Women's Health Research to coordinate and enhance investment in research on women's health.

Improving gender- and sex-based health equity requires us to address the fact that research on women's health in Australia remains fragmented, limiting our ability to address persistent disparities in health outcomes, treatment access, and workforce participation.

This Statement is a condensed summary of the Academy's full election platform, [which can be viewed here](#).