



Australian
Academy of
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POLICY PRIMER: HORIZON SCANNING

Appendix: Summary of example past and present Australian HMS horizon scanning initiatives

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Initiative and lead	Type and function	Timeframe	Focus and outputs	Strengths	Limitations
<u>National Health and Medical Research Strategy 2026–2036</u> Lead: Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA)	National policy strategy; Coordination and governance	2026–2036	a. Focus Area 1.2, <i>National priority setting and horizon scanning</i>, proposes “A national (whole-of-government) priority setting and horizon scanning process informing and guiding strategic investments, workforce and infrastructure planning.”¹¹ b. Proposed enabling action 30 recommends a <i>Health and Medical Research Workforce Plan</i> “that describes the size and location of the current research workforce, identifies trends, gaps and opportunities, and sets a path to build an adaptable, diverse and future-ready workforce going forward.”¹¹	a. Connects horizon scanning to national priority setting, investment, workforce and infrastructure planning. Proposes broad sector and jurisdictional participation, including priority populations, with advisory governance and evaluation. b. Would identify workforce trends, gaps and skills needs, and action needed to secure the ongoing adaptability and suitability of the research workforce. Could bridge scanning insights and workforce planning policy.	a. Nationally coordinated horizon scanning remains a proposed capability, with no detail regarding: principles that would inform its development; what it would look like; how it would be operationalised and implemented; or the timeline according to which it will be developed. b. A proposed enabling action rather than a dedicated scanning service. Its delivery and contribution to wider horizon scanning depends on implementation of the National Strategy.
<u>Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC)</u> Lead: Australian Government	National agency	2026 onwards	Disease surveillance, risk assessment and preparedness, with focus on infectious diseases and emerging public health risks Key outputs include evidence and advice for prevention and preparedness, informed by a One Health approach.	Provides national disease surveillance, risk assessment and preparedness capability. Brings evidence together to support early action on public health threats, with a One Health perspective.	Public health and communicable disease remit does not cover the full HMS ecosystem, including research opportunities, emerging technologies, commercialisation and research infrastructure.

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<u>Health workforce supply and demand models</u> Lead: DHDA	Profession-specific data and forecasting	Existing models developed 2023–2026, with remaining models in development, and regular updates planned to all models.	Clinical supply, demand and distribution data for nurses, GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists, dental practitioners, midwives, obstetricians and gynaecologists, medical radiation practitioners, and radiologists. Whole medical workforce model projects supply and demand from 2024 to 2048.	Projects profession-specific supply and demand, including geographical shortages and future service needs. Supports workforce planning; scheduled updates can refresh the evidence base.	Coverage is limited to selected clinical professions. Projections address defined supply and demand questions without integrating considerations from broader horizon scanning of potential scientific, technological or societal changes.
<u>HTA Policy and Methods Review</u> Leads: DHDA; Review committee	Policy review and recommendations	Review undertaken 2022–2024; report published 2024.	Recommendation 47, <i>Horizon Scanning</i> , suggested that the Australian Government establish and resource a national scanning function for emerging health technologies and the stakeholder engagement, access and healthcare payer planning related to these. ¹⁵	Recommendation 47 makes explicit case for a federally resourced and governed horizon scanning function, and link.	Focus of proposed national horizon scanning function is limited to health technology. No plan for or path towards securing implementation.
<u>National Animal Health Horizon Scanning and Foresight Network</u> Leads: Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO), Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)	Collaborative scanning and foresight network	Re-established 2024	Animal health threats and opportunities, including disease drivers, climate, misinformation and technology; intelligence sharing and capability building.	Brings Commonwealth, jurisdictional and animal health partners together to share intelligence and develop foresight capability. Relevant to threats and opportunities at the human–animal–environment interface.	Animal health focus covers one part of the wider HMS landscape. Does not itself coordinate scanning across human health research, health technologies, workforce and health services.

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<u>Australian Health and Medical Research Workforce Audit</u> Lead: DHDA	One-off workforce analysis	Audit undertaken and published 2024 Opportunities for future monitoring identified	Research workforce characteristics, careers and challenges; future data collection and monitoring opportunities.	Provides evidence on research workforce characteristics, and career pathways and challenges. Informed National Strategy and its proposed Workforce Plan. Identifies opportunities for sustained future monitoring needed for stakeholders to anticipate future trends.	Covers only a portion of the HMR workforce. Regular collection and repeat analysis are needed to track change and anticipate future trends.
<u>Medicines of Tomorrow</u> Lead: Medicines Australia	Issues-focused horizon scanning forum and accompanying annual report	Annually since 2023 (as part of the 2022–2027 Commonwealth–Medicines Australia Strategic Agreement)	Emerging therapies and technologies, including developments that may enter regulatory or reimbursement systems within the decade; implications for healthcare readiness.	Brings government, industry and patient stakeholders together to showcase and explore emerging therapies. Annual forums and reports support awareness of future innovations and their healthcare planning implications.	Periodic, medicines-focused engagement.
<u>National Medicines Policy</u> Leads: DHDA; sector stakeholders	National policy framework	2000–present Most recently refreshed December 2022 ¹⁷	Equitable access; quality, safety and efficacy; and quality use and medicines safety, enabled by a sustainable and innovative medicines industry and research sectors.	Provides a policy basis for forward planning.	A medicines policy framework rather than a scanning service, it does not establish processes for identifying, sharing or acting on emerging signals across HMS

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<u>CSIRO Our Future World reports</u> Lead: CSIRO	Periodic exploratory strategic foresight/ megatrend reports	Once-in-a-decade report; 2012, 2022, ongoing	Decadal global megatrends reports that have so far included health themes such as ageing, chronic disease, infectious disease risks, prevention and precision health.	Provides broad, long-term context for strategy and investment. Connects health pressures with wider demographic, climate, technological and societal megatrends.	Not a continuous HMS-specific service for detecting, updating and prioritising early signals of change.
<u>Commonwealth–Medicines Australia Strategic Agreement</u> Lead: DHDA; Medicines Australia	Industry–government agreement	2022–2027	Medicines access and HTA reform; provided a framework for engagement on emerging therapies.	Provided a formal basis for industry–government collaboration on medicines access and HTA reform.	Time-limited agreement focused on medicines. Does not establish coordination across the wider HMS ecosystem
<u>Australasian Joint Agencies Scanning Network (AJASN)</u> Leads: AJASN members (i.e. participating government agencies from Australia and New Zealand)	Cross-agency horizon scanning network and shared database	2004–present	Weak signals, emerging issues and implications for government policy and programs across Australia and New Zealand.	Provides representatives from participating Australian and New Zealand agencies with horizon scanning networking, mentoring, training and resources	Membership-based platform focused on upskilling individual representatives from a small number of government agencies No whole-of-HMS coordinating mandate or formal link to national HMS priority setting and investment

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<u>Australian College of Learned Academies (ACOLA) Horizon Scanning Series</u> Leads: ACOLA; Office of the Chief Scientist	Government-commissioned interdisciplinary studies	2017–2020 report series	Issues-focused analysis of an emerging scientific or technological development that is likely to shape Australia's future. HMS-related reports included: <i>The Future of Precision Medicine in Australia</i> (2018); <i>Synthetic Biology in Australia: An Outlook to 2030</i> (2018); and <i>The Effective and Ethical Development of Artificial Intelligence: An Opportunity to Improve our Wellbeing</i> (2019).	Combines expertise from across the Learned Academies to examine decade-ahead risks, opportunities and policy implications. HMS reports consider technologies alongside ethical, social, workforce and infrastructure needs.	Discrete commissioned studies rather than continuous scanning. HMS coverage is topic-specific, and the series does not provide an ongoing mechanism for integrating intelligence into national HMS planning.
<u>Australia and New Zealand Horizon Scanning Network (ANZHSN)</u> Leads: Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC); Health Policy Advisory Committee (HealthPACT).	Government-funded health technology scanning network	2003–2017 Past program that ended when national funding ceased	Devices, diagnostics, procedures and health programs; early notice for health service planning.	Provided early notice of some emerging medical technologies through cross-jurisdictional collaboration and specialist HTA expertise.	Excluded medicines and vaccines, leaving important technology gaps.



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The Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences

Canberra | Sydney | Brisbane

PO Box 6114, Woolloongabba, QLD 4102

e info@aahms.org t +61 (0) 7 3102 7220



www.aahms.org



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