



NHMRC STRATEGIC PLAN

NHMRC will only support excellence in research, because the best outcomes flow from the best research.

NHMRC is committed to all research relevant to health - including biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research.

NHMRC recognises that multidisciplinary approaches are needed to solve the complex problems of health.

NHMRC has developed and will implement a series of realistic and achievable strategies to meet the expectations of all levels of government, the health and medical research sector, and the community.

To achieve these goals NHMRC will:

- *Continue to support excellence in health and medical research, including*
 - *Supporting robust project and program grant research built on the best ideas of Australian researchers.*
 - *Developing strategic approaches to the major health issues likely to arise and other emerging issues.*
- *Support the best researchers in all research approaches, through competitive research fellowships schemes including for early and mid-career researchers.*

- *Support key national assets needed for research, such as gene and tissue banks, national animal welfare initiatives and access to large scale research facilities.*
- *Work to further implement the recommendations of the Investment Review of Health and Medical Research (the Grant Review) on policy and practice focused research, and to provide more active assistance in research to inform policy development in health.*
- *Continue its commitment to improving Indigenous health through building capacity and implementing the Road Map: a strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research.*
- *Increase its commitment to supporting the best ethical conduct in health care and in research.*
- *Provide evidence and informed advice to governments and the community.*
- *Ensure diligent and transparent administration of the regulatory framework established by the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 and the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002, including implementing the amendments to those Acts passed by the Federal Parliament.*
- *Improve communications with all our stakeholders through a comprehensive communications strategy.*

Mission

Working to build a healthy Australia.

Values

The NHMRC adheres to and promotes the following values:

<i>Excellence:</i>	In all we do.
<i>Relevance:</i>	Meeting the needs of all Australians.
<i>Responsiveness:</i>	Addressing Australia's immediate and longer term health challenges.
<i>Leadership:</i>	Leading Australia's national health and medical research efforts, setting authoritative advice, supported by high ethical standards.
<i>Balance:</i>	Supporting all forms of research including molecular, cellular, and clinical research targeted at individual health.
<i>Working with others:</i>	Supporting research across in a wide range of research organisations.
<i>Impact:</i>	Promoting policy, practice and commercial impacts.
<i>Engagement:</i>	Collaborating nationally and internationally.
<i>Accountability:</i>	Operating at the highest professional, and transparent standards.
<i>Diversity:</i>	Embracing a richly diverse workforce, operating in a collaborative, open and sharing environment.

Strategic Objectives

This Strategic Plan covers the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2009 and has five strategic objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1	THE BEST AND MOST RELEVANT RESEARCH
OBJECTIVE 2	EVIDENCE BASE FOR HEALTH POLICY AND PRACTICE
OBJECTIVE 3	HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS
OBJECTIVE 4	INCREASED INVESTMENT (THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE)
OBJECTIVE 5	TO BUILD A BETTER NHMRC

These objectives have been established to meet the challenges of the current and future health environment. Achievement of these objectives is the combined responsibility of the CEO, the Council, the Committees and the staff of NHMRC.

To ensure NHMRC achieves the targets established by the vision for the next decade, it will be essential to set, monitor and report against key quantifiable and achievable Performance Indicators that also significantly stretch the organisation. During the 2003-2006 Triennium, NHMRC developed its Performance Measurement Framework⁴. NHMRC's Performance Measurement Framework will be revised to align with the five objectives outlined in the new Strategic Plan.

NHMRC will help Australia deal successfully with health issues as they arise. These include emerging issues for the health system or individuals, or new health and medical research developments. Some of these developments may arise as new ethical issues. NHMRC, therefore, needs to be flexible to meet unforeseen challenges that may arise during the period covered by this Strategic Plan. In addition to this Strategic Plan, the NHMRC is required to provide an annual *Statement of Intent* in response to the Minister's annual *Statement of Expectation*. NHMRC's annual Statements of Intent will be made publicly available on NHMRC's website (www.nhmrc.gov.au) and should be read in conjunction with this Strategic Plan.

To achieve all the objectives, NHMRC will encourage and promote involvement of Australians in getting skills, experiences and careers in research, policy development, evidence-based health practice and ethics.



WORKING WITH OTHERS
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*Supporting research
across in a wide range of
research organisations.*

⁴ see <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/pmf2006.htm>

OBJECTIVE I**THE BEST AND MOST RELEVANT RESEARCH****KEY STRATEGIES**

- Identify and support the best research and researchers.
- Improve research funding processes.
- Match research outcomes with Australia's needs.
- Increase support for Indigenous health research.

MECHANISMS

- Peer reviewed, open, transparent and contestable processes.
- Short and long term research support.
- Funding across approaches relevant to health.
- Fellowships in the best research approaches.
- International review.
- A robust *Request for Application* process targeting major health issues.
- Policy and practice focused research initiatives.
- Commercialisation development support.
- Build Indigenous research capacity and increase research support.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- *Objective evidence of excellence, transparency and quality, such as peer review of final reports and bibliometric analysis, as outlined in the NHMRC's Performance Measurement Framework⁵.*
- *International review completed by 31 December 2007.*
- *Growth in all research approaches relevant to health.*
- *Five per cent funding from Medical Research Endowment Account for research relevant to Indigenous people.*

IMPACT
IMPACT
*Promoting policy,
practice and commercial
impacts.*

⁵ see: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/pmf2006.htm>

OBJECTIVE 2**EVIDENCE BASE FOR HEALTH POLICY AND PRACTICE****KEY STRATEGIES**

- Increase access to best research evidence.
- Facilitate the utilisation of health advice.
- Promote effective uptake of evidence into practice.

MECHANISMS

- Systems to develop the best advice on current and emerging health issues relevant to the Australian community.
- Processes to rapidly identify evidence gaps.
- Interactions with relevant Australian, State and Territory governments, and non-government organisations.
- Implement the NHMRC's policy and practice plan.
- Integrate the National Institute for Clinical Studies within the NHMRC.
- Programs to evaluate uptake methodologies.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- *Relevance and usefulness of health advice.*
- *Partnerships with relevant organisations.*
- *National Institute for Clinical Studies integrated by the end of March 2007.*

ENGAGEMENT
ENGAGEMENT
*Collaborating nationally
and internationally.*
ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 3**HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS****KEY STRATEGIES**

- Address important ethical issues.
- Drive best practice ethical review of research.
- Promote responsible conduct and governance of research.
- Ensure compliance with Australian ethical standards.

MECHANISMS

- Develop a workplan to address the ethical aspects of NHMRC's priority health issues.
- Address ethical dimensions of relevant current and emerging health issues.
- Promote the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* and the roles of Humans Research Ethics Committees and Animal Ethics Committees.
- Streamline multi-centre research.
- Promote the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Human* and the *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*.
- Propose a national systematic approach to promote compliance with national research ethics guidelines following a review of existing processes.
- Investigate alleged breaches in conduct of health and medical research.
- Perform our functions under the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* and the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* with diligence and transparency.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- *Relevance and usefulness of ethical guidelines and advice.*
- *Completion of an implementation plan for national harmonised system of ethical review of multi-centre research by August 2007.*
- *Development of a framework for a national systematic approach to promote compliance with national research ethics guidelines.*

ACCOUNTABILITY
 ACCOUNTABILITY
 Operating at the highest professional and transparent standards.

OBJECTIVE 4**INCREASED INVESTMENT (THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE)****KEY STRATEGIES**

- Work with government to support the best investment in health and medical research.
- Encourage industry investment in research and development.
- Encourage philanthropic investment in health and medical research.
- Working in regional and global partnerships.

MECHANISMS

- Engage with relevant government and non-government agencies.
- Undertake a review to identify where the NHMRC can provide the greatest impact.
- Seek to promote researcher/industry/business sector interaction.
- Develop and expand relationships with private sector.
- Establish agreements to support multi-national research, and implementation of advice and ethics.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- *Total levered research support in Australia.*
- *Interaction between researchers and the private sector.*

DIVERSITY
DIVERSITY

*Embracing a rich,
diverse workforce,
operating in a
collaborative, open and
sharing environment.*

OBJECTIVE 5**TO BUILD A BETTER NHMRC****KEY STRATEGIES**

- Develop more responsive NHMRC.
- Coordinate internal strategic functions.
- Improve NHMRC's internal expertise and capacity.
- Communicate effectively.
- Improve national and international cooperation and collaboration.

MECHANISMS

- Staff profile to better align with NHMRC's new vision.
- Implement Investment Review recommendations by recruiting additional staff experienced in health and medical research.
- NHMRC Principal Committees to bring to the attention of NHMRC issues of national importance.
- Integrate research, advisory, regulatory and ethics functions.
- Strengthen NHMRC's internal scientific capacity.
- Improve communications with government, health professionals and the community.
- Develop broad ranging national and international multidisciplinary partnerships.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- *Improved community and government recognition and trust in the NHMRC as an authoritative health body.*
- *Greater recognition of the NHMRC as a value to the Australian community.*