

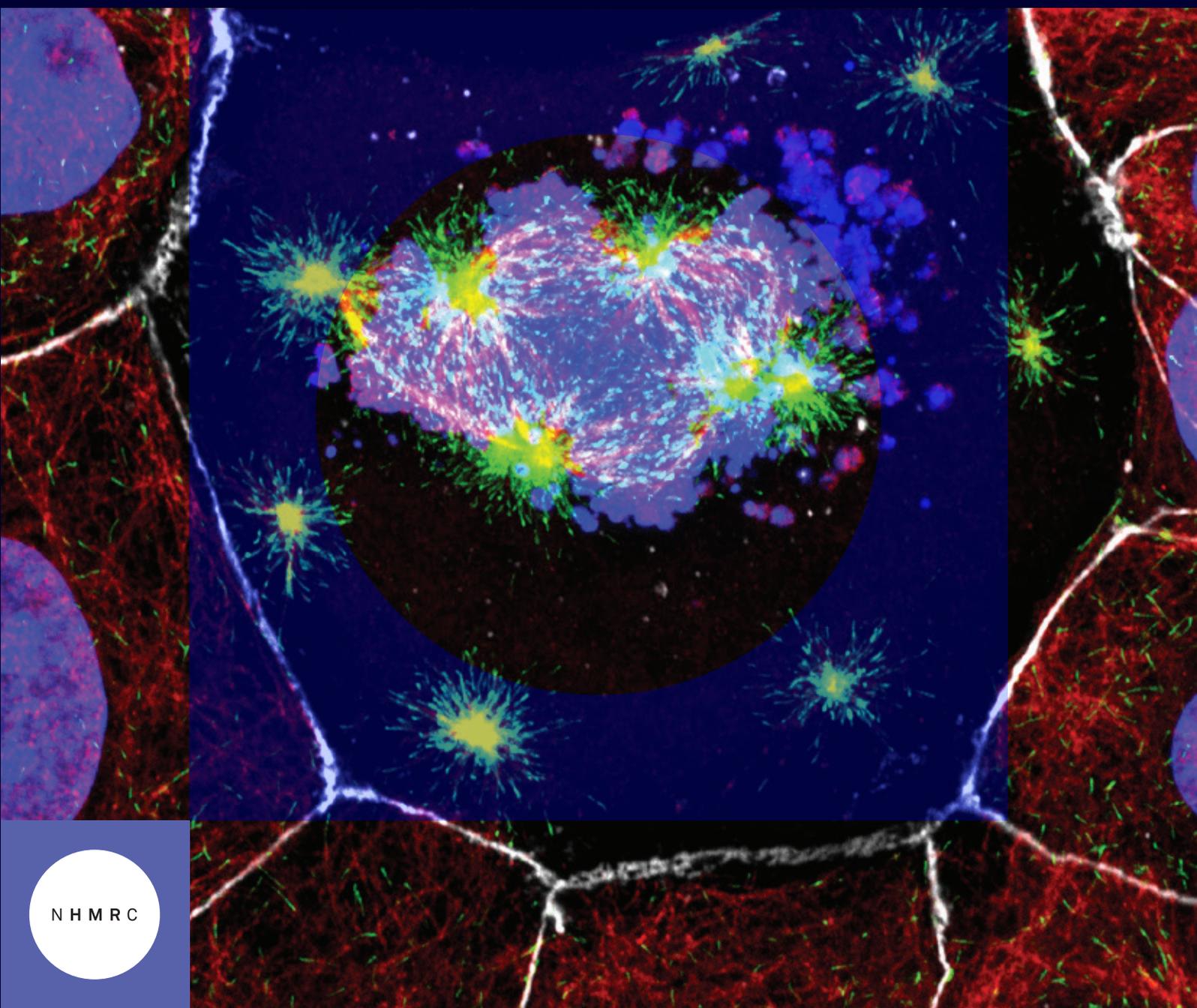


Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

BUILDING
A HEALTHY
AUSTRALIA

Corporate Plan 2022–23

National Health and Medical Research Council



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P: (02) 6217 9000

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Message from the CEO

As the Australian Government's lead agency for the support of health and medical research, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) occupies a unique position in Australia's research system. Not only is it the largest public funder of Australian health and medical research, NHMRC also oversees the development of national guidelines on research ethics and integrity, the regulation of research using human embryos and the development of evidence-based health advice for health professionals and the community.

With this broad remit, NHMRC has significant influence on what research is done, the way it is done and how it is implemented into policy and practice. This influence brings both opportunity and responsibility that in turn affects how the Office of NHMRC and its Council and advisory committees approach the agency's work, such as the design of its funding policies and the development of guidelines.

Investment

NHMRC expects to disburse more than \$900 million in research grants in 2022-23. Competition for this research support is intense. This reflects the very high standard of research undertaken in Australia's universities, medical research institutes and hospitals; the importance of NHMRC funding for the career development of many researchers; and the fact that NHMRC is the only national funding source that supports investigator-initiated health and medical research from discovery in the laboratory to research in the clinic, health service and community. In this way, NHMRC builds national research capability and delivers the breadth and depth of research support that is not available from the private and philanthropic sectors.

NHMRC's broad-based support for health and medical research also underpins the activities of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) as the Government's mechanism for funding priority-driven research, now disbursing about \$650 million per annum. The relationship between NHMRC and MRFF funding will be an important area of focus in the year ahead. We look forward to working with the Minister and the Department of Health to coordinate research investments and to continue our joint work to streamline the delivery of funding from these two major government sources.

Another important area of focus in 2022-23 is gender equity in NHMRC's grant program, as reflected in NHMRC's recently released *Gender Equity Strategy 2022-2025*. Gender equity is an issue that exemplifies NHMRC's opportunity and responsibility to develop policies that will improve the way research is done — in this case by ensuring we support a gender diverse and inclusive research workforce to take advantage of the full range of talent needed to achieve our mission of '*Building a healthy Australia*'. Following engagement with the sector on this issue in the first half of 2022, we are undertaking a national consultation on options to reach gender equity in our flagship Investigator Grant scheme. A discussion paper was released in July on potential interventions in this scheme to address the systemic disadvantage experienced by women and non-binary researchers in seeking to advance their research at the highest level. Public forums and meetings with institutional leaders are scheduled around the country in August. The response of the sector will determine how we proceed for the next and subsequent Investigator Grant rounds.

NHMRC funding policies also influence how research is done through grant assessment criteria. Applicants' past *Research Impact* and *Leadership* were introduced as track record assessment criteria in the Investigator Grant and Synergy Grant schemes in 2018-2019. As both criteria can (and are designed to) affect the way researchers plan their research and other professional activities, it is timely to evaluate their effectiveness. NHMRC's Health Research Impact Committee, Women in Health Science Committee and Research Committee are assisting NHMRC with these evaluations during the year ahead.

Translation

NHMRC fosters the translation of research outcomes into policy and practice through its funding for translational research and the development or endorsement of evidence-based public health, environmental health and clinical guidelines — all of which contribute to improving the health of the Australian community.

A significant goal for this year is to develop NHMRC's first Research Translation Strategy. The strategy will articulate NHMRC's role and identify priorities to accelerate the translation of health and medical research into policy and practice, within and outside the health system, for the improvement of individual and population health. This strategy will be complemented by work to define NHMRC's role in fostering research impact on knowledge, health, the economy and society, whether through translation or other pathways.

After a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NHMRC is delighted to host its next Research Translation Symposium in November 2022. The symposium, tagged this year as the NHMRC Research Translation Long Weekend, will be an opportunity for researchers, especially those at early and mid-career, to re-connect and to share their experiences in research translation.

The development and endorsement of public health, environmental health and clinical practice guidelines based on the highest-quality national and international evidence is an important way that NHMRC can influence health outcomes in the community. Of particular public interest is the review of the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, which will continue at pace during the year with finalisation of the scope and commencement of evidence reviews.

Integrity

NHMRC played a significant role in 2019–2020 by undertaking community consultation and providing advice to government on the scientific, ethical and legal issues raised by the possible introduction of mitochondrial donation into clinical practice in Australia. With the passage of the *Mitochondrial Donation Law Reform (Maeve's Law) Act 2022* by the Parliament in May 2022, mitochondrial donation will now be introduced into Australian clinical IVF practice in a staged manner, commencing with a clinical trial. NHMRC's Embryo Research Licensing Committee is responsible for the regulatory framework for the licensing of research, training and the clinical trial of mitochondrial donation in Australia. The development of this framework is a critically important activity in 2022.

To support the ethical implementation of this IVF technology, NHMRC's Australian Health Ethics Committee will also be undertaking a focused review of the *Ethical guidelines on the use of assisted reproductive technology in clinical practice and research 2017*, to be released for public consultation in the second half of 2022.

As one element of Australia's research integrity framework, the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC) undertakes reviews of the processes used to manage and investigate potential breaches of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* by institutions that administer research funds from NHMRC and the Australian Research Council (ARC). First established in 2011, the committee contributes to the quality assurance of, and public confidence in, the integrity of Australia's research effort. NHMRC is working with the ARC to evaluate ARIC's performance. This will be the committee's first evaluation.

During this year, with the advice of NHMRC's Consumer and Community Advisory Group, we will also work with the Consumers Health Forum (CHF) of Australia to review the joint NHMRC-CHF *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research*. NHMRC has made significant progress in supporting consumer and community involvement in research and in the assessment of grant applications and it is timely to renew our public commitment to this work through the statement.

As we look ahead, like other institutions and workplaces around the country, NHMRC faces continuing uncertainty about the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our capacity to deliver our work for the community, the government and the research sector. The experience of the last two years has changed the way we work. For example, recent implementation of a flexible work policy is helping staff find the most effective way to meet their professional and personal responsibilities and we have all become adept at meeting and working virtually. We can count on the year ahead bringing new challenges and we thank our staff, our Council and advisory committees, and the many institutions and people with whom we work for their continuing resilience and support.

The flexibility and resilience required of everyone across government, our research institutions and the wider community over recent times will continue to be tested by the changing world in which we live, starkly highlighted by the pandemic and this year's extreme floods. NHMRC's recognition of current and future threats to our health and wellbeing — and those of our Pacific neighbours and others around the world — is reflected in the Health Priorities outlined in this Corporate Plan — especially *Strengthening resilience to emerging health threats and emergencies, including environmental change, pandemics and antimicrobial resistance*.

As COVID-19 has also illustrated, the solutions lie in research and its implementation. NHMRC will continue to use its resources and its influence to help address our health challenges and build a healthy Australia.

Statement of preparation

As the accountable authority of NHMRC, I present the *NHMRC Corporate Plan 2022-23*, which covers the four-year period of 2022-23 to 2025-26. It has been prepared as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and section 16 of the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act).

Professor Anne Kelso AO

Chief Executive Officer

National Health and Medical Research Council

Purposes

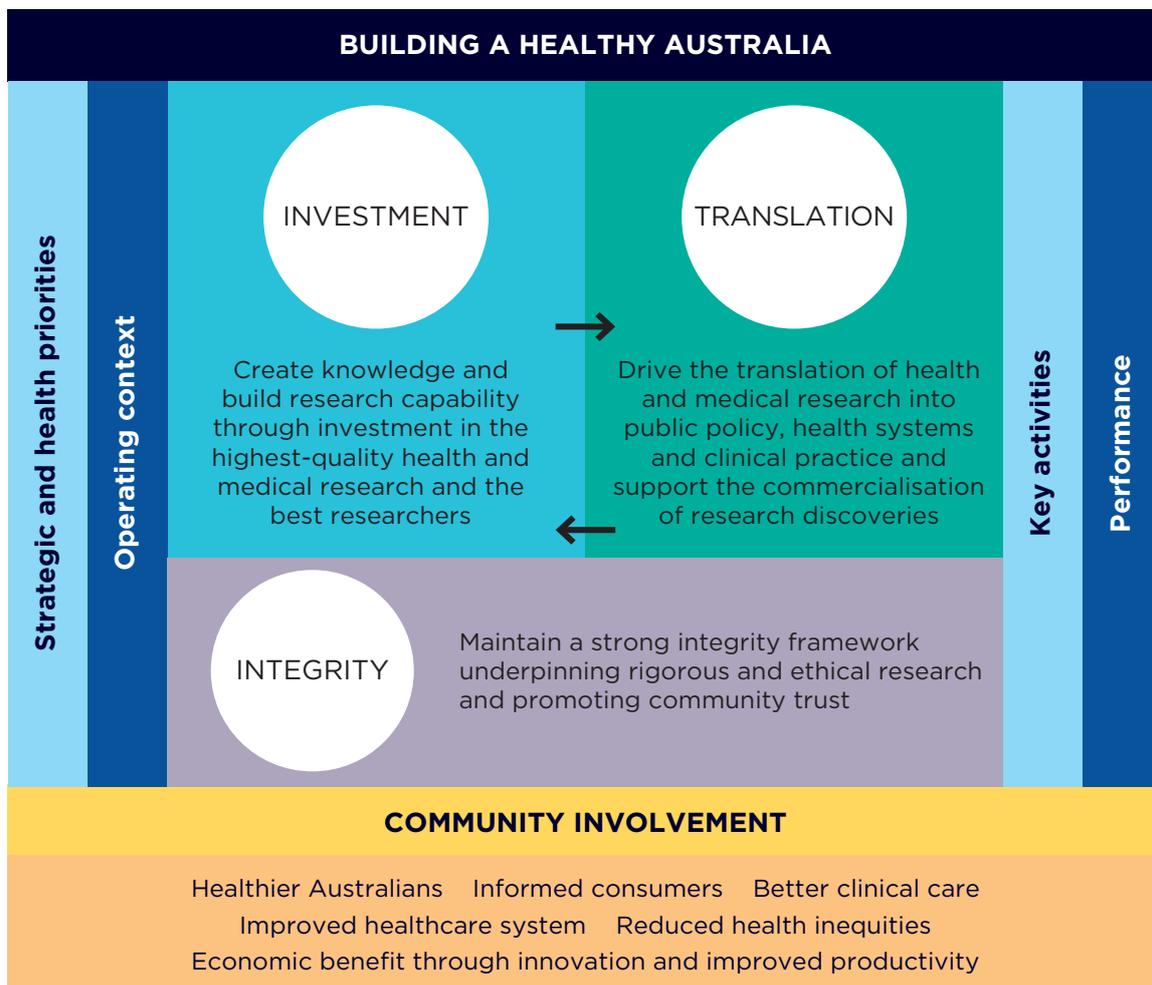
NHMRC’s purposes support our mission of *building a healthy Australia*. They reflect NHMRC’s legislated functions to fund health and medical research and training, and to issue guidelines and advise on improving health outcomes, through prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease and the provision of health care. They also reflect NHMRC’s role in promoting the highest standards of ethics and integrity in health and medical research.

NHMRC’s purposes align with the three strategic themes of **investment, translation** and **integrity**.

Figure 1: NHMRC’s strategic themes and purposes

THEME	INVESTMENT	TRANSLATION	INTEGRITY
Function	Fund high-quality health and medical research and build research capability.	Support the translation of health and medical research into better health outcomes.	Promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity in health and medical research.
Purpose	Create knowledge and build research capability through investment in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers.	Drive the translation of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries.	Maintain a strong integrity framework underpinning rigorous and ethical research and promoting community trust.

Figure 2: NHMRC’s strategy for health and medical research



Governance

NHMRC operates within a strong governance framework that supports effective performance, integrity, efficiency and compliance with our legislated responsibilities under the NHMRC Act and the PGPA Act, as well as other relevant legislation.

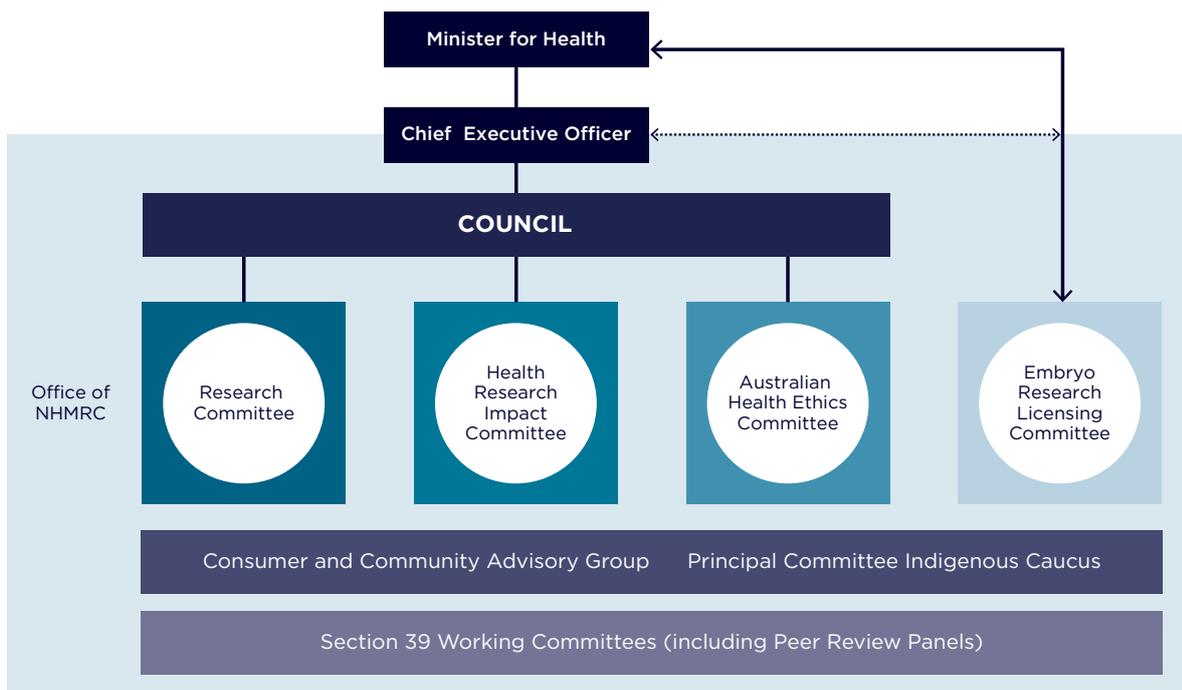
NHMRC’s Executive Board and the Audit and Risk Committee support the CEO in fulfilling her responsibilities as the accountable authority under the PGPA Act.

The CEO is supported in fulfilling the legislative functions under the NHMRC Act by the expert and independent advice of NHMRC Council, Principal Committees and other committees and expert working groups. Figure 3 shows NHMRC’s key governance and advisory bodies under the NHMRC Act, including Council, the Principal Committees and select working committees.

Through Council and its committees, researchers, healthcare professionals and consumers contribute to the work of NHMRC and provide a bridge to the community and the research and health sectors. They also help guide NHMRC’s strategy for health and medical research.

NHMRC Council and Principal Committees are appointed every three years, with the current triennium ending on 30 June 2024.

Figure 3: NHMRC’s structure under the NHMRC Act



Strategy for health and medical research

Under subsection 16(2) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC is required to set out its strategy for health and medical research. This strategy is underpinned by our strong commitment to the highest quality and standards of research and health advice. The themes of investment, translation and integrity encapsulate NHMRC's strategy for health and medical research for the period covered by this plan. We will:

- create knowledge and build research capability through **investment** in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers
- drive the **translation** of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries, contributing to an Australian health system that is research-led, evidence-based, efficient and sustainable
- maintain a strong **integrity** framework, which underpins rigorous and ethical research, and relevant and evidence-based guidelines, thereby promoting community trust.

Community involvement is essential to, and underpins, NHMRC's strategy for health and medical research. All three strategic themes draw on the lived experience of consumers and the community.

NHMRC's strategy for health and medical research is depicted in Figure 2.

As part of NHMRC's strategy for health and medical research, the NHMRC CEO identifies priority areas of focus, goals or objectives that require detailed strategies or action plans over the triennium. Priority areas usually require sustained and/or targeted effort over a number of years. NHMRC sets its priorities, in consultation with its Council and Principal Committees, every three years to align with its triennial governance arrangements. The priorities are subject to annual review by the CEO.

There are two types of priority: **strategic priorities** and **health priorities**.

Strategic priorities

Strategic priorities are areas where NHMRC-led action can help ensure the highest quality and impact of health and medical research to build a healthy Australia, with a focus on how research is conducted and evaluated, and structural issues in the health and medical research sector.

NHMRC's strategic priorities for the 2021–2024 triennium are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: NHMRC's strategic priorities for the 2021–2024 triennium

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	KEY STRATEGY DOCUMENT/S	STATUS	GOALS/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC THEME/S	KEY ACTION/S PLANNED IN 2022–23
Consumer and community involvement	Statement ¹ and Toolkit ² on consumer and community involvement in health and medical research	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote active involvement of consumers and the community in health and medical research and care. 	Investment Translation Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on promoting the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, rural and remote, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Continue to involve consumer and community representatives in the scoping and review of targeted grant opportunities. Work with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) to review the NHMRC-CHF Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research Continue to seek advice from the Consumer and Community Advisory Group.
Diversity and inclusion	NHMRC Gender Equity Strategy 2022–2025 ³ and Road Map 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research ⁴	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote gender diversity and inclusion in the health and medical research workforce. Base NHMRC actions and interventions on transparent evidence. Strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher workforce. 	Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult nationally on options to reach gender equity in the Investigator Grant scheme. Continue to allocate structural priority funding to address gender equity and to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers in selected NHMRC grant schemes. Liaise with the National First Nations Research Network and support its mission to strengthen capacity and capability amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers. Continue to seek advice from Research Committee and other advisory committees.
International engagement	NHMRC International Engagement Strategy 2020–2023 ⁵	Under review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote international collaboration in health and medical research to contribute to global health, achieve better outcomes for the Australian community and build Australia's research capability. 	Investment Translation Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish the International Engagement Strategy 2023–2026. Encourage and promote international opportunities for NHMRC-funded researchers and facilitate cooperation and exchange. Build awareness and support NHMRC-funded Administering Institutions to counter foreign interference in health and medical research. Engage bilaterally and multilaterally with international research funding agencies. Engage in international fora that promote high-quality open science and global health objectives. Continue to seek advice from Research Committee and other advisory committees.

1 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research/>

2 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/consumer-and-community-engagement/>

3 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/gender-equity/nhmrc-gender-equity-strategy-2022-2025>

4 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/road-map-3/>

5 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/international-engagement/>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	KEY STRATEGY DOCUMENT/S	STATUS	GOALS/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC THEME/S	KEY ACTION/S PLANNED IN 2022-23
Peer review	<i>Principles of peer review</i> ⁶	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that NHMRC funds are invested wisely and fairly to support the best health and medical research. Evaluate and improve peer review processes, aiming for an appropriate balance between rigour of review and burden on reviewers. 	Investment Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to embed and refine a streamlined application-centric peer review process for relevant schemes to improve the matching of reviewers to applications for conflict and suitability declarations, and assessments. Refine and consolidate guidance for peer reviewers. Continue to develop and enhance NHMRC's new grant management system, Sapphire, to support efficient and effective peer review. Maintain the highest standards of integrity and quality in peer review for both NHMRC and MRFF schemes. Continue to seek advice from Research Committee and other advisory committees.
Research impact	NHMRC Research Impact Statement NHMRC Research Translation Strategy	Under development Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote, communicate and measure pathways from research to impact. Accelerate the translation of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries, for the improvement of individual and population health. 	Investment Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with partners to demonstrate the longer-term impacts of NHMRC-funded research through Impact Case Studies. Continue to offer funding opportunities that foster translation and support the commercialisation of research discoveries. Develop and implement an NHMRC Research Translation Strategy, with advice from the Health Research Impact Committee.
Research quality	<i>NHMRC Research Quality Strategy 2019</i> ⁷	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the highest quality in research funded by NHMRC. Guide and support good research practices throughout the research cycle. 	Investment Translation Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the review of NHMRC's Open Access Policy to align with international developments. Progress development of core competencies for education and training to support research quality. Continue to seek advice from Research Committee and other advisory committees.

⁶ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/principles-peer-review/>

⁷ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/nhmrcs-research-quality-strategy/>

Health priorities

The *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) requires the CEO to identify major national health issues likely to arise in 2022–23 and during the four-year period covered by this plan. As outlined earlier, NHMRC operates on a triennial basis. The major national health issues outlined below have been identified by the NHMRC CEO as priorities for NHMRC for the triennium (1 July 2021–30 June 2024). NHMRC reviews its priorities with a longer-term outlook in the last year of each triennium.

In considering these issues, the CEO consults with the Council, its committees and the Minister, and considers the role of NHMRC within Australia’s health and medical research landscape, before determining the issues that are within NHMRC’s scope.

NHMRC’s longstanding approach is to deliver funding that builds the foundations of the national health and medical research system — high-quality research along the pipeline from discovery to implementation; an excellent biomedical, clinical, public health and health systems research workforce; national and international partnerships between disciplines and with the community, health providers and industry. Through a mix of investigator-initiated and targeted research, NHMRC supports research across the broad range of health and medical needs.

The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) is rapidly and dramatically changing the health and medical research landscape. As a priority-driven research fund, its success depends on the foundations of research excellence and capability built with NHMRC funding. NHMRC will continue to support this broad base to underpin and complement the MRFF’s research missions and programs and to ensure Australia can meet its present and future health challenges.

Accordingly, NHMRC’s health priorities reflect broad health challenges and emerging issues where national capacity or capability in health and medical research is most needed, rather than specific diseases. They also reflect areas where NHMRC’s role in promoting the highest standards in health research and care can contribute to addressing major national health issues likely to arise.

The major national health issues, also called NHMRC’s health priorities, for the 2021–2024 triennium are outlined in Table 2. NHMRC Council and its committees provide advice on the key actions to support implementation of the health priorities, informed by monitoring and evaluation of previous and existing investments and horizon scanning of these and other emerging health issues.

Table 2: NHMRC’s health priorities for the 2021–2024 triennium

HEALTH PRIORITY	STRATEGY	KEY ACTIONS PLANNED OVER THE 2021–2024 TRIENNIUM
Strengthening resilience to emerging health threats and emergencies, including environmental change, pandemics and antimicrobial resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC will prioritise targeted funding opportunities to build Australia’s capacity or capability to strengthen resilience to emerging health threats and emergencies of relevance to Australia. We will continue to offer flexibility to NHMRC-funded researchers to pivot their research to COVID-19 and other health emergencies and encourage researchers to contribute to the national and international research response. We will continue to leverage international funding and networking opportunities to develop common approaches to emerging health threats and emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider targeted research funding opportunities to build Australian capacity or capability to strengthen resilience to emerging health threats and emergencies. Participate in the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (GloPID-R) and the e-ASIA Joint Research Program. Continue to support COVID-19 forums that bring together health policy makers, scientists and clinicians to share information about the health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Seek and consider advice from Research Committee and the Health Research Impact Committee.

HEALTH PRIORITY	STRATEGY	KEY ACTIONS PLANNED OVER THE 2021-2024 TRIENNIUM
Improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including through research that addresses health inequities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC will maintain its commitment to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes through research. NHMRC will ensure targeted research funding opportunities reflect national health priorities and health issues identified as important by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. NHMRC will promote strong community engagement that flows through the grant application and research process so that researchers are supported to engage meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations. NHMRC will continue to allocate specific funding within NHMRC grant schemes to address structural issues in the health and medical research sector with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew and actively participate in the Tripartite Agreement to improve Indigenous peoples' health, with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Health Research Council of New Zealand. Conduct up to two calls for research annually in priority areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Seek and consider advice from the Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus and Research Committee.
Building capacity and innovation in the effective translation of research into quality health policy, services and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC aims to fund research that strengthens national capacity for research translation, and translation into practice, policy and products, encouraging industry engagement and the commercialisation of research outcomes where appropriate. NHMRC will engage with health consumers and the Australian community on health and medical research, and work to increase community involvement in research and access to the results of research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to recognise and accredit Research Translation Centres that bring together researchers, healthcare providers, policy makers, industry and education and training to improve the health and wellbeing of patients and populations. Consider targeted research funding opportunities to build capacity or capability to improve health care or policy, digital health services or innovations in the health system. Engage globally in implementation science through the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) and the NHMRC-Canadian Institutes of Health Research Healthy Cities Implementation Science Team Grant Scheme. Seek and consider advice from Research Committee and the Health Research Impact Committee.

HEALTH PRIORITY	STRATEGY	KEY ACTIONS PLANNED OVER THE 2021–2024 TRIENNIUM
Preventing and managing multimorbidity and chronic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC will continue to invest in research on chronic conditions and multimorbidity through its grant schemes. Develop or approve guidelines that will help prevent and manage chronic conditions and multimorbidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD). Work with the Department of Health to consider actions to support the National Preventive Health Strategy. Continue to invest in research on chronic conditions and multimorbidity through our grant schemes. Consider offering targeted research funding opportunities to build Australian capacity or capability to prevent or manage multimorbidity and chronic conditions. Continue the review of the <i>2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines</i> and release an updated version for public consultation. Seek and consider advice from Research Committee, the Health Research Impact Committee and the Consumer and Community Advisory Group.
Identifying emerging technologies in health and medical research and in health care, and promoting their safe, ethical and effective application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC will identify, explore and consult on ethical issues relating to emerging technologies in health and medical research and care, and develop ethics guidelines and advice as needed. NHMRC will continue to fund high-quality health and medical research from new ideas and innovations, through to clinical trials and development of products for use in health care. Consumer involvement and ethical consideration in research and health care will ensure that emerging health technologies meet the needs and societal expectations of the Australian community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the regulatory framework for mitochondrial donation in Australia through NHMRC's Embryo Research Licensing Committee. Review the <i>Ethical Guidelines for Assisted Reproductive Technology</i> to support the ethical implementation of mitochondrial donation in an Australian clinical trial. Identify and advise on emerging technologies with potential impact on health and medical research and health care. Consider and advise on the ethical implications and regulation of rapidly emerging technologies in research and health care, such as embryoids and organoids, stem cells and gene editing technologies, and the use of artificial intelligence and big data. Seek and consider advice from Research Committee and the Australian Health Ethics Committee.

Operating context

Environment

Factors in our environment that are likely to affect NHMRC's activities and performance in 2022-23 and over the four-year period of this plan include:

- the continuing impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the public health system, research environment and how we work and engage with each other in Australia and overseas
- the lived healthcare experience of consumers and the community, including the lived experience and impact of post-COVID condition or 'long COVID'
- the new *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*, which enables the sharing of public sector data with state and federal governments and public Australian universities
- trends and changes in the burden of disease and their impact on health service delivery
- advances in health technology and associated emerging ethical issues
- disparities in the health and medical research workforce and in the community
- disruption and/or innovations to everyday work practices and caring responsibilities for researchers and for our staff
- international action in health and medical research, health care and prevention
- global movements to support open science, data sharing and access to research results
- increasing scrutiny of research integrity issues and high-profile research misconduct cases
- ongoing need to mitigate the risks emerging from foreign interference and cybersecurity threats
- the impact of the Medical Research Future Fund on Australia's health and medical research sector
- the role of the states and territories in delivering health services
- the broader Australian and global social and economic context.

Each of these factors has been taken into consideration in planning NHMRC's major activities, identifying risks and establishing performance measures, as set out in this plan, which are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Cooperation

Our environment includes multiple domestic and international partners and stakeholders. NHMRC works closely with universities, medical research institutes, hospitals, professional colleges, other national and international funding agencies, peak bodies, consumer groups and the wider public and private sectors.

Table 3 details some of NHMRC's major collaborative partnerships that contribute to achieving our mission and purposes. NHMRC does not have any subsidiaries.

Table 3: Cooperative relationships that contribute to NHMRC’s purposes

ORGANISATION	NATURE OF COOPERATION	PURPOSE/S
Commonwealth Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We collaborate with the Department of Health on national strategies and priorities for health and medical research, including coordination between NHMRC and the MRFF. • We serve as a grants hub for the Department of Health to support the delivery of the MRFF, using NHMRC’s expertise in peer review and grants management. • Together, we simplify access for researchers, make efficient use of government resources and achieve our shared objectives to support Australian health and medical research and improve the health of Australians. • We work with the Department of Health to undertake evidence-based reviews and develop guidelines that support public and environmental health and clinical practice. • We support the Department of Health to implement national strategies to improve human health, including delivering targeted research funding to improve hearing health under the National Preventive Health Strategy. • We collaborate with the Department of Health and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator on social, ethical and legal issues in health and related regulatory frameworks. • We work with the Department of Health and other Commonwealth portfolios to contribute to government policy affecting research, researchers and the research sector. 	Investment Translation Integrity
State and territory governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with state and territory governments to identify gaps and priorities for health and medical research investment. • Together, we support the translation of research into policy and practice, work towards national consistency in health standards, and develop evidence-based public health, environmental health, clinical practice and ethical guidelines. 	Investment Translation Integrity
Other Commonwealth and Health portfolio agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with other government health agencies to invest in the highest quality health and medical research (e.g. Cancer Australia) and to develop health advice and ethical guidelines (e.g. Organ and Tissue Authority). • We collaborate with other Commonwealth agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support the health and medical aims of Australia’s development aid program. • We engage with other Commonwealth agencies to support Australia’s efforts to counter foreign interference in research and protect critical technologies for the future. 	Investment Translation Integrity
Administering Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We award funding to Administering Institutions, which include universities, medical research institutes and hospitals that meet defined research governance requirements. • We collaborate with Administering Institutions both informally and formally on research policy and support for health and medical research. • Administering Institutions implement policies and practices that support NHMRC objectives, including ensuring that NHMRC research is carried out in an ethical, responsible and competent manner. • We work with Administering Institutions to increase applicant and peer reviewer understanding of funding scheme objectives and help ensure that the highest-quality eligible research proposals are funded. 	Investment Translation Integrity

ORGANISATION	NATURE OF COOPERATION	PURPOSE/S
Peak bodies in the health and medical research sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We consult with universities, medical research institutes, academies and other peak bodies in the health and medical research sector to seek advice and evaluate our activities. We work with Cochrane Australia to support the translation of research into policy and practice and promote robust frameworks to support evidence-based decision-making. 	Investment Translation Integrity
Australian Research Council (and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We collaborate with the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia to promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity in research in line with the <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i>, the <i>National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research</i> and the <i>Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes</i> (also co-authored with CSIRO). Through the Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC), jointly established by NHMRC and the ARC, we undertake reviews of institutional processes used to manage and investigate potential breaches of the Code and contribute to public confidence in the integrity of Australia's research effort. 	Integrity
International organisations and funding partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We contribute to global health strategies and benefit from membership in international science programs, such as the Human Frontier Science Program, which promotes excellence and international collaboration in the life sciences. We contribute to and learn from international best practice to support the highest standards of research quality and integrity, peer review processes and evidence-based advice on improving health and preventing disease. We collaborate with international funding agencies to support high-quality collaborative international research, through bilateral and multilateral joint funding schemes. 	Investment Translation Integrity
Philanthropic organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We collaborate with philanthropic organisations to support high-quality health and medical research in areas of mutual interest, including supporting philanthropic funders to leverage NHMRC's excellence in peer review. 	Investment
Consumer and community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We engage with health consumer or community groups to identify community representatives, consumers and/or carers to participate in our committees, in peer review processes, in guidelines development and in public consultation. We invite community and professional organisations to identify health issues that may benefit from targeted research funding, to ensure that health and medical research is meeting the needs of the Australian community. 	Investment Translation Integrity

Risk oversight and management

NHMRC applies an integrated risk management framework, where all staff are aware of the risks inherent in the activities we undertake and proactive in their management. Our positive risk culture requires us to have a sound understanding of appropriate risk acceptance and to apply this to daily decision-making processes. Supported by our Audit and Risk Committee, we actively use risk information to improve business processes and achieve our purposes.

NHMRC's **risk appetite** recognises that it is not possible, nor necessarily desirable, to eliminate all of the risks inherent in our work. Accepting some degree of risk promotes innovation and recognises the limits of what we can control. Our appetite for risk varies by the type of risk, with a greater willingness to accept risks in pursuit of some of our strategic objectives than for operational matters.

NHMRC's *Risk Management Policy and Framework* provides the foundations and organisational arrangements for risk management within the agency and supports officials to document and use risk information in their activities. It will be updated during 2022–23 to reflect any updates to the Commonwealth Risk Management Framework. NHMRC's enterprise risk register details strategic and operational risks. NHMRC continues to conduct regular risk assessments to test and adjust our response to the changing operational environment, including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. We augment our enterprise risk oversight and management with project-level risk management plans.

Key **enterprise risks** and **risk tolerances** relevant to the four-year period covered by this plan are outlined in Table 4. Strategic risks, if realised, would have a significant impact on achieving one or more of NHMRC's purposes. Operational risks, if realised, would have a significant impact on the ability of NHMRC to operate and achieve all of its outcomes.

Our risk tolerances reflect the maximum risk that we are willing to take for each of our enterprise risks. A high tolerance indicates that we are prepared to accept exposure to the risk in order to achieve our strategic objectives, whereas a low to very low risk tolerance indicates NHMRC makes additional effort to minimise exposure to the risk and/or takes immediate corrective action where required.

Table 4: Enterprise risks and risk tolerances

PURPOSE / THEME	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK TYPE	RISK TOLERANCE	PRIMARY CONTROL/S	CONTROL TYPE/S
Investment	Funding opportunities are not available to talented researchers to contribute to the improvement of human health.	Strategic	Very Low	Maintain delivery of grant schemes, with adjustments (e.g. to timing) as needed to respond to the pandemic or other major disruptions.	Preventative Corrective
				Identify the best researchers and research through robust, independent, expert peer review.	Preventative
	Grant application and review processes are an unreasonable burden on researchers and peer reviewers.	Strategic	Low	Undertake regular surveys of peer reviewers to assess the burden and opportunities to improve processes.	Detective
				Continue to enhance the grant management system, Sapphire, to support peer review processes.	Corrective
				Implement a streamlined process where appropriate, to reduce the workload, broaden participation and shorten the time needed for peer review.	Corrective
	Poor fiscal control or financial management adversely impacts NHMRC's ability to operate.	Operational	Very low	Manage resources in accordance with agreed budgets, ensure oversight by the relevant governance body and make financial decisions at the appropriate level.	Preventative
				Undertake regular independent review of the internal control and financial frameworks, including as part of internal and external audits.	Detective
Maintain systems and processes to ensure accurate and timely payment of grants, including NHMRC and MRFF grants administered by NHMRC.				Preventative	

PURPOSE / THEME	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK TYPE	RISK TOLERANCE	PRIMARY CONTROL/S	CONTROL TYPE/S
Translation	Health advice and guidelines are inaccurate, do not comply with national and international best practice, or fail to adhere to principles for evidence-based advice.	Strategic	Low	Use the best available scientific methods for rating the certainty of evidence and making recommendations and follow transparent development and decision-making processes.	Preventative
				Consider declarations of interests and carefully manage any perceived and actual conflicts of interest, both prior to appointments and during the term of expert committees.	Preventative
	Needs and feedback of stakeholders, including researchers and consumers, are not adequately taken into account which adversely impacts achieving the end goals for the community.	Strategic	Moderate	Promote, and provide resources to support, consumer and community involvement in research at all stages.	Preventative
				Release guidelines for a period of public consultation to allow the Australian public to comment.	Detective Preventative
Obtain advice from Council and Principal Committees on emerging sectoral concerns and issues.	Detective				
Integrity	Research misconduct is not adequately investigated and addressed and/or inadequate controls are placed on NHMRC-funded researchers.	Strategic	Low	Require funded institutions, as a condition of NHMRC funding, to investigate and appropriately manage allegations of research misconduct and notify NHMRC in specific circumstances.	Detective Corrective
				Apply precautionary (and where warranted consequential) actions to researchers and research institutions implicated in research integrity matters to protect the integrity of NHMRC processes and funding.	Preventative Corrective
	There is unethical, fraudulent or corrupt conduct or systematic non-compliance by staff, service providers or contractors.	Operational	Very Low	Maintain a robust internal control framework, including fraud control, supported by regular education and resources.	Preventative
			Undertake regular independent review of the fraud control and assurance frameworks and ongoing compliance monitoring, including as part of audits.	Detective	

PURPOSE / THEME	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK TYPE	RISK TOLERANCE	PRIMARY CONTROL/S	CONTROL TYPE/S
Capability	Building innovative information and communications technology (ICT) to support business capability exceeds time or resource constraints.	Strategic	Moderate	Maintain an appropriate governance structure to oversee project management and budgets, including regular review of risks and issues.	Preventative Detective
	Core ICT platforms are ineffective or unstable.	Operational	Very low	Deliver and, where required, stabilise and enhance core ICT systems to provide reliable, highly available services to support NHMRC operations.	Preventative Corrective
	Sustainability of operations and/or security of information held by NHMRC is threatened by malicious cyber activity.	Operational	Very low	Maintain security controls within the ICT architecture, regularly monitor cyber threats and security risks, assess the effectiveness of existing controls and implement remediation actions promptly as needed.	Preventative Detective Corrective
	ICT solutions operate suboptimally or increase the burden on stakeholders.	Strategic	Moderate	Design and test ICT solutions with internal and external users and implement enhancements over time, as feasible and where most needed.	Preventative Detective Corrective
	A suitable, appropriately skilled workforce that enables the achievement of NHMRC's objectives is not maintained.	Operational	Low	Recruit and retain staff to support the range of NHMRC activities and support staff to learn and develop competencies in relevant skills.	Preventative
	COVID-19 adversely impacts the health and wellbeing of NHMRC staff, contractors or visitors.	Operational	Very low	Activate and maintain the Business Continuity Plan and ensure NHMRC's COVID-19 response accords with relevant health advice.	Preventative
	Staff behaviour is inconsistent with the core values of the Australian Public Service — ICARE (Impartial, Committed to Service, Accountable, Respectful, Ethical).	Operational	Very low	Uphold the APS values in everything we do, reinforced by a respectful work culture and leadership behaviours that model ICARE.	Preventative

Capability

NHMRC aims to operate effectively within a strong governance framework that supports performance, integrity, efficiency and compliance. Core capabilities for NHMRC’s effective operation are in the areas of governance, workforce, business services, safety and security, and information and communications technology (ICT) (Table 5). Many of NHMRC’s core capabilities support our ability to be flexible and agile, adapting to new circumstances and addressing emerging issues. In addition to these capabilities, we will focus on the following operational priorities in 2022–23 to ensure we have the capability we need over the period of the plan and beyond:

- Build a positive work culture that helps our people to perform, grow, lead and inspire.
- Foster operational resilience enabled by a safe, supportive, flexible and technologically equipped work environment.
- Deploy ICT infrastructure to support the efficient and effective delivery of NHMRC operations, including optimising business processes and recordkeeping.
- Strengthen data governance, manage agency data as an asset, and support data availability and transparency.
- Continue to develop Sapphire to support NHMRC and MRFF grant programs, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grant processes and reduce the burden on health and medical researchers.

Table 5: Capabilities to support the effective operation of NHMRC

CAPABILITY AREA	CORE CAPABILITIES
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a strong governance framework. • Maintain an effective financial/resource management framework. • Uphold a robust risk oversight and internal control framework (including legislative compliance, risk management, privacy, fraud control and managing complaints and freedom of information requests). • Maintain an effective assurance framework, including supporting the NHMRC Audit and Risk Committee and internal audit function.
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain workforce strategies to promote diversity, flexible work, learning and development, and performance management.
Business services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver critical internal business support services, including human resources, secretariat services and travel management. • Maintain NHMRC properties and facilities.
Security and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and strengthen NHMRC’s Business Continuity Plan. • Implement effective controls to meet the Australian Government’s <i>Protective Security Policy Framework</i>. • Uphold the Emergency Management Framework and comply with <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> and relevant Australian standards.
ICT and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support critical grant management systems (Sapphire and RGMS). • Support and strengthen NHMRC’s ICT infrastructure and service delivery standards. • Protect NHMRC’s data and resources by continuing to implement and maintain the Cyber Security Strategy. • Strategically manage NHMRC’s stakeholder relations, digital communication channels, media relations and other communications.

Key activities

To implement the strategy for health and medical research and deliver against our strategic priorities, NHMRC has developed a set of key activities for the period covered by this plan. These activities are informed by NHMRC's operating context and incorporate a focus on the strategic and health priorities. These high-level activities will be implemented through specific tasks and projects, which are set out in NHMRC's internal business planning documents. As well as the activities under the three themes (purposes) of investment, translation and integrity, an additional set of operational activities is outlined in the capability section (see Table 5), which provide critical support across all three themes.

Investment

Purpose: Create knowledge and build research capability through investment in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers.

Our priority activities for 2022-23 are to:

- Contribute to the nation's strategy for health and medical research, including working with the Department of Health to coordinate investments through the NHMRC grant program and the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).
- Advance gender equity and support a diverse and inclusive health and medical research workforce through the NHMRC grant program.⁸
- Continue to optimise grant application and assessment processes, including improving the quality and efficiency of peer review processes and expanding peer reviewer training.⁹
- Promote, communicate and measure the impact of NHMRC-funded research.¹⁰

Over the period covered by this plan, we will:

- Fund the best researchers and research across the breadth of Australian health and medical research needs and invest in innovative and collaborative research projects.
- Fund research to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and build and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researcher capacity.¹¹
- Fund targeted research that responds to unmet or emerging health needs and reflects national, state and territory, and consumer and community priorities.
- Continue to work with the Department of Health to deliver MRFF grant schemes effectively and efficiently, leveraging NHMRC's grant processes and capability, to achieve program outcomes.
- Work with domestic and international partners, including non-government and philanthropic organisations and other government agencies, to support health and medical research.¹²
- Recognise excellence and celebrate leadership in health and medical research in Australia.

8 Strategic priority area: Diversity and inclusion

9 Strategic priority area: Peer review

10 Strategic priority area: Research impact

11 Health priority: Improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including through research that addresses health inequities

12 Strategic priority area: International engagement

Translation

Purpose: Drive the translation of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries.

Our priority activities for 2022-23 are to:

- Maintain a leadership role in the development of evidence-based public and environmental health and clinical guidance, which is relied upon by jurisdictions.
- Drive translation of evidence into innovative and evidence-based health care and public health policy, including by recognising Research Translation Centres and developing the Research Translation Strategy.¹³

Over the period covered by this plan, we will:

- Fund research that focuses on translation into policy, practice and products, encouraging industry engagement and the commercialisation of research outcomes where appropriate.
- Engage with consumers and the Australian community on health and medical research, including increasing community involvement in research and access to the results of research.¹⁴
- Promote open access to publications and data from NHMRC-funded research.¹⁵
- Engage internationally to promote and support collaboration, open science and global health objectives, including participating in bilateral, multilateral and other international forums.¹⁶
- Promote best-practice evidence development and standards, including support for rapidly updated and living guidelines, *Guidelines for Guidelines* and approval of third-party public health and clinical practice guidelines.
- Develop and revise guidelines in public and environmental health and clinical practice to support consistent standards and clinical, policy and regulatory decisions.
- Progress the review of the *2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines* to ensure they remain a trusted resource for the community and health professionals by considering the best and most recent scientific evidence and maintaining transparency at all stages of the review.

¹³ Strategic priority area: Research impact

¹⁴ Strategic priority area: Consumer and community involvement

¹⁵ Strategic priority area: Research quality

¹⁶ Strategic priority area: International engagement

Integrity

Purpose: Maintain a strong integrity framework underpinning rigorous and ethical research and promoting community trust.

Our priority activities for 2022-23 are to:

- Support the Embryo Research Licensing Committee to implement the regulatory framework for the licensing of research, training and a clinical trial of mitochondrial donation in Australia.¹⁷
- Maintain a leadership role in the promotion of the highest standards of research quality and integrity, including engaging with the research sector on good practice, maintaining key statements, codes and guidelines, and supporting the work of the Australian Research Integrity Committee.¹⁸

Over the period covered by this plan, we will:

- Identify, explore and consult on ethical issues relating to emerging technologies in health and medical research, and develop ethical guidelines and advice as needed.¹⁹
- Monitor Administering Institutions' compliance with NHMRC's policies and requirements.
- Continue to promote best practice in research governance and ethics review processes.
- Administer the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* (RIHE Act) and the *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002* (PCHR Act) through the work of the Embryo Research Licensing Committee.²⁰

17 Health priority: Identifying emerging technologies in health and medical research and in health care, and promoting their safe, ethical and effective application

18 Strategic priority area: Research quality

19 Health priority: Identifying emerging technologies in health and medical research and in health care, and promoting their safe, ethical and effective application

20 Health priority: Identifying emerging technologies in health and medical research and in health care, and promoting their safe, ethical and effective application

Performance

Performance criteria linked to each of NHMRC's purposes are presented in Table 6, with the reporting period/s in which each will be assessed over the four-year period of this plan. These measures are designed to capture NHMRC's overall success in achieving its purposes. As with the key activities, while each criterion appears under one of NHMRC's three purposes, some measure performance under more than one purpose.

For example, impact case studies are included under Translation because they demonstrate the translation of health and medical research into real world outcomes, but they are also measures of the effectiveness of NHMRC Investment over time. Research impact relies on the underlying quality of health and medical research, so it is also an indirect measure of the effectiveness of NHMRC's Integrity activities. Similarly, NHMRC's peer review processes contribute to Investment, Translation and Integrity. An efficiency measure to streamline these processes continues for the 2022-23 year.

Across all three of NHMRC's purposes, we aim to achieve efficiencies in the way we work and for our stakeholders by making effective use of digital technologies, for example by continuing to develop our grant management solution, Sapphire, and other ICT solutions. The performance measure under the theme of Capability monitors our performance in achieving efficiencies through digitalisation.

NHMRC continues to develop methods and build its capacity to measure the impact of the research it funds, including by understanding the lived experience of consumers and the community. NHMRC's Evaluation Strategy will help to mature our performance information and guide continuous quality improvement activities over time.²¹

NHMRC's performance in achieving its purposes will be reported in the NHMRC Annual Report to Parliament at the end of the reporting period. The performance criteria in the table include those listed in NHMRC's chapter of the Health Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) (marked in the table with an asterisk) and additional measures that supplement the performance criteria in the PBS.

²¹ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/evaluation>

Table 6: Performance measures

INVESTMENT		Measurement year/s				
Purpose: Create knowledge and build research capability through investment in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers.		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
Performance criteria	Context	Assessment methodology		Targets		
<p>Research grants in basic science, clinical medicine, public health and health services research meet the health needs of Australians, and include national, state and territory and community priorities.*</p>	<p>NHMRC grants cover the full spectrum of health and medical research and NHMRC-funded research is focused on achieving better health outcomes for all Australians. The impact of NHMRC-funded research is wide-reaching, with numerous examples showcased on the NHMRC website. NHMRC funds both researcher-initiated and priority-driven research. Priorities are identified in a range of ways, including through engagement with community members and state and territory governments and through consideration of proposals submitted through our online pathway.</p>	<p>Quantitative assessment and analysis of the distribution of grant expenditure and new grants awarded in the financial year. The analysis will draw on the new evaluation framework for NHMRC's grant program. The analysis may be supplemented by selected qualitative cases studies and/or researcher profiles of top grants awarded.</p>	<p>Grants are awarded, based on expert peer review, across the full spectrum of health and medical research areas, and focus on achieving better health outcomes.*</p>	✓	✓	
<p>Research funding is invested effectively and efficiently through expert peer review against published assessment criteria, including an overall consideration of value with money.</p>	<p>NHMRC identifies the best health and medical research and researchers to fund through robust, independent, expert peer review. NHMRC has introduced a streamlined peer review process for relevant schemes to improve the matching of reviewers to applications for conflict and suitability declarations, and assessments.</p>	<p>Qualitative assessment of how targeted and priority-driven funding meets a research gap and how the unmet need was identified.</p>	<p>Targeted and priority-driven research funding calls are initiated that address areas of unmet need.</p>	✓	✓	
<p>Research funding is invested effectively and efficiently through expert peer review against published assessment criteria, including an overall consideration of value with money.</p>	<p>NHMRC identifies the best health and medical research and researchers to fund through robust, independent, expert peer review. NHMRC has introduced a streamlined peer review process for relevant schemes to improve the matching of reviewers to applications for conflict and suitability declarations, and assessments.</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the peer review process, including level of suitability matching of peer reviewers to applications, feedback from reviewers and measurement of time spent on peer review (by individual reviewers and total time).</p>	<p>Better matching of peer reviewers to applications, improving application-centric peer review in applicable schemes, and reduced burden on peer reviewers.</p>	✓	✓	

INVESTMENT		Measurement year/s				
Purpose: Create knowledge and build research capability through investment in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers.		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
Performance criteria	Context	Assessment methodology	Targets			
Research grants are provided to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	NHMRC is committed to contributing to better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through a range of initiatives and guided by NHMRC's Principal Committee Indigenous Caucus. NHMRC has a longstanding commitment to expend at least five per cent of the Medical Research Endowment Account annually on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.	Quantitative assessment of grant expenditure and new grants awarded in the financial year. Funding is categorised as 'Indigenous health research' by reviewing each funded grant against a range of investigator-provided data classifications including fields of research, keywords, grant titles and media summaries.	More than 5% of NHMRC's annual budget is expended/awarded on research that will provide better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*	✓	✓	
Build and strengthen capacity by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.	NHMRC supports research career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers by providing competitive funding opportunities and mentoring through participation in NHMRC committees.	Quantitative assessment based on the number of chief investigators currently funded across all NHMRC schemes who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.	Report on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chief investigators.	✓	✓	
NHMRC grants support a gender inclusive health and medical research workforce.	NHMRC is committed to achieving gender equity in its grant program. Under its Gender Equity Strategy 2022-2025, NHMRC's vision is a gender diverse and inclusive health and medical research workforce to take advantage of the full range of talent needed to build a healthy Australia.	Quantitative assessment of the number of grants, amount of funding awarded to and funded rates for men and women, and whether measures such as structural priority funding have been applied to reduce gender disparities. The assessment covers all NHMRC grant schemes (collectively) and key schemes (Investigator, Ideas and Synergy Grants) and considers distribution across career stages.	Gender inequities in NHMRC funding outcomes are reduced.	✓	✓	

*These performance criteria are included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

TRANSLATION

Purpose: Drive the translation of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries.

Performance criteria	Context	Assessment methodology	Targets	Measurement year/s			
				2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Support an Australian health system that is research-led, evidence-based, efficient and sustainable.*	NHMRC recognises the importance of end-user involvement in research and the translation of research into the health system.	Qualitative assessment of NHMRC's promotion of the importance of research/end-user collaborations.	Instances of researcher/end-user collaborations translating research into health care are promoted.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Report on the impact of the research funded by NHMRC.	NHMRC develops and endorses high-quality guidelines for clinical practice, public health, environmental health and ethics. NHMRC's guidelines and advice support other Commonwealth entities and states and territories in preventing, detecting and treating poor health or illness as well as fostering consistent standards in public and environmental health and clinical practice.	Qualitative assessment of NHMRC's role in revising, developing and approving guidelines that are timely, are based on a review of the available evidence, follow transparent development and decision-making processes, and will promote health, prevent harm, encourage best practice and reduce waste.	Develop and/or approve public and environmental health and clinical practice guidelines.*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Report on the impact of the research funded by NHMRC.	NHMRC acknowledges the critical importance of measuring and recognising the impact of NHMRC-funded research where it has benefited or made broader contributions to society.	Qualitative and in-depth assessment of the impact of NHMRC-funded research using a case study approach.	Seven case studies (per year) are developed that demonstrate the impact of health and medical research funding.	✓	✓	✓	✓

*These performance criteria are included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

INTEGRITY		Expected measurement years						
Performance criteria		Context	Measurement methods	Targets	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<p>Research is conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity in Australia.^{22*}</p>	<p>The <i>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</i> is co-authored by NHMRC, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. The Code is supported by a series of Guides on specific topics to facilitate its implementation.</p>	<p>Quantitative assessment using NHMRC's annual survey of Administering Institutions (Institutional Annual Compliance Report) to ensure that the Code and its supporting Guides have been implemented in institutional processes.</p>	<p>Research integrity matters are managed appropriately by Administering Institutions in line with the requirements of the Code.*</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Research involving human embryos is conducted ethically and legally in accordance with appropriate licence conditions.</p>	<p>The NHMRC Embryo Research Licensing Committee oversees the RIHE Act and PHCR Act and regulates research activities that involve the use of human embryos. NHMRC conducts inspections of licence holders to ensure compliance with the legislation and licence conditions.</p>	<p>Qualitative assessment through licence inspections, which include an assessment of the licence holder's processes in relation to activity under each licence and whether these processes meet legislative and licence requirements.</p>	<p>Compliance with regulatory requirements is demonstrated through outcomes from inspections and six-monthly reports.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	

*These performance criteria are included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

22 Published in the Portfolio Budget Statements as "Promote and monitor the revised *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and supporting guides."

CAPABILITY²³*Operate effectively within a strong governance framework that supports performance, integrity, efficiency and compliance.*

Performance criteria	Context	Measurement methods	Targets	Expected measurement years			
				2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Digital technology supports the effective and efficient delivery of NHMRC activity.	NHMRC aims to make effective use of digital systems to support its core operations. For example, NHMRC's new grant management solution, Sapphire, aims to use enhanced data linkage and process redesign to make the health and medical research sector's engagement with NHMRC grant processes intuitive and reduce the time taken on grant administration.	Progressive refinement of electronic workflow processes to measurably reduce data entry, collection and validation throughout NHMRC's grant application and administration processes.	Digital technology reduces administrative burden.	✓	✓	✓	✓

²³ The Capability theme underpins achievement of all three of NHMRC's strategic themes or purposes: Investment, Translation and Integrity.

Appendix A

Requirements for Commonwealth entity corporate plans

The NHMRC Corporate Plan 2022–23 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- section 16 of the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act)
- section 35 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)
- subsection 16E(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule).

Table 7 below details the requirements met by this corporate plan and the page reference(s) for each requirement.

Table 7: Corporate plan requirements

REQUIREMENT	LEGISLATION REFERENCE	PAGE(S)
Introduction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statement of preparation: a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Act • the reporting period for which the plan is prepared • the reporting periods covered by the plan 	ss16E(2) PGPA Rule	4
Purposes		
	ss16E(2) PGPA Rule	5
Strategy for health and medical research		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a national strategy for medical research and public health research 	ss16(2) NHMRC Act	5, 7–12
Health priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the CEO's assessment of the major national health issues that are likely to arise during the period • the manner in which the CEO proposes to perform his or her functions in dealing with those issues during the period 	ss16(2) NHMRC Act	10–12
Key activities		
	ss16E(2) PGPA Rule	21–23
Operating context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environment • capability • risk oversight and management, including key risks and its management • cooperation • subsidiaries (where applicable) 		13 20 16–19 13–15 N/A
Performance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance measures • targets for each performance measure 	ss16E(2) PGPA Rule	24–29

