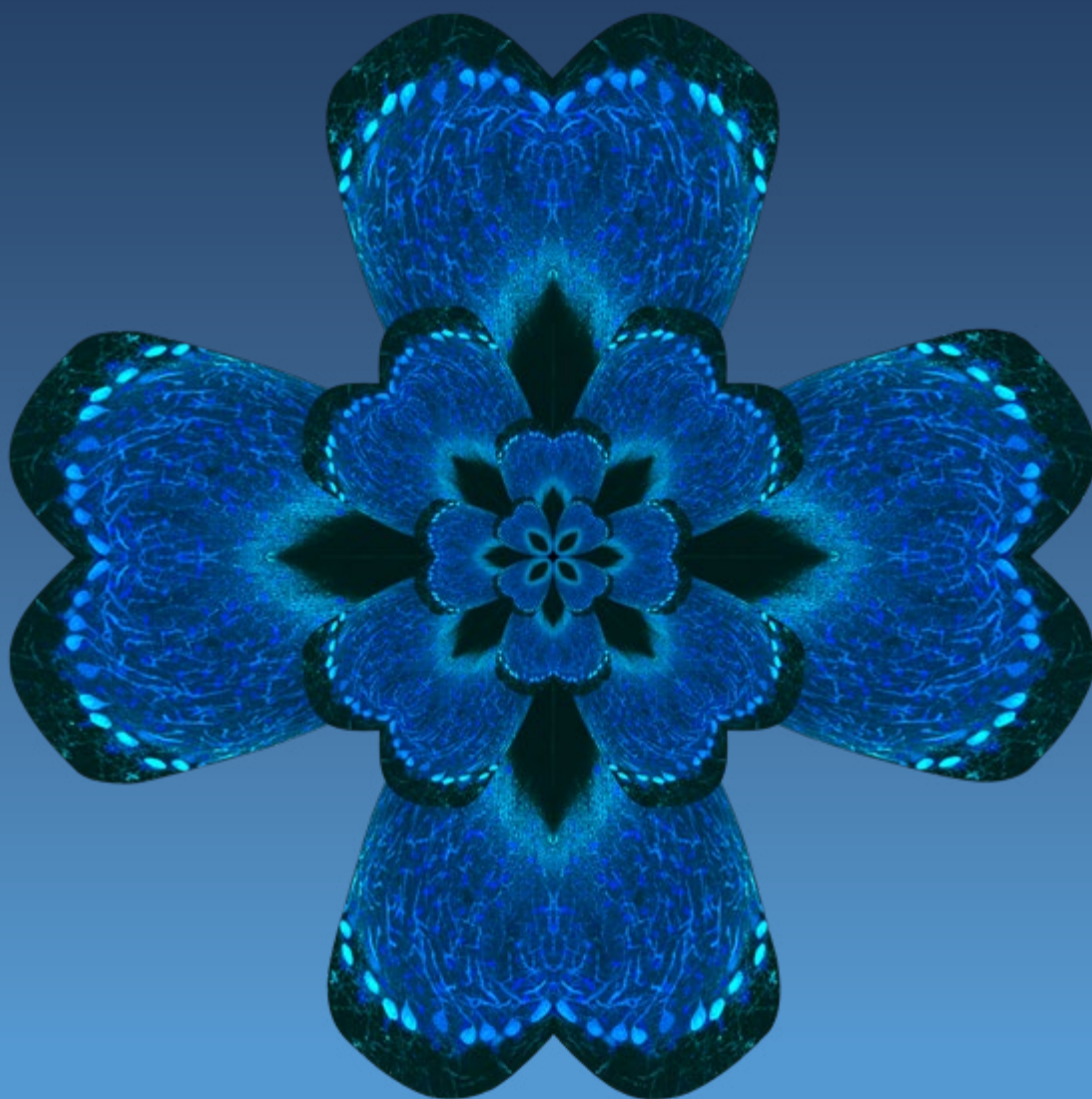


2026-27 CORPORATE PLAN



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Acknowledgement of Country

NHMRC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea, sky and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.



Artwork by Amy Kilby, a proud Wiradjuri woman from the Riverina, New South Wales.

The artwork reflects National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) mission of Building a Healthy Australia, particularly in the knowledge, research and community connection to improve health outcomes. It has strong parallels between Aboriginal ways of knowing and the work.

Message from the CEO

On behalf of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), I am pleased to present the NHMRC Corporate Plan 2026–27.

We welcome the release of Australia's first National Health and Medical Research Strategy led by its independent Chair, Ms Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM, and supported by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and NHMRC. The strategy sets a clear vision to improve health outcomes by supporting high-quality research, strengthening collaboration across sectors, and accelerating the translation of evidence into practice.

The strategy provides an opportunity to optimise the substantial investment in health and medical research through NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and other Australian Government programs, states and territories, industry, philanthropy and private investment – and to foster greater coordination to create a more productive and efficient research ecosystem. By aligning national efforts, the strategy aims to deliver better care, improve equity in health outcomes, and ensure Australia remains at the forefront of medical research that benefits all Australians.

NHMRC looks forward to working with partners across the research ecosystem to help implement this national vision. This includes embedding consistent approaches to national priority setting and evaluation, improving coordination and strategic alignment of public research funding, supporting collaboration and shared infrastructure, and accelerating the impact of research.

NHMRC continues to work closely and collaboratively with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to support a shared advisory structure through NHMRC Council and the MRFF's Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB) and stronger alignment across our funding data, policies and processes. Our joint NHMRC-MRFF advisory committees also continue to progress greater alignment and coordination between the MRFF and NHMRC's grant programs.

We are also building a stronger strategic partnership with the Australian Research Council (ARC) to provide coordinated national leadership across Australia's research system. Together with the ARC, we have released a joint statement on our commitment to upholding the highest standards of conduct and integrity in the research we fund. And we continue to engage the sector in a dialogue on strengthening confidence in the integrity of Australian research and fostering public trust in science.

Building and maintaining trust in science is central to NHMRC's mission. NHMRC continues to fund high-quality research through our competitive research grant program that advances knowledge and delivers health benefits to the Australian community – from basic scientific discovery through to translation and implementation. We remain committed to rigorous peer review processes that ensure funding decisions are fair, transparent and grounded in the highest standards. We will maintain, and implement improvements to, our decision-making processes based on evidence, including further strengthening transparency and accountability in our peer review processes.



Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly embedded across the health and medical research system, creating new opportunities for innovation, translation and impact, at a rapid and challenging pace. NHMRC will focus on the responsible integration of AI by setting the framework to promote ethical and transparent practices, ensuring that advances in technology contribute to improved health outcomes while maintaining confidence in Australia's research system. This includes working with partners, including the ARC, to align national approaches to AI, as well as research integrity and security, recognising the need for coordinated and proportionate responses across the sector.

Also foundational to trust is NHMRC's role in upholding the highest standards for the conduct of research, including rigorous methodology, transparency and ethical conduct. We will continue to uphold strong integrity and ethical frameworks that underpin confidence in Australian health and medical research. This includes progressing the review of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* and supporting the work of the Embryo Research Licensing Committee as they oversee the staged implementation of mitochondrial donation in Australia.

Over the coming year and beyond, NHMRC will continue to foster Australian participation in international and global networks and collaborative health and medical research. This includes continuing to strengthen our international engagement and partnerships with global funding agencies and organisations. Shifts in the geopolitical environment, rapid technological change (including AI), climate change and pandemic preparedness all underscore the importance of sustained global collaboration and strong international relationships. At the same time, we will contribute to work across government to strengthen Australia's sovereign capability and resilience, and manage research security risks, in an increasingly challenging global environment.

In February 2026, NHMRC convened a strategic workshop to consider Australia's preparedness for future pandemics from a health and medical research perspective. The workshop brought together key stakeholders to inform research priorities and system-level considerations and identify broad directions for strengthening Australia's research readiness. Building on this work, NHMRC will consider how it might contribute to further coordination, advice and collaboration across the system to support the development of a shared roadmap to pandemic research preparedness.

Equity and community involvement are key pillars for building and maintaining community trust in science, which is more important than ever in an environment of rapid change and increasing complexity. For NHMRC, maintaining trust in science requires meaningful involvement of consumers and communities, supporting inclusive research practices, and ensuring that diverse perspectives inform the design, conduct and impact of research.

NHMRC is committed to embedding equity in health research to address systemic barriers that contribute to health inequity. We will continue to apply an equity lens across our grant program, including targeted support for rural, regional and remote health research through a Regional, Rural and Remote Capacity Building grant opportunity in 2026. We will also continue to support and monitor the effectiveness of gender equity measures across our grant program.

To help drive equitable health outcomes towards *Closing the Gap*, and consistent with the national strategy's focus area to accelerate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing, NHMRC will expand the application of its Indigenous health benefit question this year – asking more grant applicants to consider the potential impacts and benefits of their research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We will also focus on strengthening the involvement of consumers, communities and the public across the research sector, as we work with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia and others to promote the revised *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research (2026)*, and progressively implement it in our own grant program and related activities.

NHMRC will also continue to lead and invest in addressing long-standing and complex health challenges, including chronic disease, multiple long-term conditions, ageing, and the enduring burden of disease and associated risk factors. Through targeted investment in high-quality research, trusted health advice and evidence, and strong partnerships across the research, health and policy sectors, NHMRC supports the generation, translation and use of evidence-based knowledge that improves prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. This includes progressing major guidelines work, such as the review of the Australian Dietary Guidelines and clinical practice guidelines for the care of trans and gender diverse people under 18 with gender dysphoria, supported by rigorous evidence review, transparent processes and community input.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to the dedicated staff and our Council and committee members, whose resilience, hard work and commitment underpin everything NHMRC does. As I conclude my term as Chief Executive Officer in late August 2026 – it has been a privilege to work alongside the Australian health and medical research sector in advancing NHMRC's mission, and I extend my best wishes to the organisation as it continues to build a healthy Australia.

Statement of preparation

As the accountable authority of NHMRC, I present the *NHMRC Corporate Plan 2026–27*, which covers the four-year period of 2026–27 to 2029–30. 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 Steve Wesselingh

Chief Executive Officer

7 August 2026

NHMRC values



Integrity

Doing the right thing



Innovation

Driving positive change



Transparency

Building trust



Collaboration

Working together



Excellence

Achieving the highest standard



Inclusion

Embracing equity and diversity

Purpose	Investment Create knowledge and build research capability through investment in the highest-quality health and medical research and the best researchers.	Translation Drive the translation of health and medical research into public policy, health systems and clinical practice and support the commercialisation of research discoveries.	Integrity Maintain a strong integrity framework underpinning rigorous and ethical research promoting community trust.
NHMRC Council and Committees (including shared NHMRC-MRFF advisory committees)			
Strategy	Strategic priorities		
	Support the National Health and Medical Research Strategy		
	Harmonise the MRFF and MREA		Maintain excellence in peer review
	Champion consumer involvement	Embed equity in health research	Bolster confidence in research integrity
Foster translation and commercialisation		Promote prevention and public health	
Cooperation	Health priorities		
	 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health	 Artificial intelligence in health	 Emerging health threats and emergencies
			 Multiple long-term conditions
	Consumers, communities and the public	Industry organisations	
Commonwealth agencies		States and territories	
International and global partners		Philanthropic organisations	
Researchers and research organisations			
Governance and accountability			
Operating context	Environment		Risk oversight and management
	Capability  Integrity and transparency	 Workforce and culture	 Safety and security  ICT and data management  Communication and outreach
Activities	Investment - Research strategy and policy - Grant opportunities - Grant Hub service delivery - Grant administration - Grant system capability	Translation - Research translation strategy - International engagement strategy - Research impact reporting - Guidelines development - Guidelines standards and approvals	Integrity - Research integrity framework - Research quality strategy - Human and animal research ethics guidelines - Embryo research regulation
	Performance	- High-quality research - Broad range of research areas - Community needs - Effective and efficient review - Research capability and equity	- Evidence-based health - Clinical practice guidelines - Public health guidelines - Environment health guidelines - Research outcomes and impact

Purposes

NHMRC's purposes support our mission of *building a healthy Australia* and collectively capture NHMRC's legislated functions.

Legislative context

NHMRC is an independent statutory authority within the Health, Disability and Ageing portfolio. We operate under the NHMRC Act, *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and *Public Service Act 1999*.

The NHMRC Act establishes NHMRC’s core functions as being to:

- fund health and medical research and training (through the application of the Medical Research Endowment Account)
- issue guidelines and advise the community on improving health (including on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease and the provision of health care) and on ethical issues relating to health.

NHMRC also administers and has legislated functions under the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* and the *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002*. In addition, NHMRC exercises some functions under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*.

Figure 1: NHMRC’s mission and purposes



Strategy

The NHMRC Act requires the CEO to develop a strategy for health and medical research and to identify major national health issues likely to arise during the period covered by this plan. In considering these issues, the CEO consults with NHMRC Council, its Committees and the Minister before determining issues that are within NHMRC's scope.

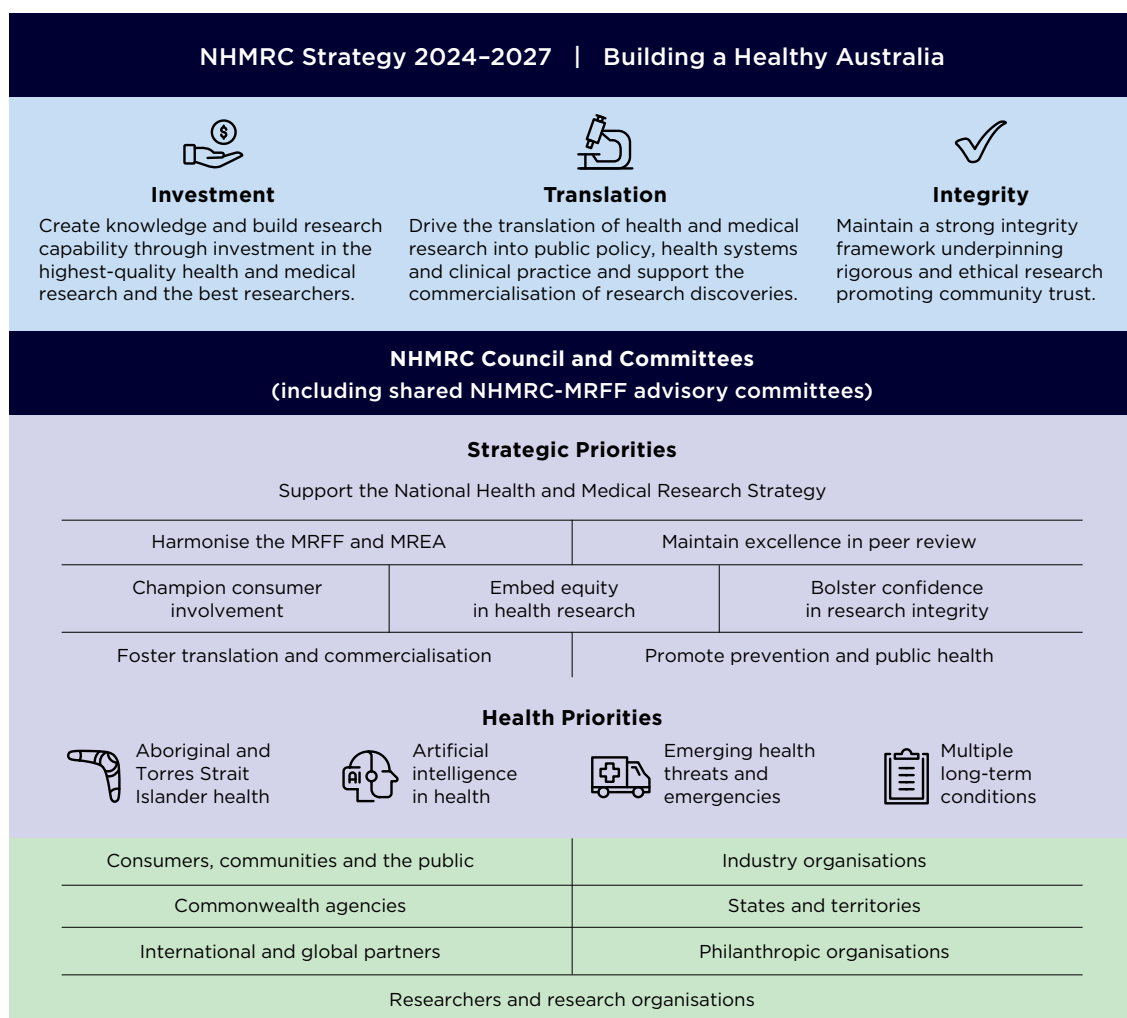
Overview

NHMRC's strategy for health and medical research helps to focus our activity to ensure we achieve our mission of building a healthy Australia, and contributes to the broader research and innovation system in Australia.

In 2024, the NHMRC CEO endorsed strategic and health priorities for 2024-2027, which are at the core of the strategy. The development and implementation of NHMRC's strategy and priorities are overseen by NHMRC Council and Committees, and subject to review by the NHMRC CEO as required as part of the annual corporate plan.

In 2026-27, NHMRC will be considering its strategy and priorities for 2027-2030, including how NHMRC can help deliver the vision and outcomes outlined in Australia's first [National Health and Medical Research Strategy](#), which was launched on 22 May 2026.¹

Figure 2: NHMRC's strategy for 2024-2027



1 www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-health-and-medical-research-strategy-2026-2036

NHMRC Council and Committees

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.

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

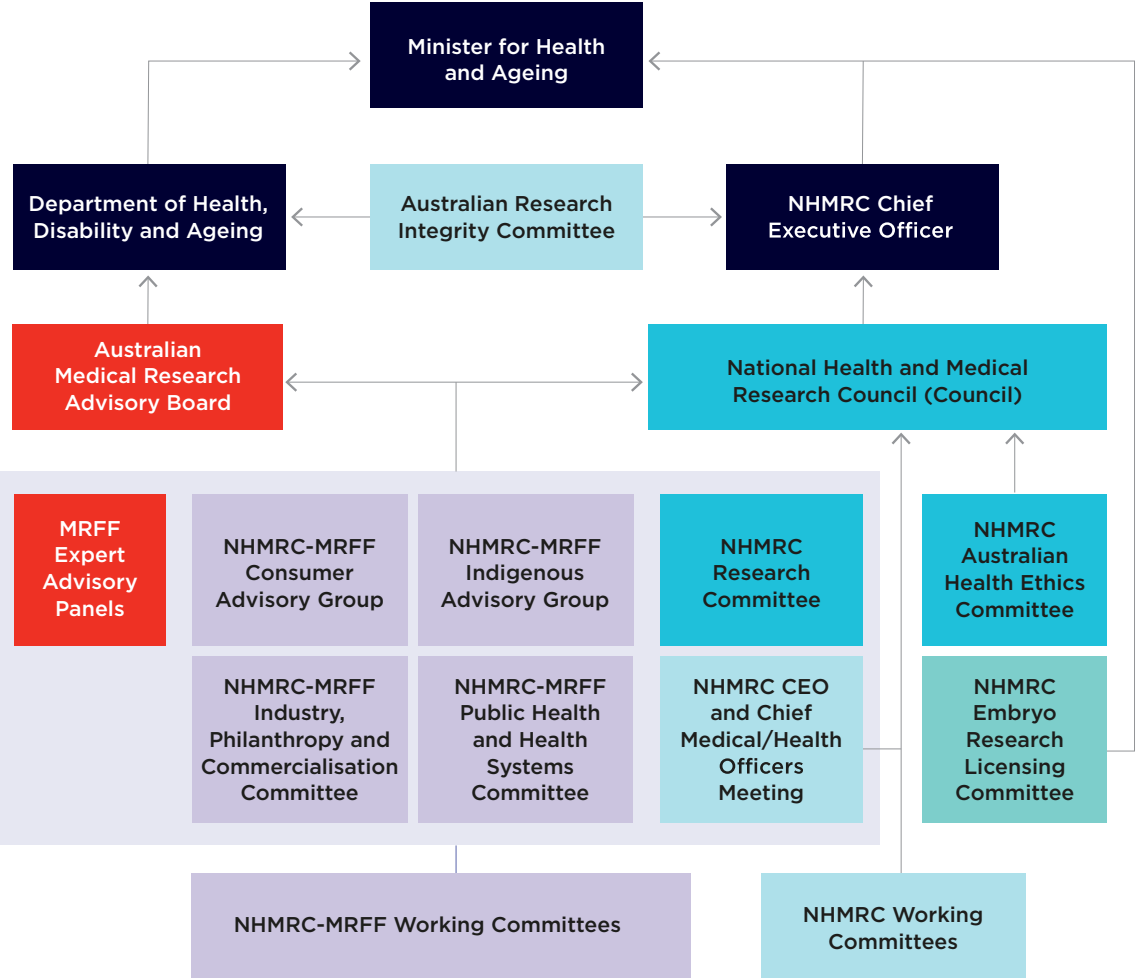
As part of new collaborative arrangements with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to progress and improve alignment and coordination between the MRFF and MREA, a shared NHMRC-MRFF advisory committee structure has been in effect since 1 July 2024.

As part of these arrangements, NHMRC Council and AMRAB continue to work closely together to provide holistic advice on the health and medical research landscape in Australia, including on the MRFF and the MREA, supported by a range of shared or linked advisory committees.

These NHMRC-MRFF advisory committees are focused on stronger engagement with industry and philanthropy, clinicians and policy makers across the health system, consumers and the community, and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers and communities.

NHMRC Council, Principal Committees and NHMRC-MRFF advisory committee arrangements, as well as other NHMRC committees that support the full range of NHMRC functions, are shown in Figure 4. NHMRC Council and Principal Committees are appointed every 3 years, with the 2024–2027 triennium ending on 30 June 2027.

Figure 3: NHMRC and MRFF advisory committee arrangements



Strategic priorities

NHMRC’s strategic priorities are areas of focused activity where NHMRC will lead (or make significant contributions to) policy, programs, initiatives or activities that directly contribute to building a healthy Australia.

The NHMRC CEO, in consultation with NHMRC Council and Committees, endorsed strategic priorities for 2024–2027, as outlined in Table 1, along with planned actions in 2026–27. Further detail on NHMRC’s key activities aligned with these priorities is provided under the Activities section of this Corporate Plan.

Table 1: NHMRC’s strategic priorities for 2024–2027

Strategic priority	Overview	Planned actions in 2026–27
Support the National Strategy	Work with partners across government and the research ecosystem to support the vision and outcomes outlined in the National Strategy.	Identify and progress early actions and develop a longer-term implementation roadmap that aligns with the vision, focus areas, outcome areas and enablers within the National Strategy.
Harmonise the MRFF and MREA	Work with the Department to optimise synergies and create alignment in policy, operations and governance between the MRFF and MREA.	Continue to use the shared advisory structure through Council/AMRAB and expert advisory committees to align policy and operations. Further opportunities to optimise synergies and create alignment to be considered in the context of the National Strategy implementation.
Champion consumer involvement	Strengthen the involvement of consumers and the community in health and medical research.	Establish a strong governance framework to implement the revised NHMRC and Consumers Health Forum of <i>Australia Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research</i> and boost consumer involvement in NHMRC’s grant program and funded research.
Maintain excellence in peer review	Innovate, evaluate and enhance the ways researchers are assessed when applying for grant opportunities to ensure our processes are equitable, evidence-informed, and sustainable.	Continue to implement actions aligned with NHMRC’s framework for peer review and responsible research assessment, with a focus on managing burden, strengthening peer reviewer training for health and medical researchers and consumers, expanding the role of consumers in peer review, refining score descriptors, providing feedback to applicants, increasing transparency and rewarding excellence in peer review.

Strategic priority	Overview	Planned actions in 2026–27
Bolster confidence in research integrity	Work with the Australian Research Council and research leaders to enhance quality and integrity in research, which is also foundational to maintaining community trust in science and medicine.	Progress discussion about potential reform of the national research integrity framework, as well as updating NHMRC-specific policies and processes to bolster the management of research integrity matters, including serious misconduct and fraud, and continue to promote high-quality research practices.
Embed equity in health research	Address the structural racism and other systemic barriers that drive health inequity through research policy and funding initiatives that promote equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, women, and rural and remote communities.	Strengthen requirements for researchers to consider and describe how their research would benefit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health and how it incorporates appropriate consideration of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation, as well as continuing to support targeted initiatives to promote gender equity and capacity building in rural, regional and remote health research.
Foster translation and commercialisation	Develop evidence-based strategies that strengthen translation of research and promote greater commercialisation of innovative research.	Release a new Research Translation Strategy 2026–2030 that articulates priorities, actions and targets to foster the translation and commercialisation of health and medical research.
Promote prevention and public health	Promote prevention and public health through the development of evidence-based advice, guidelines and strategies to strengthen research in these areas.	Progress the NHMRC-led reviews of the Australian Dietary Guidelines, Nutrient Reference Values (with a focus on finalising iodine and selenium and progressing sodium and vitamin B6), the statement on e-cigarettes, the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the Recreational Water Guidelines, as well as continue to support the development of high-quality prevention and public health guidelines across Australia through NHMRC’s 3rd-party guideline-approval program.

Health priorities

NHMRC's health priorities articulate areas of targeted research investment to address major national health issues over the period of the plan.

In identifying health priorities, the NHMRC CEO takes into consideration other Australian Government priorities and activities, including [Australia's national science and research priorities](#), and the [MRFF strategy and priorities](#), and where NHMRC activity can build on or contribute to these activities, as well as unique areas of activity that reflect NHMRC's purposes and mission of building a healthy Australia.

In general, 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 NHMRC's role in promoting the highest standards and ethics in health and medical research.

The NHMRC CEO, in consultation with NHMRC Council and Committees, has endorsed refreshed health priorities for 2024–2027, as outlined in Table 2. These priorities were informed by advice from NHMRC committees, drawing on previous and existing investments and horizon scanning of these and other emerging health issues.

Table 2: NHMRC’s health priorities for the 2024–2027 triennium

Health priority	Overview	Actual and planned actions to address the health priorities
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health	Promoting wellness and health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	• 2025 NHMRC Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD): Strengthening Health Systems Funding Call • 2026 NHMRC Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD): Multisectoral Approaches Funding Call • NHMRC is currently engaged in strategic dialogue with international partners on potential collaborative opportunities in 2027. • 2026 Targeted Call for Research: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men’s health • 2026 Targeted Call for Research: Strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce
Artificial intelligence in health	Promoting the integration of artificial intelligence into health and medical research, and its safe, ethical, equitable and effective application in health care.	• 2025 NHMRC-Horizon Europe • 2025 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • NHMRC-AMED 2024 Collaborative Research Scheme: Adopting Sustainable Partnerships for Innovation and Research Ecosystem (ASPIRE) • 2026 NHMRC-SNSF grant opportunity focusing on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare for populations of diverse sex, gender or sexual orientations or other underrepresented population groups. • 2026 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • 2026 NHMRC-Horizon Europe • 2026 NHMRC-European Partnership on BrainHealth
Emerging health threats, emergencies and pandemic preparedness	Identifying and targeting emerging health threats and emergencies, including working with partners towards a One Health research approach to climate change, health and our environment, biodiversity, and antimicrobial resistance.	• 2025 Centres of Research Excellence, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. • 2025 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • 2025 NHMRC-EU Collaborative Research Grant Scheme • 2026 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • 2026 NHMRC-Horizon Europe • NHMRC is currently engaged in strategic dialogue with international partners on potential collaborative opportunities in 2027.
Multiple long-term conditions	Identifying, preventing, and managing multiple chronic conditions, multi-morbidity and greater integration of living with multiple long-term conditions into research.	• 2025 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • 2025 NHMRC-EU Collaborative Research Grant Scheme • 2026 NHMRC e-ASIA Joint Research Program • 2026 NHMRC-Horizon Europe • 2026 Targeted Call for Research: Reframing Women’s Health • 2026 Targeted Call for Research: Serving and Ex-Serving Australian Defence Force Members Mental Health and Well-being

Cooperation

NHMRC partners with others to support the achievement of its purposes and ensure our priorities and national leadership align with government directions and meet the research and health needs of the community.

NHMRC's major collaborative partnerships and other cooperative relationships and engagement mechanisms are outlined in this section. NHMRC does not have any subsidiaries.

Consumer, communities and the public

NHMRC supports active consumer and community involvement across all areas of its activity, including embedding involvement throughout the development of health guidelines and advice, and on ethical issues in health research and health care.

We involve consumers, communities, community organisations and the public in our committees, peer review processes, guideline development and other major activities. NHMRC also undertakes open public consultation on health and ethical guidelines in line with its legislative obligations and community expectations. We promote opportunities to be involved in NHMRC activities openly, including issuing open calls for nominations to our Principal and Advisory Committees, and notifications of public consultations on open forums, such as social media.

We invite consumers, communities, the public and professional organisations to identify health issues and priorities that may benefit from targeted research funding, to ensure that health and medical research reflects, and best serves, community needs and priorities.

NHMRC provides leadership and guidance to the health and medical research sector by promoting effective consumer and community involvement, and by supporting consistent policy and practice that embeds involvement across all stages and types of research.

Industry organisations

NHMRC engages with industry organisations to foster research translation and impact, including involving business representatives on our committees and peer review processes, and inviting submissions from industry in public consultation processes.

NHMRC will be expanding its industry engagement activities over the period of this plan, including engaging with biotech and other health-connected companies, with a focus on fostering the translation and commercialisation of Australian research to support production and supply of treatments and devices that benefit the Australian community.

Government relations and other research funders

NHMRC engages with other government agencies, including other Commonwealth agencies, state and territory health departments, international partners, and philanthropic organisations to deliver its strategy for health and medical research.

Health, Disability and Ageing portfolio

NHMRC collaborates with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on national strategies and priorities for health and medical research, including coordination and harmonisation between the MRFF and the MREA grant programs, and with the Department and Cancer Australia on administering grant opportunities. By working together, we aim to simplify access for researchers, make efficient use of government resources and achieve our shared objectives to support Australian research and improve the health of Australians.

We also collaborate with the Department, and other Health portfolio agencies and statutory office holders, to support governance, ethics review and legal frameworks for human research, clinical trials and gene technology. NHMRC also works with other areas of the Department and portfolio agencies (including FSANZ,² TGA,³ ACSQHC,⁴ and AIHW⁵) to promote the use of evidence to improve public health, environmental health and clinical practice, including undertaking evidence-based reviews and developing health guidelines and advice.

NHMRC has commenced working closely with the Australian Centre for Disease Control to support a strong, evidenceinformed national approach to disease prevention, preparedness and response. Through alignment of research priorities, expert advice and capability building, this collaboration helps ensure that research continues to inform public health decision making and strengthens Australia's capacity to respond to current and emerging health threats.

Australian Research Council

NHMRC works in strategic partnership with the Australian Research Council (ARC) to provide coordinated national leadership across Australia's research system. Together, we are strengthening the coherence, transparency and accountability of research funding, policy and practice, and aligning our approaches to better support high-quality, ethical and impactful research.

Through this partnership, NHMRC and the ARC uphold and advance national standards for ethics and integrity, including the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (the Code), the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, and the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*.

We are also embarking on research integrity reform, in collaboration and consultation with the research sector, to strengthen institutional accountability, improve the effectiveness and consistency of responses to research integrity concerns, and reinforce public trust in the research system. This work will build on NHMRC-ARC's long-established collaboration through the jointly convened Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC).

We are collaborating through joint initiatives such as implementation of the Australian National Persistent Identifiers (PID) Strategy, driving more consistent adoption of persistent identifiers across the research system, as well aligning our policies on open access and on the use of generative artificial intelligence in our respective grant programs.

2 Food Standards Australia and New Zealand

3 Therapeutic Goods Administration

4 Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Other Commonwealth agencies

NHMRC also works with other Commonwealth agencies to coordinate priorities and investment in health and medical research, and to contribute to and support government policies and initiatives affecting the research sector. This includes CSIRO, the Departments of Industry, Science and Resources, Education, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and others.

States and territories

NHMRC works with state and territory governments to foster best practice in the conduct of research, use of evidence and national consistency in health standards. Together, we identify gaps and priorities for research investment and support the translation of research into policy and practice.

International and global partners

Recognising that Australia's health is connected to global wellbeing, NHMRC invests in collaborative research and partnerships to address shared health challenges. NHMRC works with international funding agencies and global organisations to support collaborative health and medical research and address shared health challenges. Through bilateral and multilateral partnerships, NHMRC helps create opportunities for Australian researchers to participate in international research and contributes to the exchange of knowledge, expertise and best practice. These relationships support Australia's health and medical research capability and strengthen our contribution to global research efforts.

Philanthropic organisations

NHMRC collaborates 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.

Researchers and research organisations

NHMRC collaborates with researchers and research organisations, both formally and informally on research policy and support for health and medical research.

NHMRC-approved 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 consult with universities, medical research institutes, learned 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.

We work with domestic and international organisations such as the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) and ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) to support digital infrastructure and data-sharing initiatives, including the use of persistent identifiers for research, scholarship, and innovation.

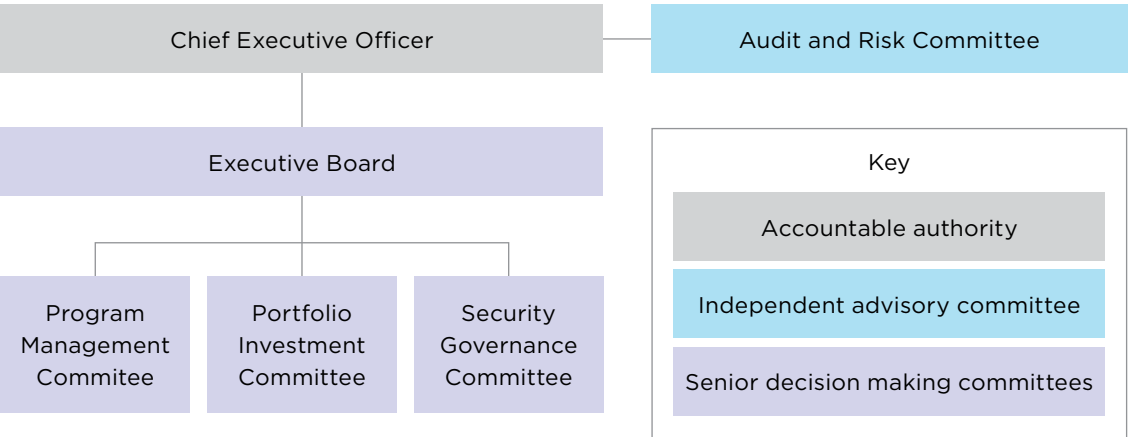
Operating context

NHMRC takes into consideration its operating context in determining its priorities and key activities to achieve its purposes. This section outlines the environment in which NHMRC operates and our risk oversight, including key risks and its management, over the 4-year period of this plan.

Governance and accountability

NHMRC operates within a strong governance, integrity and accountability framework that supports efficient and effective performance. NHMRC’s corporate governance committees (shown in Figure 4) play an important role in supporting achievement of our purposes.

Figure 4: Overview of NHMRC’s corporate governance structure



Executive Board provides oversight, managing risk and monitoring performance of the agency. It is the key management committee that supports the CEO in fulfilling their responsibilities as the accountable authority under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and other relevant legislation.

Executive Board is supported by three senior decision-making committees:

- the Program Management Committee oversees the effective delivery of the NHMRC grant program and supporting systems
- the Portfolio Investment Committee oversees resource distribution and effective project management
- the Security Governance Committee oversees effective management of security operations, risks and issues.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice to the CEO on the appropriateness of financial and performance reporting, risk management and internal control mechanisms.

Environment

NHMRC's operating environment is influenced by a range of factors that affect how we deliver our activities. Over the 4-year period of this plan NHMRC is likely to be affected by:

- the Australian and global social and economic context, including changing geopolitical dynamics and the impact of misinformation on trust in science
- emerging individual and population health issues, the lived experience of consumers, communities and the public in the health system, changing demographics (e.g. ageing population), and trends and changes in burden of disease
- changes to health policy, care, services and systems, including the interplay between jurisdictions, industry, community organisations and providers
- rapid innovation in the use of technology in research and in health, including the risks and opportunities posed by artificial intelligence
- increasing cybersecurity risks and impacts, including from external threats (e.g. deliberate hacking) and unauthorised data access
- trends and policy in data access, sharing and transparency, including greater sharing of public sector data and open science affecting research data and results access and sharing
- Australian Government's reform initiatives and policy developments, including responses to major reviews and consultations, including reforms focused on integrity, fraud and corruption control, as well as APS capability to deliver modern, people-first policy and services.

Each of these factors has been taken into consideration in planning NHMRC's key activities and identifying strategic and operational risks, which are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Risk oversight and management

NHMRC engages with risk to achieve its purposes and improve business efficiency, in line with our risk appetite and tolerances.

Our positive risk culture requires us to have a sound understanding of appropriate risk acceptance and to apply it to daily decision-making processes. NHMRC's risk appetite recognises that it is not possible, or necessarily desirable, to eliminate all risks inherent in our work. Accepting some degree of risk promotes innovation and recognises the limits of what we can control. Our risk tolerance varies with a greater willingness to accept risks in pursuit of strategic objectives than for operational matters.

Key enterprise risks and risk tolerances relevant to the 4-year period covered by this plan are outlined in Table 3. Our risk tolerances reflect the maximum risk that we are willing to take. A high tolerance indicates that we are prepared to accept exposure to the risk in order to achieve our strategic objectives, whereas a low risk tolerance indicates that we take action to minimise exposure to the risk and/or take immediate corrective action where required. Led by its Executive Board, NHMRC implements strategies for identifying, managing and escalating emerging risks across our all areas of our operations.

NHMRC's Risk Management Policy and Framework provides the foundations and organisational arrangements for risk management within the agency and supports officials to identify, document and use risk information. All staff have a role in identifying and managing risks as part of their day-to-day activities. We augment our enterprise risk oversight and management with project-level risk management.

Table 3: Enterprise risks, risk tolerances and controls

Risk description		Risk tolerance	Primary control/s
Investment	Funding opportunities are not available to talented researchers to contribute to the improvement of human health.	Low	• Maintain delivery of grant schemes, with adjustments (e.g. to timing) as needed to respond to public health emergencies or other major disruptions. • Identify the best researchers and research through robust, independent, expert peer review.
	Grant application and review processes are an unreasonable burden on researchers and peer reviewers.	Low	• Undertake regular surveys of peer reviewers to assess the burden and opportunities to improve processes. • Continue to refine the grant management system to support peer review processes. • Implement a streamlined process where appropriate, to reduce the workload, broaden participation and shorten the time needed for peer review.
	Poor fiscal control or financial management adversely impacts NHMRC's ability to operate.	Low	• Manage resources in accordance with agreed budgets, ensure oversight by the relevant governance body and make financial decisions at the appropriate level. • Undertake regular independent review of the internal control and financial frameworks, including as part of internal and external audits. • Maintain systems and processes to ensure accurate and timely payment of NHMRC and MRFF grants administered by NHMRC.
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.	Low	• Use the best available scientific methods for rating the certainty of evidence and making recommendations and follow transparent development and decision-making processes. • 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.
	Needs and feedback of stakeholders, including researchers and consumers, are not adequately taken into account which adversely affects achievement of the end goals for the community.	Low	• Promote, and provide resources to support, consumer and community involvement in research at all stages. • Release guidelines for a period of public consultation to allow the Australian community to comment. • Obtain advice from Council and Principal Committees on emerging sectoral concerns and issues.

	Risk description	Risk tolerance	Primary control/s
Integrity	Misconduct, including alleged fraud or corruption in research, are not adequately investigated and addressed and/or inadequate controls are placed on NHMRC funded researchers.	Low	- Require funded institutions, as a condition of NHMRC funding, to investigate and appropriately manage allegations and notify NHMRC in specific circumstances. - Manage allegations, including misconduct, fraud or corruption reported to NHMRC, in accordance with approved policies and processes. - Apply precautionary (and where warranted consequential) actions to researchers and research institutions implicated in misconduct matters to protect the integrity of NHMRC processes and funding. - Use data collected, including from the Institutional Annual Compliance Reporting, to monitor appropriateness of policies and controls.
	NHMRC funded researcher/s act contrary to community protections introduced though <i>The Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism (Criminal and Migration Laws) Act 2026</i> .	Low	- Maintain and, where needed, use provisions in the NHMRC Funding Agreement with Administering Institutions to enable NHMRC to address non-compliance with Australian laws. - Maintain web-based anonymous fraud and corruption and complaint reporting to help identify if funds are misused or laws breached.
	There is unethical, fraudulent or corrupt conduct or systematic noncompliance by staff, service providers or contractors.	Low	- Maintain a robust internal control framework, including fraud and corruption control, supported by regular education for staff, service providers or contractors and availability of resources. - Undertake regular independent review of the fraud and corruption control and assurance frameworks and ongoing compliance monitoring, including as part of audits. - Uphold the APS values in everything we do, reinforced by a respectful work culture and leadership behaviours that model the APS Values and the NHMRC Values.
	Foreign interference in NHMRC-funded research or other activities compromises Australia's national interests.	Low	- Require NHMRC Administering Institutions to meet obligations of the University Foreign Interference Taskforce's <i>Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector</i> (UFIT Guidelines). - Monitor and measure Administering Institutions' awareness of, and compliance with, the UFIT Guidelines.
	Critical business systems, data or grant scheme integrity is compromised through the inappropriate use of new technology (such as artificial intelligence).	Low	- Require all external users to adhere to the NHMRC Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grant Applications and Peer Review. - Maintain appropriate System Security Plans, System Risk Management Plans and Security Assessments and perform annual reviews of the NHMRC Cyber Security Strategy.

Risk description		Risk tolerance	Primary control/s
Capability	Innovative information and communications technology (ICT) solutions operate sub-optimally or increase the burden on stakeholders.	Moderate	• Maintain an appropriate governance structure to oversee project management and budgets, including regular review of risks, security and issues. • Design and test ICT solutions with internal and external users and implement enhancements over time, as feasible and where most needed.
	Sustainability of operations and/or security of information held by NHMRC ICT platforms is threatened by malicious cyber activity.	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. • Deliver and, where required, stabilise and enhance core ICT systems to provide reliable, highly available services to support NHMRC operations.
	A suitable, appropriately skilled workforce that enables the achievements of NHMRC's objectives is not maintained.	Low	• Recruit and retain staff to support the range of NHMRC activities and support staff to learn relevant skills.
	The health, safety, wellbeing or psychosocial health of NHMRC staff, contractors or visitors is compromised.	Low	• Maintain, and when needed activate, the Business Continuity Plan to respond to public health emergencies and other critical events. • Monitor the work environment and rectify identified safety issues in a timely manner. • Actively continue to monitor staff welfare and wellbeing and address any issues as a priority.
	Business outcomes are compromised by the actions of third-party providers.	Low	• Maintain a series of frequent account, service and operational coordination meetings between NHMRC and its partners to ensure third-party providers understand expectations and meet these. • Establish and maintain provider relationships which foster trust, respect and transparency with third-party providers.

Capability

NHMRC has identified capability areas requiring focused activity in 2026–27 and over the period of this plan. Each of these areas will help build and maintain the critical capabilities NHMRC needs to achieve its mission and purposes in both the short and long term.



**Integrity and
transparency**



**Workforce
and culture**



**Safety and
security**



**ICT and data
management**



**Communication
and outreach**



Integrity and transparency

NHMRC is focused on fostering stakeholder confidence through a culture of accountability, transparency and integrity.

NHMRC’s strategies and plans in this area include:

- maintaining a culture of integrity and accountability through transparent reporting and systems for addressing concerns, including regular review of fraud and corruption controls
- maintaining an effective financial/resource management framework, including continuing to embed strong financial governance over the agency’s internal budget and compliance frameworks, and consolidating and streamlining the agency’s financial systems and processes
- delivering a comprehensive internal audit and risk management program, guided by our Audit and Risk Committee, to underpin continuous quality improvement across all activities.



Workforce and culture

NHMRC is focused on fostering workplace strategies that cultivate and strengthen workforce capabilities and ensuring the delivery of operational outcomes within a culture of excellence.

NHMRC is also committed to fostering a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion and employee wellbeing, where all employees feel safe, valued and respected.

Our workplace culture also champions the values and behaviours that make NHMRC unique and helps us achieve our purposes.

NHMRC's strategies and plans in this area include:

- implementing and embedding NHMRC's workforce strategy that addresses challenges and harnesses our opportunities to build a capable, adaptable and future ready workforce
- continuing to embed NHMRC's culture (values and behaviours) across our activities to build a high-performing, engaged and productive workforce
- modernising our HR service delivery and workforce practices to improve employee experience and remove barriers to effective ways of working
- promoting fair, accessible and contemporary employment conditions and mature our flexible working practices that support productivity and the diverse needs of the workforce
- strengthening NHMRC's organisational capability by delivering a right-sized, adaptable, sustainable and compliant property footprint that enables workforce effectiveness, supports collaboration, and achieves value for money in a small agency operating context
- investing in leadership and workforce capability development, through our Learning and Development Strategy, and foster a culture of respect, innovation, and inclusive leadership
- strengthening our commitment to diversity and inclusion by delivering a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and associated action plans (e.g. LGBTQIA+, disability inclusion and RAP action plans) to foster a culture of respect and belonging
- delivering effective internal communication that creates an environment where trust, collaboration and ideas sharing thrive.

NHMRC operates in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework, with core work undertaken primarily by APS employees and outsourcing limited to circumstances permitted under the framework.

NHMRC has identified the following job families as core work for 2026–27:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Business and organisational management | • ICT and digital (excluding ICT service delivery and support) |
| • Communications and engagement | • Intelligence and information management |
| • Compliance and regulation | • Legal and parliamentary |
| • Data and research | • Policy, portfolio, program and project management. |
| • Health | |
| • Human resources | |



Safety and security

NHMRC continues to prioritise safety and security of its personnel, data and information, and business continuity.

NHMRC's strategies and plans in this area include:

- maintaining a safe workplace through its Health and Wellbeing Strategy that proactively addresses physical and psychosocial risks and encourages staff involvement, ownership and support
- implementing and continuously improving NHMRC's Business Continuity arrangements to mature our capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis and major disruption
- continuing to implement a comprehensive Security Plan to enhance security maturity and strengthen our resilience to insider threat and foreign interference risks and build a culture of security awareness
- strengthening NHMRC's safety and emergency management to meet relevant legislation and Australian standards
- protecting NHMRC's information, data and technology assets by continuing to implement the priorities outlined in the Cyber Security Strategy and Information and Data Strategy.



ICT and data management

NHMRC continues to prioritise aligning our systems and processes to a more service-based approach. This includes our internal facing ICT services, as well as strengthening NHMRC's grant management system as a trusted source of consistent, available and high-integrity services.

We are also improving our information and data management systems, processes and training which will lead to an improvement in data quality, accessibility and availability. Core to this priority will be the release of the full dataset of all NHMRC grant funding outcomes for external use.

NHMRC's strategies and plans in this area include:

- finalising and launching the Digital Business Strategy, setting out NHMRC's technology priorities and guiding investment to support the delivery of business activities and strategic outcomes
- building a culture where the digital workplace provides a positive experience for staff and modern technologies, including AI support greater productivity and transformation
- developing our ICT service approach following the transition to a fully cloudbased ICT environment and migration to an in-house service desk, so that systems and processes will be progressively aligned to a service-based approach
- delivering the NHMRC Grant System Strategy, which is guiding the future direction of the grants management platform
- delivering the Cyber Security Strategy, improving the agency's approach to managing and mitigating cyber security risks and threats, including improving our cyber capability to reach the Essential Eight level 2 maturity rating under the Protective Security Policy Framework
- delivering the Data and Information Strategy, to identify priority actions to optimise NHMRC's information and data capability.



Communication and outreach

NHMRC's communication and outreach strategies aim to strengthen engagement, visibility and trust across the health and medical research sector, and include:

- recognising and celebrating excellence, diversity and leadership in Australian health and medical research
- enhancing external communication to foster and maintain trust, build positive stakeholder relationships, and uphold NHMRC's brand integrity, credibility, and reliability
- delivering clear, timely, and accessible information through a range of channels, including media, digital platforms, publications, and events
- supporting strategic initiatives and policy implementation through targeted communication and stakeholder engagement
- promoting awareness of NHMRC's role, funding opportunities, and research impact to diverse audiences.

Activities

NHMRC achieves its purposes and mission of *building a healthy Australia* by delivering a range of activities. Our key activities are grouped below by broad type of activity, which align with the primary purpose to which the type of activity contributes, noting that many activities support achievement across more than one purpose.



Investment

- Research strategy and policy
- Grant opportunities
- Grant hub service delivery
- Grant administration
- Grant system capability



Translation

- Research translation strategy
- International engagement strategy
- Research impact reporting
- Guidelines development
- Guidelines standards and approvals



Integrity

- Research integrity framework
- Research quality strategy
- Human and animal research ethics guidelines
- Embryo research regulation

Key activities

Key activities in 2026–27 and extending over the period of this plan are outlined below. Our key activities are informed by our operating context and include specific strategies, plans and other activities to implement our strategic priorities, health priorities and capability priorities.



Investment

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

Research strategy and policy

- Continue to work closely and collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to provide coordinated national leadership across Australia's research funding system.
- Strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion in health and medical research through funded research activities and initiatives.
- Establish a research security framework that bolsters Australia's reputation as a global leader in health and medical research and improves the resilience of our research system.
- Implement the Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research, in collaboration with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia and other key stakeholders, with oversight from the joint NHMRC-MRFF Consumer Advisory Group.
- Advance open science and responsible research assessment by implementing NHMRC's Action Plan for Responsible Research Assessment, embedding principles of transparency, openness and fairness in funding policies and processes, and supporting recognition of a broader range of research outputs, contributions and career pathways.
- Commit to continuous evaluation and evidence-based improvement of NHMRC grant program policies, processes and outcomes - learning from and sharing learnings with other national and international funders.

Grant opportunities

- Deliver funding schemes that invest in the best researchers and research to meet Australia's diverse health and medical research needs and invest in innovative and collaborative research projects.
- Deliver targeted calls for research that responds to unmet or emerging health needs and reflects national, state and territory, and consumer and community priorities.
- Deliver funding schemes that focus on translation into policy, practice and products, including encouraging partnerships with policy makers or industry engagement and the commercialisation of research outcomes where appropriate.

Grant hub service delivery

- Work with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to deliver MRFF grant opportunities effectively and efficiently, leveraging NHMRC's grant processes and capability, to achieve program and policy outcomes and complement NHMRC funding schemes.
- Provide grant hub services to diverse partners (e.g. government agencies, philanthropic trusts, foundations and other funders) who seek to deliver bespoke grant programs, or leverage NHMRC's established grant program, to support prioritised research.

Grant system capability

- Strengthen NHMRC's grant management system as a trusted source of consistent, available and high-integrity services.
- Refine and consolidate our grant management system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grant application, peer assessment and post-award management processes.
- Explore future system capability alternatives with organisations sharing similar policy, legislative and operational contexts to develop aligned strategic directions.

Grant administration

- Manage and respond to inquiries from grant applicants and grantees in a timely, consistent and transparent manner.
- Manage active grants through risk-based monitoring, structured engagement with administering institutions, and effective use of data to identify issues early and support resolution.
- Monitor compliance with NHMRC's policies and requirements through robust assurance processes, targeted compliance activities, and escalation pathways for non-compliance.



Translation

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

Research translation strategy

- Embed research in health-related systems by promoting successful collaborations between health services, researchers and end-users, including through accreditation of NHMRC Research Translation Centres.
- Consider opportunities to foster greater translation and commercialisation of Australian research to support production and supply of treatments and devices that benefit the Australian community.

International engagement strategy

- Create opportunities for Australian researchers to collaborate internationally, facilitate international networks and collaborative research partnerships and explore opportunities to work with international partners on policies and strategies to address shared health priorities, build regional capacity and promote international best practice in research.

Research impact reporting

- Promote, communicate and measure the impact of NHMRC-funded research through structured case studies and communication products that demonstrate contributions to knowledge, health, social and economic outcomes.
- Explore and progressively implement the use of AI and large language models (LLMs) to generate new insights from NHMRC data, enhance evaluation capability, and improve the depth and breadth of research outcome and impact reporting.

Guidelines development

- Develop and update guidelines in public, clinical and environmental health to support consistent standards, promote prevention and public health and inform clinical, policy and regulatory decisions.

Guidelines standards and approvals

- Promote best-practice evidence review and guideline development standards, including support for rapidly updated and living guidelines, Guidelines for Guidelines and approval of third-party public health and clinical practice guidelines.



Integrity

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

Research integrity framework

- Promote research integrity, including maintaining the Code and other guidance, and supporting the work of the Australian Research Integrity Committee.

Research quality strategy

- Promote the highest standards of research practice, including engaging with the research sector on good practice and developing guidance in key areas.

Human and animal research ethics guidelines

- Maintain national standards, codes and guidelines that promote best practice in research governance and ethics review processes and provide guidance on ethical issues in health.

Embryo research regulation

- 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.

Table 4: Links between key activities and priorities

Key activity	Strategic priority							Health priority				
	Support the National Strategy	Harmonise the MRFF and MREA	Maintain excellence in peer review	Champion consumer involvement	Embed equity in health research	Bolster confidence in research integrity	Foster translation and commercialisation	Promote prevention and public health	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health	Artificial intelligence in health	Emerging health threats and emergencies	Multiple long-term conditions
Research strategy and policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grant opportunities			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grant hub service delivery		✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
Grant system capability		✓	✓									
Grant administration		✓				✓						
Research translation strategy	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
International engagement strategy	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research impact reporting	✓							✓				
Guidelines development				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guidelines standards and approvals				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research integrity framework						✓						
Research quality strategy				✓		✓						
Human and animal research ethics guidelines						✓			✓	✓		
Embryo research regulation						✓						

Performance

NHMRC assesses and communicates its performance by measuring its achievement against the performance measures outlined in this section, as well as through evaluation activities guided by the NHMRC Evaluation Strategy.



Investment

- High-quality research
- Broad range of research areas
- Community needs
- Effective, efficient and sustainable review
- Research capability and equity



Translation

- Evidence-based health
- Clinical practice guidelines
- Public health guidelines
- Environmental health guidelines
- Research outcomes and impact



Integrity

- Responsible and ethical conduct of research, including research involving human embryos

Performance measures

Achievement of NHMRC’s purposes will be measured and assessed over the period of this plan using the performance measures outlined below.

The detailed performance measures and targets, including the sources of information and methodologies that will be used to measure and assess performance against each target, are outlined below. A mix of qualitative and quantitative targets are included. The reporting period for each target is also outlined. Most targets are reported against every year, which helps provide an assessment of NHMRC’s performance over time.



Investment

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

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.*

Target/s	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
1 Grants are awarded, based on expert peer review, across the full spectrum of health and medical research areas.*	Quantitative assessment of the distribution of the value of new grants awarded in the financial year by broad research area.	Output	2026-27
			2027-28
			2028-29
			2029-30
2 Targeted and priority-driven research funding calls are initiated to address areas of unmet need.	Qualitative assessment of how targeted and priority-driven funding meets a research gap and how the unmet need was identified.	Output	2026-27
			2027-28
			2028-29
			2029-30

*This performance measure/target is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Research funding is invested effectively and efficiently through expert peer review against published assessment criteria, including an overall consideration of value with money.

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
3 A high level of matching of peer reviewers to applications is maintained through application-centric peer review processes in applicable schemes, while also effectively balancing the peer review burden.	Analysis of the peer review process, including level of self-reported suitability matching of peer reviewers to applications, feedback from reviewers and measurement of time spent on peer review.	Efficiency and effectiveness	2026-27
			2027-28
			2028-29
			2029-30

Research grants are awarded that aim to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
4 More than 5% of NHMRC's annual budget is awarded to research that aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*	Quantitative assessment of new grants awarded in the financial year. Funding is categorised as 'Indigenous health research' through a combination of Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (IREC) assessment and reviewing each funded grant against a range of investigator provided data classifications including fields of research, keywords, grant titles and media summaries.	Output	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30

*This performance measure/target is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Capacity and capability are built and strengthened by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
5 At least 3.4% of NHMRC's annual grants are awarded to lead chief investigators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.	Quantitative assessment of the percentage of new grants awarded in the financial year to lead chief investigators of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.	Output	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30
6 The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chief investigators funded by NHMRC is reported.	Quantitative reporting on the number of chief investigators of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent currently funded (active grants) across all NHMRC schemes.	Output	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30

NHMRC grants support a gender inclusive health and medical research workforce.

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
7 Gender inequities in NHMRC funding outcomes are reduced.	Quantitative assessment of the number of grants, amount of funding awarded and funded rates by gender, and whether measures have been applied to reduce gender disparities. The assessment covers all NHMRC grant schemes (collectively) and key schemes (Investigator and Ideas Grants) separately and considers gender equity in grant distribution across career stages.	Output and effectiveness	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30



Translation

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

Support an Australian health system that is research-led, evidence based, efficient and sustainable.*

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
8 Public and environmental health and clinical practice guidelines are developed and/or approved by NHMRC.*	Review of NHMRC records to identify all CEO approvals/ issuances in the reporting period and NHMRC Council records that also demonstrate that Guidelines are developed consistent with NHMRC standards for guidelines under subsection 7(1) of the NHMRC Act, as well as records that demonstrate progress of guidelines under development.	Output	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30

*This performance measure/target is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

The impact of the research funded by NHMRC is reported.

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
9 The contributions of NHMRC-funded research to improvements in the health, society and economy of Australia are demonstrated through case studies.	Qualitative and in-depth assessment of the impact of NHMRC-funded research using a case study approach. Case studies are selected where beneficial impacts can be connected to NHMRC funding.	Effectiveness	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30
10 The quantitative outputs, outcomes and impacts of NHMRC grants in a specific area are demonstrated through reporting.	Quantitative analysis such as economic, bibliometric and/or AI-enabled approaches (large language model) to provide insights on the outputs, outcomes and impacts of NHMRC-funded research. The area of focus and time period is identified by the NHMRC CEO and a complete list of relevant NHMRC grants is generated to match to external datasets.	Effectiveness	2026-27 2028-29



Integrity

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

Research is conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity in Australia.*

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
11 Research integrity matters are managed appropriately by Administering Institutions in line with the requirements of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.*	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 and that required notifications of integrity matters are made in line with the NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy. Qualitative analysis of Australian Research Integrity Committee reviews of the processes used by Administering Institutions to conduct integrity investigations in line with the requirements of the Code.	Effectiveness	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30

*This performance measure/target is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Research involving human embryos is conducted ethically and legally in accordance with appropriate license conditions.⁶

Target	Methodology	Measure type	Reporting years
12 Compliance with regulatory requirements under the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002 is demonstrated.#	Qualitative assessment from inspections and six-monthly reports is used to calculate the number and type of incidents of non-compliance with licence conditions by each licence holder in the period, as well as how quickly and effectively any actions to redress non-compliance (as required by the regulator) are actioned by the licence holder.	Effectiveness	2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30

This performance measure relates to regulatory activities governed by the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*.

6 Research involving human embryos is regulated by the NHMRC's Embryo Research Licensing Committee (ERLC) under the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* and the *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002*. A licence issued by ERLC is required before research involving human embryos can occur, there are strong penalties for non-compliance with the legislation.

Appendix A: List of requirements

The NHMRC Corporate Plan 2026-27 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- section 16 of the NHMRC Act
- subsection 35(1) 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 • statement of preparation: a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the PGPA Act • the reporting period for which the plan is prepared • the reporting periods covered by the plan	16E(2) PGPA Rule	7
Purposes	16E(2) PGPA Rule	10-11
Strategy • a national strategy for medical research and public health research	16(2) NHMRC Act	12-17
Health priorities • 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 their functions in dealing with those issues during the period	16(2) NHMRC Act	18-19
Operating context • cooperation • environment • risk oversight, including key risks and its management • capability	16E(2) PGPA Rule	20-24 26 26 30
Key activities	16E(2) PGPA Rule	34-39
Performance • performance measures • targets for each performance measure	16E(2) PGPA Rule	42-45

Science to Art 2025 image

'Purkinje Petals' – In the brain, there are increasing insights into how the cerebellum contributes to cognitive and emotional function. This image was created from a microscopic image of a rat cerebellum, immunostained for Purkinje neurons (cyan) and interneurons (blue). This tissue was harvested from an experiment which investigated the role of the cerebellum in pain processing.

Artist: Ms Crystal Li – Monash University

