



Western Australian
Future Health Research
& Innovation Fund

FHRI Fund Communique #9

9 May 2024 meeting

I am thrilled to share highlights from the May Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund Advisory Council (Council) meeting, where we commenced charting an exciting path forward for health and medical research and innovation in Western Australia. It was an honour to chair my first Council meeting, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to lead such a distinguished group.

Ministerial Address and Strategic Direction

We were fortunate to have the Minister for Medical Research, the Hon. Stephen Dawson join us to set the scene and future direction for the FHRI Fund and Council.

Emphasising the opportunities created by the FHRI Fund, the Minister underscored the importance of innovation and the translation, implementation and commercialisation of research outcomes into tangible benefits for the WA community. The Council was encouraged to be bold and courageous in leveraging the FHRI Fund to drive transformative changes across the WA health system.

There was a recognition that the FHRI Fund is well-positioned to support initiatives that enhance patient care and treatment and the need to embed research and innovation into the fabric of the WA health system.

Continued engagement with the health and medical research and innovation sector (Sector) remains a top priority, with a strong emphasis on fostering interaction and collaboration to drive partnerships and maturity across the ecosystem.

With the development of a new Strategy and Priorities for the FHRI Fund planned for 2025, we are committed to ensuring alignment with relevant WA government strategies as well as Sector strengths and priorities.

Evaluation and Performance Review

Guided by our commitment to evidence-based evaluation and sustained engagement with the health and medical research and innovation sectors, an independent evaluation will be conducted of the Fund's achievements over its first three years. This evaluation will assess progress of the FHRI Fund Scheme against the objectives outlined in the Act, reaffirming our dedication to delivering impactful outcomes for the WA community. A performance review of the Council, the Council Secretariat, and relevant Expert Committees will also be undertaken to ensure that our activities bring the highest value and benefit to the community.

Expert Committees

As part of our ongoing commitment to engage with the Sector, the Council is progressing towards the establishment of a new Research Expert Committee and have agreed to establish a standing Innovation Expert Committee. Following a high

level of interest from the research community, the Advisory Council is reviewing expressions of interest (EOI) for membership on the Research Expert Committee in line with the Committee's purpose and scope. We anticipate making an official announcement of the new members following our next Advisory Council meeting. Stay tuned for further updates on both new Committees.

Advisory Council call for Abstracts

It was encouraging to see the response from the Sector, with over 60 abstracts submitted in response to the call. Three abstracts were selected for presentation at the May meeting, addressing key themes such as commercialisation, rural and remote health research and innovation, and high-performance computing and data security.

The Council found great value in hearing from the Sector, gaining insights into pertinent issues, challenges and opportunities relevant to the FHRI Fund. We remain committed to hearing from a diverse range of stakeholders and the process of selecting the next round of abstracts for presentation is underway. The Office of Medical Research and Innovation (OMRI) will soon extend invitations to the selected abstract leads, and we look forward to further engagement and collaboration.

July 2024 Open Day

I am excited to announce that the next Open Day will be held in Perth on 18 July, co-hosted by OMRI in partnership with the WA Life Sciences Innovation Hub. With the theme 'a connected innovation ecosystem' the event promises to highlight exciting developments and projects in the health and medical research and innovation space, as well as showcase FHRI Fund programs opened for applications, and recently awarded FHRI Fund grant recipients. Registrations are now [open](#) for both online and in-person attendance and we hope to see many of you there.

Finally, I would like to advise the FHRI Fund and Cancer Council WA co-funded Cancer Research Projects Scheme opens for applications on 15 May 2024. The Scheme will support the implementation and development of early-stage research projects in any area related to the cause, diagnosis, treatment, and/or prevention of cancer.

I'd like to thank you for your support as I begin my role as the Council Chair and I look forward to continued engagement with the Sector as we collectively strive to advance health and medical research and innovation in Western Australia.

Kind regards

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