



FHRI Fund Communique #5

7 - 9 May 2023 meetings

Welcome to the May 2023 Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund Communique. This month FHRI Fund Advisory Council (AC) events were held in parallel with the annual Science on the Swan conference in Perth. It was a pleasure to welcome some of our AC members to Perth and engage with WA researchers in person. Panel members attended an AC strategy session (7 May), debriefed the Minister for Medical Research Hon Stephen Dawson MLC (8 May), contributed to a conference panel (8 May), and participated in the AC meeting (9 May).

Performance review and strategy session

In early 2022, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) conducted a review and outlined the performance and function of the AC and its members. Findings were shared with the AC during our strategy session held on 7 May. Members have agreed to incorporate recommendations for improvements into our planning over the next 12 months.

It was agreed that to achieve the objects of the FHRI Fund Act and to strengthen the ecosystem, it is necessary to improve the way WA researchers and innovators genuinely collaborate locally, nationally and internationally. Collaboration will be encouraged and monitored across all FHRI Fund programs and initiatives. A summary of the PwC review approach is now available.

Science on the Swan conference events

FHRI Fund recipient presentations

Minister Dawson and the AC members were treated to some of the exciting research and innovation activities supported by the FHRI Fund. Sessions were delivered by Fund recipients, with podium appearances, lightning round and poster presentations. We heard from the Acting Director General Angela Kelly PSM about the WA Health and Medical Research Strategy and from mental health experts about development of the WA Mental Health Research Strategy. Both strategies are supported by the FHRI Fund's strategy and focus areas, namely, Aboriginal, remote and rural health; Burden of diseases; Living with COVID-19 and Long-Covid; and Mental health.

Partnering for success – panel session

AC members, Adjunct Professor Dale Fisher and Mr Kane Blackman, joined me, Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Cathy Foley and Queensland University of Technology's Distinguished Professor Lyn R. Griffiths, in the partnering for success panel session on 8 May. This event, which included a Q and A session, was facilitated by Professor S.S. Vasan, Director Research at the Department of Health, with interesting discussions on:

- national priorities for health and medical research, opportunities for WA in this space, the Fund's role in the technology and innovation space, and ways to promote inter-jurisdictional partnerships;
- the role of the Fund's governance structure in promoting partnerships, gender equity, diversity, consumer and community involvement.

Funding Cycle Open Day

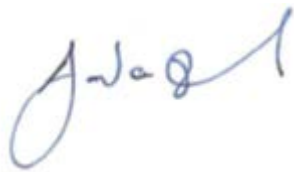
The next FHRI Fund Open Day on 4 July 2023 will be co-hosted by the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) at the Geraldton Universities Centre from 10:30am to 2:00pm. Minister Dawson and other eminent presenters from the AC, WACHS and the WA Centre for Rural Health will present on local and related initiatives, alongside presentations on the programs and initiatives launching in this cycle. Registrations are now open and attendance options for the Open Day are on-line or in-person at Geraldton.

Key and new programs update

The Advisory Council met on 9 May 2023 and endorsed the following new or updated programs, which have now been approved by Minister Dawson:

- WA Cohort Studies: (a) Research Project Support Program to provide research grants for population health research projects that have a clear hypothesis, methodology, and scientific protocol to obtain results utilising an established WA cohort study; (b) Operational Infrastructure Support Program to provide short-term funding for WA cohort studies to continue to contribute to the delivery of clinical outcomes, changes to health policy and translational health outcomes;
- Innovation Challenge to support innovative solutions aligning to the 6 priority areas of the Sustainable Health Review, genomics and mental health;
- FHRI Fund and Brightspark Foundation Co-Funded Partnership B Program to provide fellowships for WA's best early career child health researchers.

These programs will be launched at Geraldton on 4 July 2023 Open Day when full details, guidelines and conditions will be made available.



Mr John Van Der Wielen
FHRI Fund Advisory Council Chair
Future Health Research and Innovation Fund
 E: FHRI.Fund@health.wa.gov.au
 W: <https://fhrifund.health.wa.gov.au/>

