



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**



Western Australian
**Future Health Research
& Innovation Fund**

Western Australian Future Health
Research and Innovation Fund

Strategy

2025–30





Acknowledgement of Country and people

The WA health system acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia (WA). It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Using the term Aboriginal

Within WA, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of WA. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

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Message from the Minister

I am proud to present the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Strategy 2025–30: Research excellence; translating breakthroughs and innovation impact into health, social and economic outcomes.

Momentum in medical research is pivotal to driving a healthier, wealthier and more sustainable Western Australia.

This new strategy defines a fresh approach in Western Australia's ambition to become a leader in health and medical research, and innovation to understanding disease, preventing illness and reducing disability.

The foundation years of the Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund have set WA up for success.

Significant strides forward are the result of the injection of substantial investment via grants across the sector – supporting infrastructure and workforce development, cultivating extensive engagement with the sector, building credibility, strengthening governance, and ensuring the FHRI Fund remains responsive to stakeholder needs.

The FHRI Fund is primed to take the next step, sharpening its focus on areas where WA has unique strengths and needs – such as improving Aboriginal health outcomes and delivering health care innovations for remote communities.

At the same time, there needs to be a strong drive to accelerate the translation of research into practice and the commercialisation of innovative solutions.

This strategy reflects a confident and deliberate narrowing of focus. It introduces a clearer and more structured approach to how the sector collaborates, how ideas are progressed, and how long-term capability is built to ensure enduring success.

It sets out not only what the FHRI Fund will do, but how it will deliver, with clearer expectations, stronger alignment, and greater transparency.

Most importantly, this strategy creates the conditions for real world impact: more effective solutions for local communities, stronger economic contribution through health innovation, and a reputation for excellence that extends well beyond the borders of WA.

Hon Stephen Dawson MLC

Minister for Medical Research



Message from the Chair

Delivering real impact and building capacity

The Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund was created in 2020 by re-purposing the WA Future Fund and has been a game-changer for the health and medical research and innovation community. Since then, the FHRI Fund has injected more than \$200 million to hundreds of projects – building confidence and achievement within the sector.

It's time to reflect, refocus, and reset by creating new strategies that catapult us to new heights.

With a sustainable funding base and ongoing government support, the state can confidently move toward a world-class research and innovation ecosystem.

Elevating our strategy will see WA discoveries transform into new treatments, technologies and companies' advancement – delivering benefits to the WA community and adding value to the WA economy.

The focus of the FHRI Fund is to build enduring pathways to attract and retain top scientific talent in WA creating a pipeline of expertise for the future. A talented workforce, innovation and collaboration will deliver better health outcomes, stronger impact, and long-term value for WA.

The FHRI Fund's Advisory Council is dedicated to ensuring impact and benefit for the community. I'd like to thank members for their valuable time, expertise and guidance to ensure our powerful priorities are managed with discipline and transparency – while remaining agile enough to pivot decisively when needed.

The FHRI Fund is committed to fuelling the sector's ambition and anchoring research and innovation firmly here in WA.

Ms Rebecca Tomkinson

Chair, Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Advisory Council



The Act

The FHIR Fund enabling legislation, *Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012* (the Act), was enacted in 2020.

The object of the Act is to provide a secure source of funding to support qualifying activities that contribute to one or more of the following:

- Improving the financial sustainability of Western Australia's health system
- Improving the health and wellbeing of Western Australians
- Improving Western Australia's economic prosperity.
- Advancing Western Australia to being, or maintaining Western Australia's position as, a national or international leader in any qualifying activities.

Stakeholder engagement

 14+	 7	 40+	 1	 274
formal interviews and several informed discussions. 20 key stakeholders involved, including the Minister for Medical Research.	strategic workshops conducted to gain key stakeholder insights and input.	stakeholders engaged across workshops and interviews.	stakeholder forum with more than 60 attendees, who provided additional insight to inform and test strategic themes.	stakeholder submissions received electronically provided insight to current strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Context

The Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund is entering a new era of clarity and purpose. Established in 2020, after re-purposing the WA Future Fund, the FHRI Fund was created to support health and medical research, and innovation across Western Australia (WA).

In its first 4 years, the FHRI Fund awarded over \$200 million to hundreds of research and innovation projects across WA, laying a strong foundation for a more focused and impactful future. The FHRI Fund Strategy 2025–30 marks a deliberate shift from foundational program-building to a phase of intentional impact. It reflects a maturing vision – one that moves beyond simply being a source of funding, toward becoming a catalyst for systemic transformation.

Grounded in the principle of 'By WA, for WA,' the strategy emphasises that WA's unique geography, population, and culture offer distinctive opportunities to lead in health and medical research, and innovation. This next chapter is designed to guide not only government investment decisions but also to provide clarity and direction for researchers, clinicians, innovators, investors, and our community.

It calls for a collective focus on areas where WA can lead with a uniquely Western Australian voice. These include Aboriginal health research, remote and rural health service innovation, diagnostics and precision medicine, and emerging strengths in biotech and digital health. The strategy concentrates on areas where WA can offer something truly valuable – both to its own community and to the world.

Recipients of FHRI Fund support are expected to contribute to the broader research ecosystem. This includes strengthening shared infrastructure such as the PeopleWA linked data platform, supporting the development of a proposed Health Innovation Hub, expanding access to biospecimens through a revitalised WA Biobank, and participating in system-wide efforts to improve research translation and impact.

These investments are intended to build long-term capability and create pathways that future generations of researchers, clinicians, and entrepreneurs can use to deliver even greater health and economic benefits.

A key theme is collaboration. Real progress will not be achieved in isolation. The strategy promotes a mindset shift toward stronger partnerships and co-investment, encouraging collaboration across government, industry, academia, health services, and communities.

Initiatives that demonstrate strong teamwork, leverage external investment, and deliver tangible benefits for WA will be prioritised.

It also introduces a more structured and transparent approach to funding, with regular grant cycles and clearer expectations. Success will be measured not only by traditional academic metrics such as publications and grants won, but also by the pathways built, partnerships formed, and the cumulative uplift in WA's research system performance and reputation. Importantly, initiatives must show how they will translate knowledge into real-world outcomes – whether through improved healthcare delivery, system efficiencies, economic opportunity, or broader societal wellbeing.

Ultimately, the FHRI Fund Strategy 2025–30 is about securing long-term value for Western Australians. It invites all participants – government, researchers, health services, industry, and the community—to help build a health and medical research sector that is sustainable, globally connected, and proudly driven by WA. With focus, ambition, and collaboration, WA is poised to deliver health, economic, and social benefits that will resonate for generations to come.

Strategy on a page

Our purpose

Fire up life-changing health breakthroughs for Western Australia

Our vision

By 2035, triple the impact of health research and innovation with a uniquely Western Australian focus

Strategic goals

Sustainable health system

WA health expenses per capita

Healthier Western Australians

Health adjusted life expectancy

Prosperity of Western Australia

Economic contribution of health and medical research and innovation

Make WA famous for health and medical research and innovation

Global top 10 health researchers and innovators

Strategic themes and priorities

Connect and collaborate



- Empower pathways and collaboration
- Inspire impact through an aligned focus
- Be bold and predictable

Accelerate and translate



- Underwrite innovation
- Activate the innovation community
- Build investment partnership

Foundational confidence



- Retain early to mid-career researchers
- Attract and retain world-class talent
- Make WA competitive

Guiding principles

Impact driven research and innovation

Fair and inclusive access

Excellence with accountability

Power in partnership

Future ready investment

Our purpose

Fire up life-changing health breakthroughs for Western Australia.

Fire-up	speaks to the role of the FHRI Fund as a provider of energy to the sector. The FHRI Fund is the fuel and the sector is the engine. 'Firing-up the crowd' indicates partnerships will get more milage for the funding dollar, coupled with a memorable and engaging link to the FHRI Fund's most common name, 'Firey' Fund.
Life-changing health breakthroughs	is the aspirational outline of the intended action that funding creates by providing outcomes, drawing accolades and seeing impact by turning translation in to impact.
For Western Australia	aligns to the broad framing of the object of the Act, allowing benefits to health, sustainability, prosperity and/or global standing.

Our vision

By 2035, triple the impact of health research and innovation with a uniquely Western Australian focus

By 2035, triple the impact	is ambitious but achievable. Tripling performance by 2035 would stand as clear, tangible proof that WA is delivering on its bold vision.
Of health research and innovation	ensures the health research and innovation sector is explicitly acknowledged and respected in the statement.
With a uniquely Western Australian focus	'Uniquely Western Australian' allows the focus to be on Western Australian areas of unmet need, competitive and comparative advantage, exemplar institutions, and societal environmental difference. 'Focus' tightens expectation to work together to benefit WA.

Strategic goals

Strategic goals define the outcomes the FHRI Fund is working towards. The FHRI Fund alone is not responsible for their delivery. The strategic goals anchor the strategy to the *Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012* (the Act) and ensure focus remains directly aligned to the reason the FHRI Fund exists.

The object of the Act is to provide a secure source of funding to support qualifying activities that contribute (directly or indirectly) to one or more of the following:

Improving the financial sustainability of WA's health system

Sustainable health system



WA health expenses per capita

Ensure that our health services remain high-quality, accessible and affordable – both now and into the future. As demand grows due to an ageing population and rising rates of chronic disease, we must find smarter, more sustainable ways to deliver care.

By focusing on prevention, smarter use of resources, and innovation, this goal aims to protect and future-proof our health system so it can meet the needs of all Western Australians for generations to come.

Improving the health and wellbeing of Western Australians

Healthier Western Australians



Health adjusted life expectancy

Healthier Western Australians means ensuring people not only live longer but healthier lives, free from preventable illness and avoidable suffering.

By using these measures, we can monitor real progress and focus on what matters most – better health outcomes and fairer access to care for everyone in our state.

Improving WA's economic prosperity

Prosperity of Western Australia



Economic contribution of health and medical research and innovation

Recognise the opportunity for the health and medical research and innovation sector to become a major contributor to the state's future prosperity. By investing in health research, innovation, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing, WA can create high-quality jobs, attract global investment and develop new industries beyond mining and resources.

The goal supports not only better health outcomes but also a stronger, more resilient economy for WA's future.

Advancing WA to being or maintaining its position as a national or international leader in any qualifying activities

Make Western Australia famous for health and medical research and innovation



Global top 10 health researchers and innovators

Build WA's reputation as a world-class hub for research, innovation and medical discovery. A strong global profile helps attract top talent, secure investment and encourage collaboration with leading institutions, companies and manufacturers. It also inspires confidence in early to mid-career researchers to stay and thrive here.

By raising our profile, we strengthen the entire ecosystem and help position WA as a recognised leader on the world stage.

Guiding principles

Guiding principles shape how the FHRI Fund makes decisions, sets priorities, and evaluates success. They reflect values of impact, fairness, excellence, partnership, and future readiness. They ensure that all funded activities align with the FHRI Fund's broader ambition to drive measurable improvements in health, economy, and community while building a more connected, capable, and resilient health system for WA.

Impact driven research and innovation		Prioritise funding to research and innovation that delivers measurable health, economic, and societal benefits for WA.
Fair and inclusive access		Ensure all communities across WA, in particular Aboriginal people, have access and equitable opportunities to participate in the FHRI Fund and benefit from health breakthroughs.
Excellence with accountability		Support high-quality initiatives through open, independent review, driving learning, transparent evaluation, and firm principled decisions.
Power in partnership		Foster deep collaboration spanning sectors and borders with the community, researchers, innovators, the health system, industries and government to unlock opportunities.
Future ready		Support bold, long-term change by building talent, infrastructure, and culture that embraces risk, learns from failure, and strengthens WA.



Strategic themes

Connect and collaborate

Be bold and predictable



Bold ambition needs clear direction. By setting powerful priorities and managing them with discipline and transparency, the FHRI Fund drives faster action, stronger partnerships, and lasting impact, putting WA at the forefront of global health innovation.

Accelerate and translate

Strengthen pipelines



Endeavour to build a thriving innovation pipeline through early support of high-potential innovation. Lift discipline and capability through partnerships with private investors and ultimately accelerate the translation of ideas into practical real-world application.

Foundational confidence

Capacity to underpin long-term success



Support the people, systems, and infrastructure that underpin WA's health and medical research and innovation sector, ensuring it can attract top talent, win national grants, and deliver sustainable growth.

Connect and collaborate

Bring WA's health sector together around one bold, uniquely Western Australian challenge each year, through the Spotlight Program, driving lasting solutions with deep, multi-year investment, cross-sector collaboration, and strong community engagement.

Priorities



Empower pathways and collaboration

Long-term change comes from building shared solutions across disciplines, sectors, and services. This priority supports structures and relationships that extend well beyond the initial spotlight area.

Inspire impact through an aligned focus

Concentrating effort on a single, uniquely Western Australian health challenge each year creates clarity and energy across the system. This focused approach is designed to deliver visible outcomes and elevate WA's national and global profile.

Be bold and predictable

By committing to ambitious, system-wide challenges and publishing them in advance, the FHRI Fund gives partners time to align, prepare, and act with confidence. Predictability builds momentum and invites meaningful co-investment.





Accelerate and translate

Boost commercialisation in WA by backing bold health innovations through competitive, investor-led programs, turning ideas into real-world impact, attracting co-investment, and growing WA's health and medical research and innovation ecosystem.

Priorities



Underwrite innovation

Support high-potential, early-stage health innovations that carry commercial and translational promise. Funding will be structured to absorb early risk and provide clear stage-gated progression toward impact.

Activate the innovation community

Engage WA's researchers, entrepreneurs, and startups through competitive programs that promote bold thinking and real-world application. These initiatives will build momentum, visibility, and a stronger culture of innovation.

Build investment partnerships

Form long-term partnerships with investors who bring both capital and commercial capability with a shared commitment to WA-led ventures. These relationships will amplify FHRI Fund investments and accelerate the path to market.

Foundational confidence

Supporting the workforce, systems and infrastructure that underpin WA's health and medical research and innovation sector, ensuring it can attract top talent, be competitive for national grants, and deliver sustainable growth.

Priorities



Retain early to mid-career researchers

Provide targeted support to secure the future of WA's health and medical research and innovation workforce at a critical career stage. Fellowships, near-miss grants, and career pathways will help reduce attrition and keep top talent engaged.

Attract and retain world-class talent

Attract and retain global research leaders to WA with competitive programs and conditions. This includes offering strong infrastructure, career incentives, and opportunities to lead impactful work.

Make WA competitive

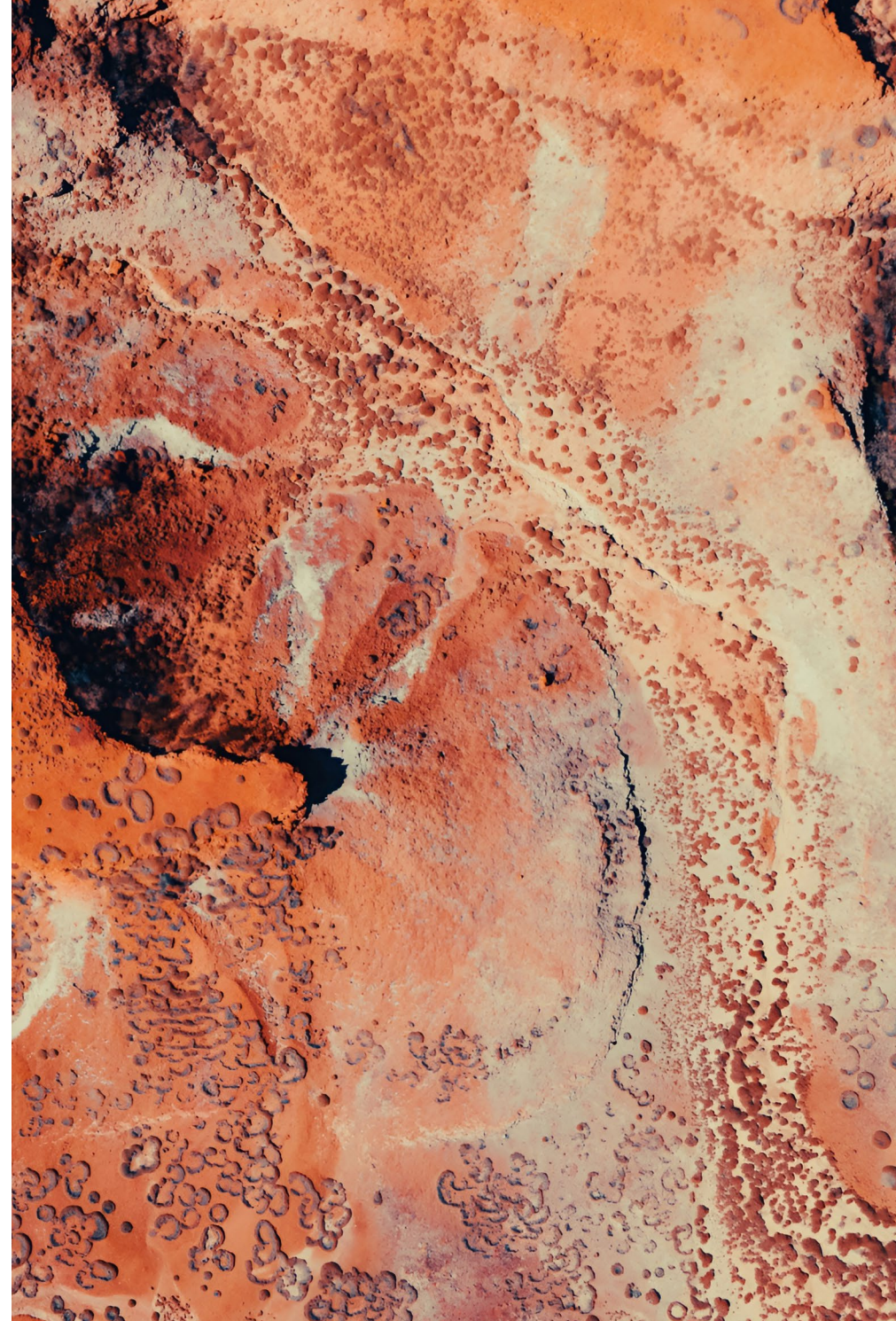
Deliver funding and ecosystem support that improves WA's success in national and global funding rounds. Investments will focus on closing capability gaps, supporting funding navigation, encouraging collaboration, and rewarding open science.

Measure and monitor

Accountability and transparency are crucial for the FHRI Fund.

While the Minister for Medical Research oversees the activities of the FHRI Fund with guidance from the appointed Advisory Council, the implementation of a measurement framework that regularly assesses the performance of all aspects of the FHRI Fund strategy is vital to ensuring ongoing success and achievement of the object of the FHRI Fund Act.

The Advisory Council, supported by the Department of Health has defined a measurement framework to measure and monitor the vision, strategic goals, themes and priorities on a regular basis, with an annual report showing progress against each component published online.



Investment plan

The FHRI Fund Strategy 2025-30 outlines a bold, long-term commitment to strengthen WA's health and medical research and innovation ecosystem. To accompany the strategy, an investment plan will be published annually which matches the available forecast investment income generated by the sovereign wealth fund to planned Programs and Initiatives of the FHRI Fund.

This annual investment plan will be published online to provide certainty and predictability to the health and medical research and innovation ecosystem as well as encouraging co-investment with other partners. Backed by a robust measurement and monitoring plan, the annual investment plan will ensure the FHRI Fund achieves its purpose to *fire up life-changing health breakthroughs for Western Australia*.





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