



Research and translation

Context

- Research and its translation into practice are vital to promoting a sustainable health system. Research contributes to system sustainability when the knowledge gained begins to influence decision making and it leads to reform in the way services are delivered.
- In the *Sustainable Health Review Interim Report*⁽¹⁾, the Panel noted that Western Australia (WA) is home to outstanding medical researchers, however, the State struggles to attract external research funding.
- In the Sustainable Health Review (SHR) Staff Engagement Survey, 46 per cent of respondents indicated that harnessing and supporting health and medical research collaboration and innovation will likely lead to a sustainable health system, whilst 32 per cent stated that it definitely will lead to a sustainable health system.
- The current WA Government has attached a high priority to innovation and research, and a number of important initiatives are now being progressed. The Government has committed to a \$1.1 billion Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) fund, with a focus on research relating to cancers, child health and other diseases in which WA has an international standing. The FHRI has the potential to provide long-term secure source of funding for WA researchers to underpin the development of a culture of innovation and research.
- Following an election commitment, the Government is now developing three innovation hubs which will provide a strong foundation for the future of health and medical innovation research in WA:
 - The WA Centre for Health Innovation Hub: provides infrastructure and services to support emerging innovative enterprises, bridges the gap between idea and enterprise, and helps existing businesses identify commercialisation opportunities.
 - The WA Centre for Health Innovation at Royal Perth Hospital: will provide accommodation and services to start-ups and established collaborative medical innovation research organisations.
 - The WA Data Science Innovation Hub: will facilitate collaboration between start-ups, businesses, universities and the State Government.
- Translation frameworks have not been determined for the WA health system. Their development, specific to each healthcare setting in each of the Health Service Provider, would provide defined pathways for researchers and improve the rate and effectiveness of research translation.
- The Panel heard that health system sustainability should be seen as a field for research in itself, and there should be an enduring sustainability research and development function.
- Consistent with Staff Engagement Survey findings, the need for effort in research and translation featured in submissions and discussion at forums. The Panel heard of the role

research plays in achieving better patient health outcomes and more efficient service delivery, and also the positive economic gains arising from research. For example, one submission noted:

- ‘The value of Australia’s continued investment in health and medical research lies in better health outcomes for Australians, a safer, higher quality, and more efficient health system, and a stronger Australian economy. These benefits are realised when the results of this research are implemented as new therapeutics and devices, but also as new evidence-based policies, procedures and work practices’.
- Some of the key themes from submissions and public forums in relation to WA’s health system research arrangements included coordination, governance, funding and the workforce. For example, the need for a strategy or framework governing research and translation, and the importance of continued funding to support this including the provision of incentives was apparent. In addition it was raised that WA needs to promote a culture that supports research and translation. From a data perspective it was raised that there is a need to improve data collection, linkage, sharing and access in order to translate research into practice.

Exemplars considered

A range of exemplars were identified throughout the course of the SHR in public submissions, Clinical and Consumer and Carer Reference Groups, Working Groups and in public forums. The following exemplars are indicative, however are not an exhaustive list of the exemplars considered throughout the SHR.

NSW Office for Health and Medical Research

- The Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR) is an office within the Chief Health Officer function in the NSW Ministry of Health. The OHMR was set up to support and coordinate the implementation of the *10 Year Health and Medical Research Plan*. Officials within the OHMR are responsible for the payment and monitoring of grant funding, using external reviewers to assess individual applications for funding. Decision making rests with the Ministry of Health. The OHMR also provides medical devices commercialisation training and support to researchers and innovators in partnership with Cicada Innovations, a private business dedicated to supporting technological innovations.
- The objectives of *Victoria’s Health and Medical Research Strategy 2016-2020* are to:
 - ‘embed health and medical research into the Victorian health system
 - accelerate the translation of research into clinical practice
 - advance Victoria’s position as the lead national jurisdiction for health and medical research
 - build economic growth’.⁽²⁾

These objectives will be achieved by:

- ‘integrating research, education and healthcare
- developing an advanced convergence science capability
- enhancing Victoria’s clinical trials system
- working towards optimising big data and informatics
- developing the next generation workforce
- Stimulate engagement between researchers and industry to facilitate innovation’.⁽²⁾

National Institute for Health Research, United Kingdom

- The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) provides £1 billion of funding per year with the aim to:
 - ‘transform research in the National Health Service
 - increase the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public
 - drive faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits
 - develop and support people who conduct and contribute to applied health research
 - attract investment by the life sciences industry through world-class facilities for health research’.⁽³⁾
- It identifies unmet clinical need on a rolling basis and aligns investment in both health and medical research and translation to address this need. It operates at the direction of the Department of Health, but has advisory and strategic boards that provide expert guidance and supports NIHR in developing its strategic priorities.
- The NIHR use a combination of key themes and principles to inform the assessment of ‘priority areas’ or ‘areas of interest’ to be funded. The *National Institute for Health Research at 10 years: An Impact Synthesis Report*, 2016, provided strong evidence of substantial impact across patient benefits, the delivery of health and social care, public policy, economic growth and the generation of knowledge.⁽⁴⁾



This background paper was developed by the Sustainable Health Review secretariat to inform the work of the Sustainable Health Review Panel. Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy, currency and reliability of the content. The background paper is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the subject nor does it represent the position of the Western Australian Government. Changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact the quality of the information. Background papers are published in full at: www.health.wa.gov.au/sustainablehealthreview.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2019

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.

health.wa.gov.au

References

1. Department of Health WA. Sustainable Health Review Interim Report. Perth, Western Australia; 2018.
2. Victoria State Government. Victoria's Health and Medical Research Strategy 2016-2020. In: Health Department, editor. Port Melbourne, Victoria 2016.
3. Health e-Research Centre. Our funders: Health e-Research Centre; n.d. [Available from: <https://www.herc.ac.uk/about-us/our-funders-2/>].
4. Molly Morgan Jones AK, Catriona Manville, Ioana Ghiga, Calum MacLure, Emma Harte, Anton Spisak, Anne Kirtley, Jonathan Grant. The National Institute for Health Research at 10 years: an impact synthesis 2016 [Available from: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1574/RAND_RR1574.pdf].