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Queensland Health

HEALTHQ32

Research Strategy 2032



**Queensland
Government**



HEALTHQ32
Research Strategy 2032

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the following program may contain images of deceased persons.

"Making Tracks" Artwork produced for Queensland Health by Gilimbaa.

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Queensland Health respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional and Cultural Custodians of the lands on which we live and work to deliver healthcare to all Queenslanders and recognises the continuation of First Nations peoples' cultures and connection to the lands, waters and communities across Queensland.



Driving the success of our new Queensland Health vision



There is no doubt that people's quality of life depends, to a large degree, on their health and wellbeing and that of their families. Queensland Health, as the provider of public healthcare throughout the State, plays a vital role in delivering much-needed healthcare to a growing and ageing population, and in contributing positively to Queenslanders' quality of life.

We are pleased to release the new Queensland Health *Research Strategy 2032* to guide Queensland Health in maximising the benefits of research and innovation in our health system over the decade ahead, ensuring that we value and empower our workforce to provide world-class healthcare to Queenslanders.

All Queenslanders benefit from the research and innovation that contribute significantly to keeping our health system dynamic and responsive, to our health priorities and burden of disease, addresses health inequities of our vulnerable populations. Following wide stakeholder input on key issues and actions needed, Queensland Health has developed a new *Research Strategy* to ensure that the potential of research and innovation is fully recognised and realised.

The Queensland Health *Research Strategy* highlights the integration of research with clinical care so that patients, consumers and staff can lead, contribute to, and benefit from, research, wherever they live, in culturally appropriate and safe ways.

Queensland Health has developed the *Research Strategy* with careful consideration of the many people working across our health system in current and emerging fields of research and patient care.

All staff should be encouraged to engage in research and recognised for their contribution to our research agenda which is designed to improve the delivery of healthcare and patient outcomes. Queensland Health researchers include scientists, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, clinical support staff and administration officers.

We have also included in our *Research Strategy* a more prominent need to involve the community in prioritising and co-designing research for the provision of the world-class health system, for which we all strive.

This Queensland Health *Research Strategy* tackles current and emerging needs and provides the framework for actioning the work required to maintain a future focus on building the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

We share this *Research Strategy* for the decade ahead and look forward to its contribution to the success of our new Queensland Health vision: *To be a dynamic and responsive health system where our workforce is valued and empowered to provide world-class healthcare to all Queenslanders.*

The Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women

Recognising the role of research in Queensland Health



Under the overarching *HEALTHQ32* suite of new strategies designed to set the direction for a healthier system for healthier Queenslanders, Queensland Health has developed a new *Research Strategy*, which recognises the important role of research and innovation in a high-performing health system.

The Queensland Health *Research Strategy* sets a central goal of creating a vibrant Queensland Health ecosystem—over the decade ahead—that enables research and innovation to drive more effective and efficient healthcare delivery. This goal will be achieved by supporting the full research pipeline from fostering ideas into research excellence into translation for better healthcare.

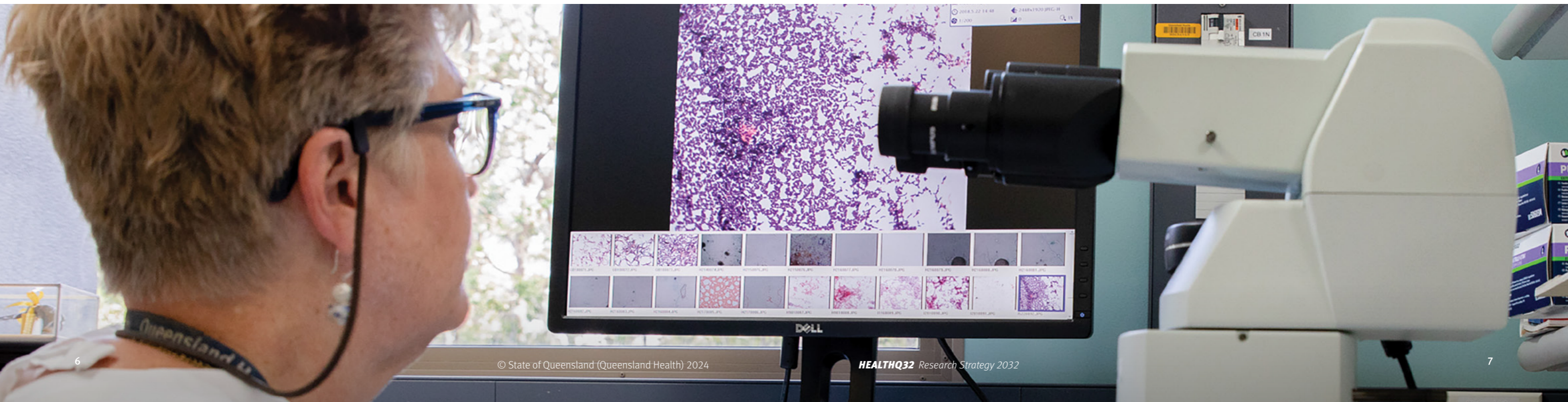
Extensive consultation, particularly with our staff and partners across the health sector, has provided insights that have shaped our ambitious 10-year strategy to guide the work ahead and deliver outcomes that matter most to patients and the community. Instrumental to the *Research Strategy's* success will be how we support our workforce, across all disciplines, to embrace research.

Queensland Health is fortunate to have world-class researchers working at the interface of research and clinical practice in our Hospital and Health Services and in other areas such as the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Department of Health.

Researchers are pivotal to our research outcomes and to strengthening the engagement between Queensland Health and our partners in research institutes, universities, industry and government. Fostering this engagement is essential for improving the impact of our research ecosystem towards 2032, and I am pleased to see this strategy's action plan includes initiatives to assist Queensland Health clinicians to undertake innovative and translatable research linked to their clinical practice.

The continued focus on enabling more Queenslanders to access clinical trials, which lead to better patient health outcomes, and to teletrials for access to new treatments closer to home, is essential. A range of new initiatives is included in the *Research Strategy* and the related action plan. A clear and stronger focus on innovation and translating research into practical benefits for Queensland patients will drive Queensland Health towards its 10-year vision of delivering world-class healthcare which is adaptable, innovative, efficient and effective.

Michael Walsh
Director-General, Queensland Health



HEALTHQ32: A vision for Queensland’s health system

In collaboration with our partners and consumers, the vision for Queensland’s health system over the next 10 years is: *To be a dynamic and responsive health system where our workforce is valued and empowered to provide world-class healthcare to all Queenslanders.*

HEALTHQ32 sets the future direction for the health system and focuses on being adaptable and sustainable. The vision focuses on embedding innovative models of care and new technologies to deliver services more efficiently and ultimately improve patient outcomes. HEALTHQ32 outlines seven system priorities to focus the course of action over the next 10 years in achieving the vision and system outcomes.

The overarching HEALTHQ32 vision and the *Research Strategy 2032* and other system priority strategies will guide future directions for healthcare in Queensland. The *Research Strategy* sets an agenda to create a Queensland Health ecosystem—over the decade ahead—that enables research and innovation to drive more effective and efficient healthcare delivery. This will be achieved by supporting the full research pipeline from ‘ideas into research excellence into implementation’ and building a cohesive and dynamic ecosystem which leads to translational outcomes that positively impact Queenslanders.

To be successful, all partners across the system will need to work collaboratively over the next 10 years to bring the vision to life.



Research and innovation are at the heart of a world-class health system and drive the generation of new insights, discoveries and evidence which underpins and delivers:

- better health outcomes through more effective healthcare prevention and interventions
- improved health system sustainability through more efficient healthcare design and delivery
- economic growth and job creation through turning discoveries into commercial opportunities.

Creating a world-class and sustainable research and innovation pipeline that delivers the aims of improved healthcare, clinician experience, patient experience and better outcomes, requires a shared vision and commitment between Queensland Health, academia, research institutes and industry. Success will be achieved by leveraging existing relationships and establishing new partnerships across Queensland’s entire research ecosystem. This proactive, outward-looking approach will help to catalyse and synthesise new ideas, move them through the research pipeline and translate them into products, technologies and new models of care to improve the health outcomes for Queenslanders.

Partnering with Queensland Health’s active consumer networks is an important consideration and vital for ongoing research endeavours. Bringing the consumer voice in at the beginning of the process, to work with research teams to craft the important research questions, will be powerful in driving the research agenda.

Health is an industry that both benefits from, and is challenged by, new technology. For example, the rapid technological advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning will play a big role in the future delivery of healthcare and need to be embraced. To prepare for this requires a cross-pollination between clinicians and other health professionals, academics, data scientists and software engineers to trial, test and embed new technologies.

The *Research Strategy* builds on the preceding *Queensland Advancing Health Research 2026* strategy, leveraging the experience and insights gained in implementing its objectives and actions since 2017. Care has been taken to align the new *Research Strategy* with other key Queensland strategic documents, national and state policy objectives and legislative requirements such as [Closing the Gap](#) for First Nation Queenslanders, the [Advance Queensland initiative](#), which has laid the foundation for innovation to happen in Queensland, and has supported the creation, scale-up and international success of many Queensland researchers, innovators and businesses, [Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–32](#), [Rural and Remote Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022–27](#) and the Queensland Hospital and Health Services’ research strategies already available.

Development of the *Research Strategy* has been informed by broad-based consultation with the Queensland research and innovation community, including clinicians and other health professionals, consumers, and industry and academic partners.

By 2032, HEALTHQ32 aims to:

- increase quality, safety and equity
- maximise the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders
- be more innovative, connected and sustainable
- create a workforce that is agile, skilled and valued.



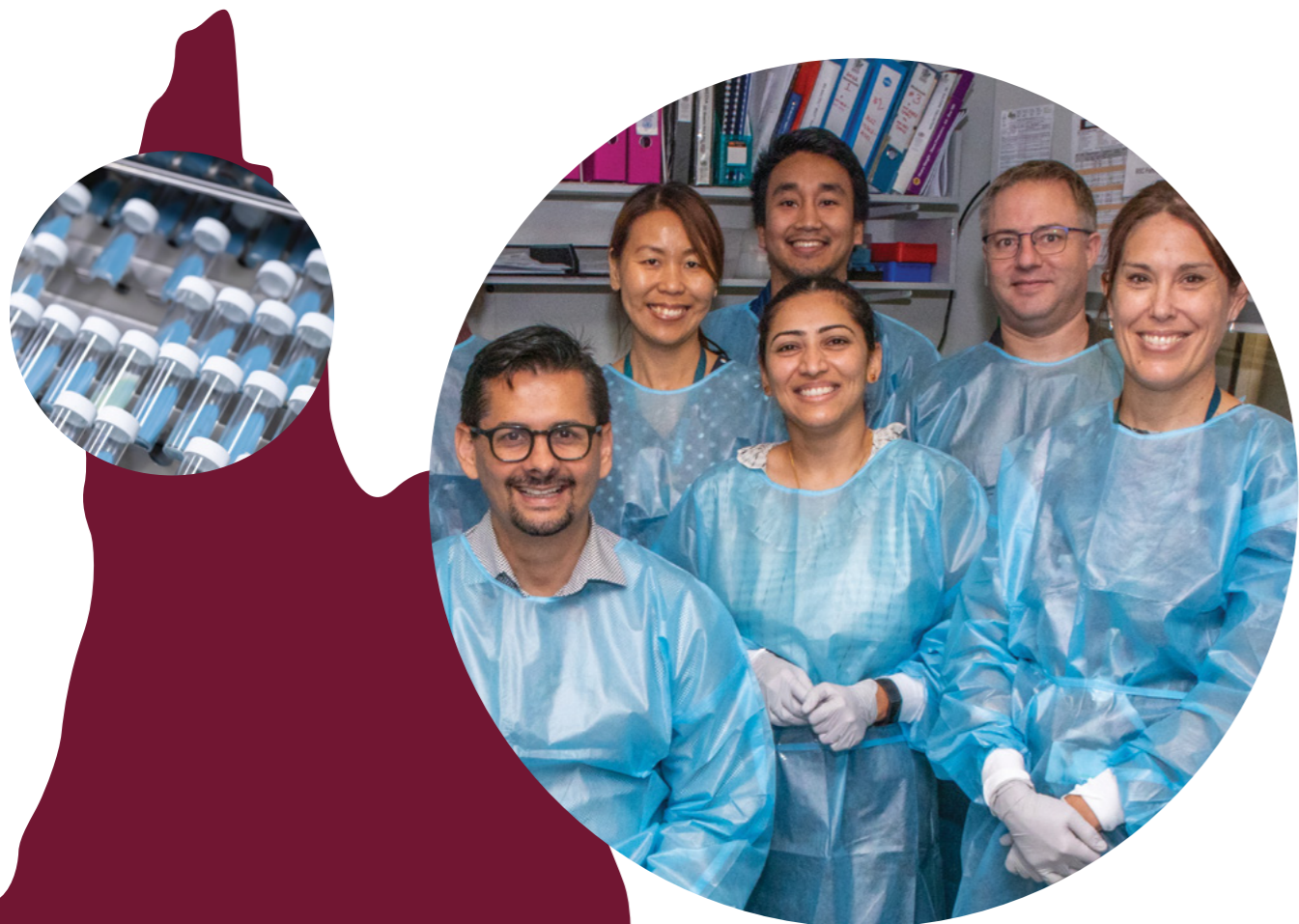
Reform

Delivering connected equitable, sustainable, and integrated healthcare



Research snapshot

The *Research Strategy* recognises and builds upon previous investment by Queensland Health in research and innovation and the achievements of Queensland Health clinicians, other health professionals and our partners in growing a research and innovation culture that changes practices and ultimately improves health outcomes for Queenslanders.



Each year Queensland Health is involved in

1000+

research projects

and hundreds of new clinical trials are offered to patients across all the therapeutic areas.



Queensland Advancing Clinical Research Fellowships Program: Supporting research careers

This program supports Queensland Health clinician researchers to undertake research linked to their practice. The program recognises that clinician researchers (e.g. doctors, nurses and allied health practitioners) are uniquely placed to identify clinical issues which can benefit from further research, lead patient-focused research discoveries and facilitate improved patient care through research translation. To date, the program has supported 42 clinician researchers and provided some \$10.6 million in additional research funding.



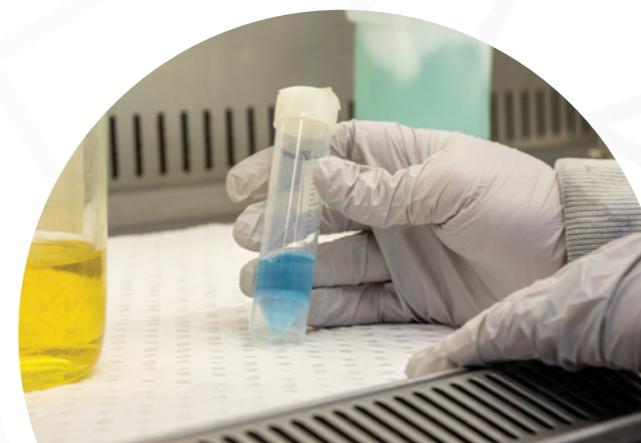
The Australian Teletrial Program: Access to clinical trials closer to home

With more than \$75 million in funding from the national Medical Research Future Fund, the Office of Research and Innovation manages the Australian Teletrial Program, which is designed to bring clinical trials closer to home for patients in rural and remote parts of Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The program includes access to logistics and equipment funds for eligible sites, and education and training opportunities at no cost for government and private health organisations.



Queensland Health Research and Development (R&D) Expenditure

Queensland Health invests more than \$125 million annually (*Queensland Government Research and Development Expenditure Report 2020–21*) for R&D projects carried out in-house and in collaboration with other organisations. (This is regularly the highest R&D expenditure of all Queensland Government departments.) The Queensland Health investment funds project infrastructure and other costs such as salaries, and continues to be central in developing excellence in research and innovation in our state.



Research challenges

Queensland Health researchers face complex challenges and exciting opportunities in the decade ahead. These challenges and opportunities require careful consideration in developing strategies which respond effectively and set the pathway for change that is presented within this strategy. An overview follows of some of the most pressing challenges.



Research career pathways

To grow and retain its clinical research workforce, Queensland Health has to expand its research career pathways for clinicians and provide dedicated time for them to do their research.



Complex organisational processes

Research management processes across the ecosystem need to be consistent and streamlined to support the delivery of ethically-approved research.



Broad research and innovation spectrum

The potential of research is vast, but resources are inevitably limited in terms of the quantum of funding and continuity. Significant time investing in preparing and submitting grant proposals under very competitive processes can negatively impact the trajectory of research.



Balancing data protection and use

The volume and accessibility of health data are growing rapidly, alongside the power to analyse data through artificial intelligence (AI) and other means. The need to balance data protection and data use presents challenges in undertaking valuable data-driven research.



Geographical spread

Whilst Queensland has a rich and expansive geographic footprint, this presents challenges in developing research capacity and capability in regional, rural and remote areas.



Connecting the system

Research occurs at multiple points across the Queensland Health system (e.g. Hospital and Health Services, Forensic and Scientific Services, Pathology Queensland and the Queensland Ambulance Service) and can often be disconnected.

Research opportunities

The *Research Strategy* highlights the many opportunities to advance research and development across Queensland Health. The opportunities below have been identified and prioritised to drive the *Research Strategy* over the next 10 years.



New healthcare options

Research studies, particularly clinical trials, give patients access to an expanded range of new treatment options and are the foundation of future, more effective prevention and healthcare delivery.



Improved equity to research involvement for Queenslanders

All Queenslanders should be able to benefit from involvement in research and innovation activities, no matter where they live. The capacity for equity (e.g. through teletrials) is available by tailoring research to local and specific needs, including for First Nations communities and regional, rural and remote communities.



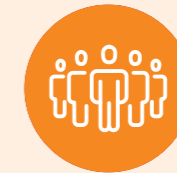
Better targeted healthcare

There is opportunity for a more efficient precision healthcare approach based on tailoring prevention and intervention to the individual. Research, in particular implementation science, will help to boost understanding of how new technologies, such as genomics, can be integrated into the health system.



Capacity to meet emerging challenges

Research and innovation equip us to respond to new and emerging healthcare challenges as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the ensuing development of new public health approaches, vaccines and treatments.



Knowledge job creation

Health and biomedical research discoveries have proven commercial potential. Translating these discoveries into commercial opportunities will not only improve translation into practice at scale but also fuel economic growth and the creation of highly skilled, knowledge-based jobs.



Research Strategy 2032

The *Research Strategy* builds on Queensland Health’s research strengths, responds to the complex challenges of undertaking research in the health system and above all, is driven by the exciting opportunities that research presents.

The *Research Strategy* is not limited to clinical research. Research undertaken in many important areas, such as public health, disease prevention, wellbeing, infrastructure, waste management and food services, is also needed in Queensland Health. The *Research Strategy* will also recognise, celebrate and promote Queensland Health researchers and their research — with researchers themselves being the most important element in building a stronger research ecosystem towards 2032.



Building on our strengths

There are several specific strengths in Queensland that can be leveraged to effectively deliver the *Research Strategy*.

Queensland Health’s reach

Queensland Health is one of Australia’s largest healthcare providers and as such, has the opportunity to involve a large number of Queensland patients in research and, most importantly, translate research into practice where it can have maximum impact.

Skilled and multidisciplinary Queensland Health workforce

Queensland Health is built on a large, diverse, talented and motivated clinical and support workforce. These highly-skilled professionals are well placed to identify key research questions and lead research in the health system. Attracting, training and retaining our skilled workforce are amongst the highest priorities of an effective health system. Furthermore, clinicians and other health professionals working in regional, rural and remote areas are keen to participate in research and create solutions which are tailored for their local populations. Fostering relationships between metropolitan and regional, rural and remote locations will be key to developing research capabilities across Queensland.

Strong research ecosystem

Queensland is home to leading Australian universities and research institutes, and a burgeoning health and medical industry. The health sector is bolstered by Queensland Health which plays a vital role in supporting research, including in public health and disease prevention. Queensland’s rich health ecosystem creates opportunities for innovative partnerships and collaborations, and benefits from knowledge-exchange between hospitals, universities, research institutes and industry.

Unique advantages

Queensland has unique advantages resulting from our vast state (covering tropical and sub-tropical regions, coral reefs, and semi-arid inland deserts), our decentralised population with a strong network of 16 Hospital and Health Services, and our previous investments in research. Key investments include research into tropical diseases and medicine, a unified public pathology service, and an integrated electronic Medical Record (ieMR). For example, with approximately 70 per cent of the population included under the ieMR system, Queensland is in a unique position, and ieMR offers a valuable asset upon which Queensland researchers can draw to drive advances in research and innovation.



Outcomes

A series of objectives and strategies have been defined under each of the three focus areas to guide and inform the development of specific actions, over the decade ahead. As we work to achieve our objectives and implement the strategies and actions, Queensland Health will continue to nurture strong relationships with our key partners. In doing so, Queensland will be an exemplar of how, by building a cohesive and dynamic ecosystem, translational outcomes will be achieved which positively impact patients.

Research Strategy focus areas

Supporting the full research pipeline from ideas to implementation



Focus area 1
Foster innovative ideas



Focus area 2
Turn ideas into research excellence



Focus area 3
Translate research into better healthcare

Key outcomes

Queensland Health's environment and culture promote innovative thinking and value research

Queensland Health's processes and systems encourage and enable high quality research in the health system

Queensland Health collaborates with diverse stakeholders to drive research discoveries quickly and safely into practice





Focus area 1: Foster innovative ideas

Research starts with an innovative idea to be tested and explored. Queensland Health and our clinicians are well placed to identify research questions to improve healthcare and health outcomes. Queensland Health will ensure that the organisational, cultural and system settings are in place to fully value research and enable research ideas to flourish.

Focus area 1 is about creating a foundational environment, and emphasises the importance in future research of informed patient participation, coupled with highly-trained researchers and support staff, as well as the importance of tracking investment and outcomes systematically.

Supporting our staff with time, training and career options to combine research with their practice is essential for achieving the *HEALTHQ32* vision. The development of a structured research career pathway, in partnership with stakeholders, will not only provide certainty and security but will also support the retention of a valuable workforce as well as attracting new and emerging clinical researchers. Furthermore, Queensland Health will celebrate the contribution which research makes to improving the health system, and will support and encourage clinicians and other health professionals to combine research with their clinical practice throughout their careers.

Sufficient and reliable investment in research is needed to power research and innovation and realise efficiency benefits over the long term. Gaining an increased share of national funding for health and medical research, through the Medical Research Future Fund and other programs, is an important goal.

Our objectives

- Research is promoted as a valuable part of the health system with research achievements acknowledged, celebrated and disseminated.
- Research and innovation are supported by mixed streams of funding from a range of external sources of investment.
- Pipelines for career opportunities are available to researchers in Queensland Health.
- Patients, consumers and the broader community influence research priorities and are empowered to participate in research.

Strategies

1. Queensland Health will recognise research excellence.
2. A sustainable funding environment for research will operate in Queensland.
3. Research and innovation activities will be monitored and incentivised through system-wide financial and performance indicators.
4. Career opportunities will be available to support and encourage clinicians and others to undertake research in the health system.
5. Consumers and communities will partner in research.



Focus area 2: Turn ideas into research excellence

Innovative ideas must be converted into action through well-designed and rigorous research studies. Focus area 2 is about ensuring that the practical support skills, infrastructure and optimised processes are in place to encourage researchers to take the next step in turning ideas into research excellence in the health system.

Focus area 2 highlights the need to form, and learn from, strong multidisciplinary collaborations (both within and outside Queensland), to equip researchers with the right training and advice to design and undertake research and, crucially, to make the key stages in running a research study as easy and quick to navigate as possible.

Ensuring safe and ethical research conduct will always be expected. Removing the systemic constraints to improve research management processes so that they do not discourage or unnecessarily impede the conduct of research in the health system is needed. Also needed is the removal of barriers to regional, rural and remote clinicians undertaking research projects within the health system.

Building better connections across the system will lead to the clarification of priorities, research strengths and identified needs. Better alignment will drive collective research that is beneficial for Queensland and will move away from “silo” research activity and pockets of disconnected research.

Our objectives

- Partnerships with academia, industry and others provide high quality research informed by health needs.
- Approval processes are streamlined for researchers and patients and ensure studies are safe and ethical.
- Tailored education, training and advice upskills staff for designing and undertaking R&D in the health system.
- Health system infrastructure and technology absorb translational research seamlessly.

Strategies

1. Research collaborations and partnerships will be encouraged and supported.
2. Research operational and approval processes will be streamlined and consistent.
3. Research education and training opportunities will be developed and available for Queensland researchers.
4. The potential of health system data to power research and innovation while protecting privacy will be enabled.
5. Enabling platforms and infrastructure will be prioritised.



Focus area 3: Translate research into better healthcare

To achieve real impact, the discoveries, insights and evidence generated through research must change healthcare and reach patients. Focus area 3 is about effectively translating new knowledge into practice.

There are many forms and pathways of translation. Focus area 3 recognises the importance of expanding research participation to offer access to new treatments early, supporting clinicians and other health professionals to implement new evidence directly in healthcare settings and, where relevant, convert discoveries into commercial opportunities to expand their reach and release the economic potential of innovation. Focus area 3 also provides an opportunity to influence health policy when an intervention or invention that makes a meaningful impact in patient care can be endorsed by policy change. There are benefits in focusing our investment and support on fields that deliver the impact to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

In addition, building research capability in regional and remote areas will not only benefit local communities but will also better position Queensland for taking up new and emerging opportunities.

Many key research initiatives are already underway, such as enabling more Queenslanders access to clinical trials (which lead to better patient health outcomes) and teletrials (which also lead to better patient health outcomes which are closer to home), assisting Queensland Health clinicians to undertake innovative and translatable research linked to their practice, and providing a tailored education and training program to upskill researchers (e.g. translation, commercialisation and teletrials).

Our objectives

- Research outcomes are routinely scaled-up and adopted across the health system to improve frontline healthcare delivery.
- Queensland is an international clinical trials hub giving patients access to cutting-edge treatment options close to home.
- The wealth of discoveries is captured to realise health and economic potential.

Strategies

1. Research findings will be translated and implemented into practice.
2. Research fields and questions with greatest impact on health outcomes for Queensland are identified and updated regularly.
3. Opportunities to increase access and participation in research will expand.
4. Capacity and capability across Queensland Health will grow so research addresses local needs and specific challenges.
5. Intellectual Property will be comprehensively captured, protected and developed.

Implementation, monitoring and review

The *Research Strategy* provides a path for Queensland Health to build a transformed health research organisational ecosystem over the *Research Strategy*'s 10-year timeframe horizon.

Queensland Health will develop sequential action plans which outline the initiatives to be implemented in line with the objectives and strategies set out in this document.

The initial action plan will focus on short-term action over the 2023–25 period. Actions which require longer-term commitments and/or are contingent on outcomes in the first action plan will be carried forward into the subsequent action plan.

The following guiding principles will be critical to our work:

- **Partnership-driven** – Queensland Health will work closely with our valued stakeholders to achieve outcomes which will be enhanced through collaboration with partners from across the health, education, training, industry and other sectors.
- **Quality-focused** – Planning, delivery, review, reporting and improvement cycles will drive highly-valued work, with quality maintained via continuous improvement.
- **Accessible and available** – The initiatives will be freely and easily accessible with inclusion requirements and barriers to access minimised, and activities will consider the needs of targeted participants.
- **Coordinated and integrated** – Queensland Health will be committed to professional communication with stakeholders for shared learning and mutual benefits.

Queensland Health will continue to work with our valued stakeholders across the health, academic, industry, government and other sectors to achieve outcomes which will be enhanced through partnership and collaboration.

Robust governance mechanisms will support the *Research Strategy* and action plans. The Queensland Health Executive Leadership Team will oversee the implementation of actions.

Review and evaluation will demonstrate the progress and impact of the implementation of the *Research Strategy* and action plans.

To report on our success, we will capture data (qualitative and quantitative) across a range of indicators such as those below:

- Number of First Nations people and regional, rural and remote people participating as researchers and research participants in Queensland Health research studies.
- Number of Queensland Health researchers participating in education, training and industry placements.
- Assessment of the success of the education, training and industry placements (e.g. benefits, accessibility, expected and attained personal and institutional value).
- Value of Queensland Health R&D expenditure.
- Research ethics and governance approval timeframes.
- Number of clinical trials approved.
- Number of research studies ethically approved.
- Number of patents submitted by Queensland Health.
- Number of translational impact case studies.
- Number of Queensland Health Research Fellows.

Annual reporting on performance against agreed indicators, key milestones and required outcomes will be important for the continuous improvement and ongoing delivery of the *Research Strategy*. A cycle of 'review – evaluate – report – improve' will be maintained within the delivery of the *Research Strategy* and its related action plans to drive health and medical research work that is highly valued by Queenslanders.







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HEALTHQ32 A vision for Queensland's health system