

Roadmap for Strengthening Health Research and Translation in Queensland – summary

Why this Roadmap?

Queensland's health and medical research sector makes a positive difference to the health of Queenslanders every day

The translation of medical research changes lives through new discoveries and new treatments. There are many examples of world leading contributions by those working in Queensland. However, the full potential of the clinical and research system is not being realised. Our ambition is to reverse this trend and position Queensland's health and medical researchers as leaders.

The priorities and actions outlined in this document are designed to match this ambition and are timely considering recent government plans as Queensland enters a new and exciting phase of growth and opportunity. The Queensland Government's *Advance Queensland: Innovation for a Future Economy 2022–2032 Roadmap* sets the direction and priorities for Queensland to become a leading and sustainable world class innovation economy. Included in that document are plans to:



support Queensland universities and research institutes and the health system to leverage increased Australian Government funding opportunities such as new Cooperative Research Centres and through the Medical Research Future Fund; and



support Queensland hospital and health services and health and knowledge precincts to foster research into innovative products and services for translation into improved patient care and commercialisation opportunities including through clinical trials.

Under the leadership of Health Translation Queensland, Queensland's leading research institutes, universities, health service providers, and Queensland Health are working together to better understand what actions we need to take to ensure we can Advance Queensland. Specifically, we seek to:



continue to improve translating our world class health and medical research into opportunities that contribute to our future economy; and



identify opportunities that will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

Our objective for this Roadmap

The objective of this Roadmap is to engage decision makers, leaders and the health and medical research sector in working together on the actions required to build an innovative, sustainable and globally competitive health and medical research sector in Queensland.

Our approach



Compared with other states and territories, Queensland is not receiving its expected quantum of Commonwealth health and medical research funding.

Step 1 – Defining the problem

Understanding the barriers and opportunities to strengthening Queensland's Health and Medical Research funding position.
(HTQ Funding Analysis report)

Step 2 – Leveraging the network

Defining tangible actions that clinicians, educators, researchers, academics, policy makers and health consumers can collectively implement.
(Developing the Roadmap for Strengthening Health Research and Translation in Queensland)

Step 3 – Achieving a stronger health and medical research translation sector in Queensland

Securing commitment across the Queensland health and medical research sector to collaborate and act in the implementation of the Roadmap to achieve sustainable and expected Commonwealth funding for Queensland-based health and medical research.
(Implementing the Roadmap for Strengthening Health Research and Translation in Queensland)

Three key priorities for this Roadmap



1

Strengthen the ecosystem

Develop a dedicated Queensland Health and Medical Research 2032 Strategy, aligned with the *Advance Queensland: Innovation for a Future Economy 2022–2032 Roadmap*



2

Build workforce capability and capacity

Increase the number and diversity of active clinician researchers



3

Optimise funding

Broaden the scope and increase the probability of funding



About Health Translation Queensland (HTQ)



HTQ is a peak body that brings together many of Queensland's universities, research institutes, health and hospital services, CSIRO's Australian e-Health Research Centre and Queensland Health.

At HTQ, we provide a platform for greater integration and collaboration between clinicians, educators, researchers, academics, policy makers and health consumers.

HTQ vision

Improved population health outcomes through collaborative partnerships that translate scientific discovery and knowledge into practice.

HTQ mission

To enable the translation and integration of innovative health research with education, policy, clinical care, and consumer engagement.



1 Strengthen the ecosystem

1.1 Engaging all in the sector in a 'Team Queensland' approach

The problem to solve
 Queensland does not capitalise on existing capabilities or prioritise health and medical research opportunities in some areas including joint ventures, cross-institutional collaborations and networked precincts.

- 1.1a.** Use the HTQ partnership as a peak body to bring all shareholders together to design collaborative structures to support action
- 1.1b.** Share best practice by establishing a Queensland-wide, cross-institutional mentoring program for individuals and emerging institutions
- 1.1c.** Analyse the performance and research strategies of Queensland's healthcare and research institutes annually to identify and link areas of common interest
- 1.1d.** Establish and maintain databases of specialised equipment, skills and research projects to enable access and reduce duplication

1.2 Harnessing Queensland's competitive advantages

The problem to solve
 The strengths of Queensland's health system are not being leveraged.

- 1.2a.** Promote Queensland's health system strengths such as our state-wide pathology service, children's hospital and electronic medical records
- 1.2b.** Identify and address barriers such as slow ethics and governance approvals to help research projects and clinical trials to get started safely, but quickly
- 1.2c.** Embed informed brokers in the system to support linkages between researchers, clinicians and industry
- 1.2d.** Accelerate progress in areas such as data sharing and biobanks to create new Queensland assets

1.3 Investing in activities that support Queensland's medical research and translation competitiveness

The problem to solve
 Queensland's health and medical research systems are rich in knowledge and capability but there are gaps in infrastructure and incentives to share information across entities for collective benefit.

- 1.3a.** Work with Queensland Health and the Hospital and Health Services to increase their investment in research, including an allocation goal of 3% of budgets (as proposed by the McKeon Report) and a requirement to publish the annual quantum of research investment and results.
- 1.3b.** Identify and implement practical steps for a state-wide biobanking system which supports precision health and diverse research areas
- 1.3c.** Identify and action areas to support Queensland's clinical trials capability
- 1.3d.** Build on existing knowledge and health precincts to achieve their full potential individually and collectively
- 1.3e.** Explore establishing virtual institutes that would focus on specific diseases to address significant health challenges

2 Build workforce capability and capacity

2.1 Facilitating more research by clinicians and others in the health system

The problem to solve
 Our current health system does not have research embedded as a core activity within the overall service profile of hospital and health services.

While excellence in research exists within some hospital and health services, it often operates in a siloed environment.

- 2.1a.** Embed dedicated funding for translational research and innovation activity in hospital and health services through Service Level Agreements ensuring the inclusion of:
 - » protected time for clinician researchers; and
 - » connections with research centres to support applications for federal research funding
- 2.1b.** Work with consumers and clinicians to promote the upstream and downstream benefits of translational research
- 2.1c.** Improve translational research enabling functions including human research ethics and governance, digital capability, evaluation and impact, workforce and consumer and community involvement

2.2 Recognising and retaining talent and supporting them to flourish

The problem to solve
 Queensland lacks a systematic approach to support and retain talented researchers.

- 2.2a.** Implement a state-wide 'near miss' scheme to support researchers to improve unsuccessful NHMRC or MRFF funding applications for subsequent grant rounds
- 2.2b.** Establish a Queensland Premier's research excellence awards program to celebrate researcher achievements
- 2.2c.** Remove financial disincentives for successful clinical grant applicants
- 2.2d.** Engage with Research Translation Centres nationally for a coordinated approach to attracting and retaining a research workforce aligned to health needs and workforce gaps

2.3 Improving the diversity of active clinician researchers

The problem to solve
 We do not have a workforce of researchers commensurate with the population of Queensland.

We need to increase researcher numbers in the system and diversity of their skills and career stages.

- 2.3a.** Prioritise efforts to increase the investment in schemes and initiatives that support, enhance and increase the capability and numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples active in health and medical research
- 2.3b.** Establish early and mid-career researcher retention strategies with tailored measures for researchers in rural and regional settings, and for female researchers in the health system
- 2.3c.** Work with clinician researchers from all disciplines to increase the number of applications for federal research funding

3 Optimise funding

3.1 Aligning medical research with health and economic opportunities

The problem to solve
 Research activities are often developed independently from the needs of the end users. This reduces the impact and diminishes the appeal of applications to research funders.

- 3.1a.** Work with Queensland Health to identify key areas where research is needed to improve health outcomes
- 3.1b.** Connect research networks to health delivery networks (e.g., Queensland Health State-wide Clinical Networks) to embed translational research in the clinic
- 3.1c.** Leverage philanthropic funds to support researchers to prepare strong NHMRC and MRFF applications
- 3.1d.** Establish proof of concept funds to support researchers to perform crucial targeted experiments to generate preliminary data for funding applications or increase commercial relevance
- 3.1e.** Improve researchers' commercial acumen and include potential commercial outcomes as a key consideration for researchers

3.2 Ensuring that quality is maintained as the number of funding applications is increased

The problem to solve
 Clinician informed applications are increasingly required when presenting research funding applications. As new researchers come into the system, it is essential to maintain quality standards.

- 3.2a.** Support researchers with grant writing and emphasise impact
- 3.2b.** Connect researchers and clinicians from different institutions to support cross-institutional collaboration



3.3 Embed consumer and community involvement as standard practice in all stages of research, especially in the development of funding applications

The problem to solve
 The approach to consumer engagement, particularly for people and groups who experience marginalisation and barriers to participation, is inconsistent and often compounded by researchers who are lacking in time and resources to ensure meaningful and sustained engagement.

- 3.3a.** Build on HTQ's consumer and community involvement program to support consumers and researchers to work together in formulating research priorities, projects and funding applications
- 3.3b.** Harness and support the efforts of those who are leading initiatives aimed at ensuring equity and inclusion of the needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in health and medical research
- 3.3c.** Connect researchers, clinicians and consumers to help guide translational research, with a particular emphasis on priority populations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

