

Australia's missing link: a national health and medical research strategy

The Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) is highlighting the need for an overarching national health and medical research strategy and introducing a [whitepaper](#) to start the conversation across Australia.

Over the past two years, terms like epidemiology, disease modelling and spike proteins have become household words. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of medical researchers and medical research, and the Australian Government has responded, boosting funds.

“An additional \$650 million a year is being invested into the Medical Research Future Fund, on top of the \$900 million the NHMRC funds. It's an exciting time to be in medical research, which is why it is also the right time for a national plan,” said Professor Kathryn North AC, President of AAMRI.

Australia needs an overarching health and medical research strategy and a coordinated approach to the administration of government funded research.

“We are talking about a joined-up plan across the whole discovery pipeline, from basic research through to treatments for patients, that addresses how research is funded, and what research is funded,” said Professor North.

Without a more coordinated approach, the sector is at risk of losing the next generation of talent, whose career paths are the most uncertain.

“Our early to mid-career researchers are our best and brightest minds. They have been working tirelessly through the difficulties of a pandemic and have invaluable knowledge, we can't afford to lose them,” said Professor North.

The success rates in the many different funding schemes are low. For example, 85% of applicants trying to secure a salary in this year's NHMRC Investigator Grant round were not successful. Across the board, researchers spend 2-3 months of their year writing grants, targeting multiple different schemes to try and maximise their chances. It's not sustainable. We owe it to this next generation to put a better plan in place and provide job security.

To address the issue, [AAMRI has developed a whitepaper](#) to set out the case for developing a National Health and Medical Research Strategy. In doing so it has identified opportunities for reform across the three key structural domains that underpin the sector: research, workforce, and funding.

“Now is the time for all stakeholders in the medical research sector to come together and develop a national strategy that ensures Australia has the world-class medical research sector it needs and deserves.”

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About AAMRI

AAMRI is the peak body representing medical research institutes across Australia. Our 58 member organisations are international leaders in health and medical research, addressing practically every aspect of human health and disease. Collectively, AAMRI's members represent more than 19,000 staff and students.

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