

Better health outcomes through research

The Women's Research Strategy 2016-2020



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

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Cover image: Researchers prepare human tissue specimens for histological examination.

Back cover image: Clinical research nurses on their way to theatre to collect blood and tissue samples for an endometriosis study.

Introduction

The Women's is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of women and newborns through research and innovation. Established in 1856, the Women's is Australia's first and largest specialist public hospital for women of all ages and newborns. It has been advocating and advancing the issues of women's health for 160 years.

As a tertiary-level hospital and one of Australia's major teaching hospitals, the Women's is internationally recognised for its clinical care and medical research. Embedding research into our clinical model delivers world-class healthcare for women and newborns. Our health and medical research successes have benefited generations of families around the world. This tradition of research excellence continues to inspire the Women's to lead in innovative and translational research for women and newborns.

The process of developing the *Women's Research Strategy 2016-2020* has involved wide-ranging consultation throughout the organisation including individual research groups, the Board Research Committee and hospital executive. The strategy builds on a strong track record of discovery and clinical research.

The strategy has been informed by two recent government reports: the *Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research* by Simon McKeon AO (2013) and the *Victorian Health and Medical Research Strategy: Discussion Paper* (2015) from the Victorian State Government.

Our Research Strategy conveys our strategic goal, directions and action plans for the 2016-2020 period. It provides a vision and course of action for supporting and continually improving all areas of research at the Women's.

This document complements *the Women's Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Transforming health care for women and newborns*. It builds on the strategic direction 3: 'Our research, knowledge translation and innovation will lead and drive better health outcomes for women and newborns'.

Our challenge now is to realise our vision by creating an environment where excellence can flourish and our brightest and best researchers can undertake cutting edge studies aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of not only our own patients, but of all people on a national and international scale.



Dr Sue Matthews
Chief Executive Officer



Professor Peter Rogers
Director of Research



Our Research Strategy 2016-2020

Better health outcomes for women and newborns through research

The Women's Research Strategy 2016-2020 covers the diverse range of research (basic, translational and clinical) undertaken across our ten research centres: Women's Mental Health, Women's Infectious Diseases, Pregnancy, Newborn, Midwifery and Maternity Services, Gynaecology, Women's Cancer, Anaesthetics, Allied Health and Family Violence Prevention.

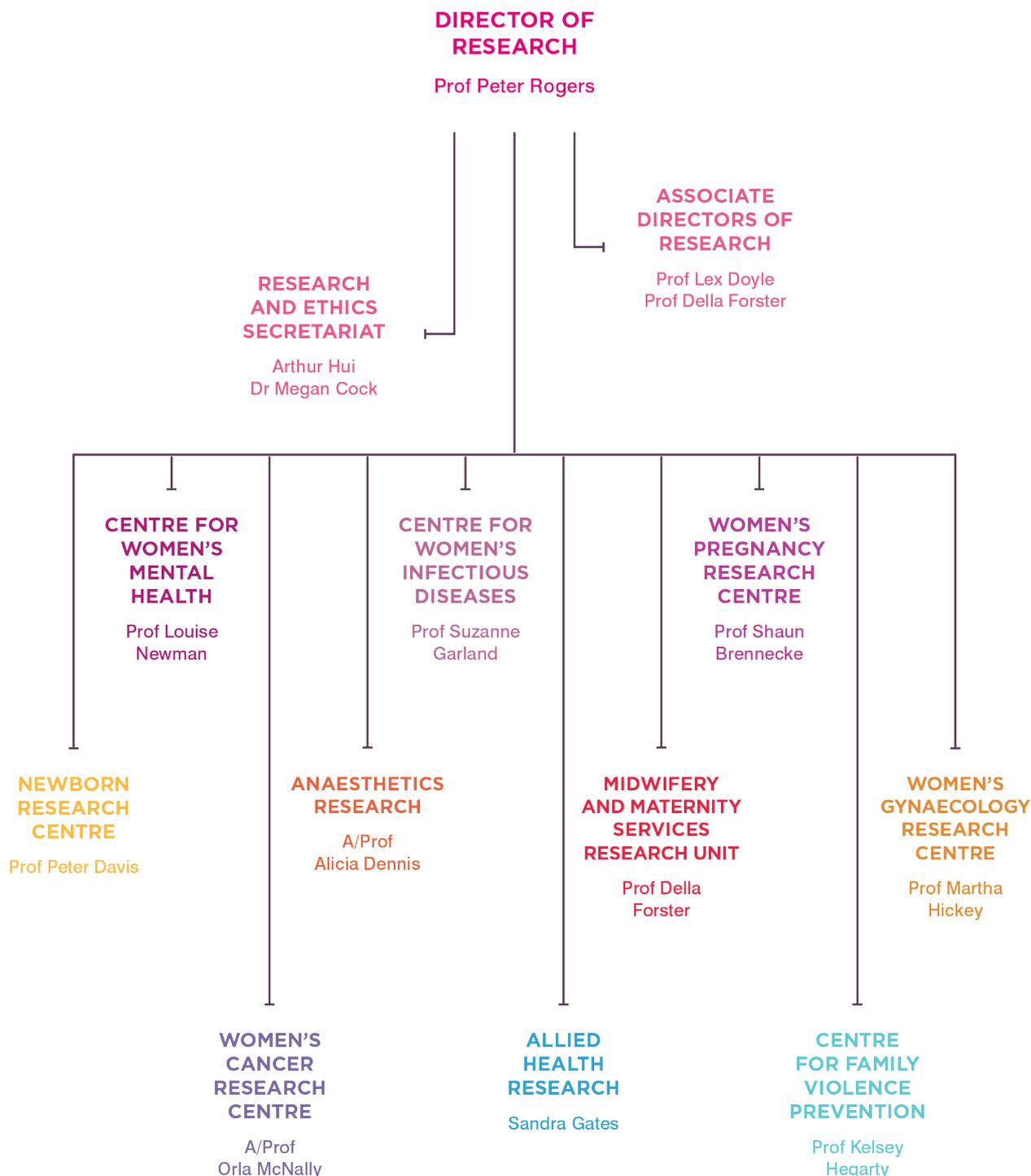
Strategic Goal:

Our research, knowledge translation and innovation will lead and drive better health outcomes for women and newborns

1. Research excellence	Maintain our ongoing commitment to research excellence
2. Translation and innovation	Embed research in our programs and services
3. Research training	Invest in people through research training
4. Performance	Improve our governance and support systems
5. Communications	Develop communications to improve our internal and external research profile
6. Funding	Develop processes to increase research funding

The Women's Research Precinct

The Research Precinct at the Women's provides a unique environment for the collaboration and integration of scientists and health professionals. It facilitates the wide spectrum of research, from discovery research to clinical and implementation research, enabling us to be leaders in innovative and translational research for women and newborns.



Governance

Research at the Women's is overseen by the Board Research Committee which is responsible for governance of the Women's Research Strategy and for advocating research at Board level. Within the Women's research precinct, research activities are supported by a research secretariat led by the Director of Research.

Governance of all research projects involving humans or the use of animals is overseen by three committees. The Board Research Committee acts as an advisory committee and reviews the quality of the research. It then makes recommendations to the relevant Human Research Ethics Committee / Animal Ethics Committee which evaluates and ultimately authorises the conduct of individual research projects on behalf of the organisation.

Research centres

Women's Newborn Research Centre

Director: Professor Peter Davis

The Women's Newborn Research Centre's mission is to give all babies the best chance of growing into healthy adults. Our biggest challenge lies with the tiniest babies, those weighing less than one kilogram and more than three months premature. In addition, those that survive may face significantly increased risks relating to their brain development, sight and hearing.

In order to improve the outcomes for tiny and preterm babies, we are conducting research into the care given to babies immediately after birth, throughout their time in hospital and during their first critical years at home.

Ongoing long-term studies include determining the effectiveness of magnetic resonance imaging of the brain in very tiny or preterm babies to predict long-term outcomes, and understanding the causes of brain injury in very preterm babies.

Centre for Women's Infectious Diseases

Director: Professor Suzanne M. Garland

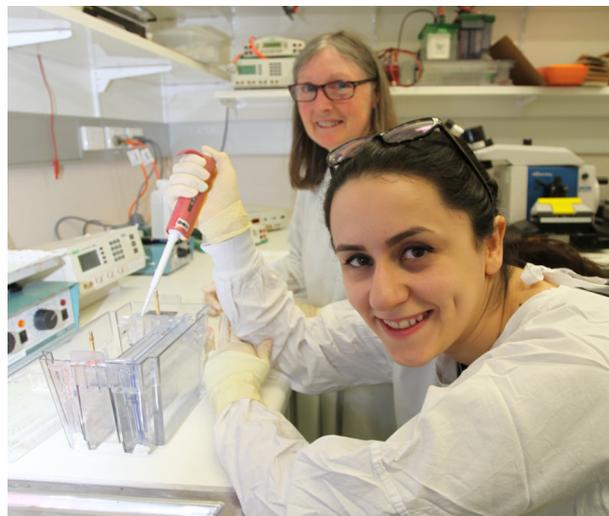
The Centre for Women's Infectious Diseases conducts clinically based research, in addition to providing molecular diagnostics for the detection of infections within obstetrics, paediatrics, gynaecology and neonatology.

Our key research areas include cervical cancer, sexual health and mother-to-baby infections. Emphasis is placed on providing evidence for changes that translate into clinical practice. Recent and ongoing research activity includes monitoring the effectiveness of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination; preventing sepsis in premature infants and investigating the cause of common gynaecological infections.

Women's Gynaecology Research Centre

Director: Professor Martha Hickey

As the largest specialist public hospital for women in Australia, the Women's is ideally placed to lead international academic gynaecological research. The Women's Gynaecology Research Centre brings together clinical and laboratory expertise to investigate a wide range of common gynaecological conditions. This enhanced understanding helps improve prevention, diagnosis and management of a wide range of conditions including adverse menopausal symptoms, menopause after cancer, heavy and abnormal menstrual bleeding, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, pelvic pain, infertility and sexual health dysfunction due to cancer treatment.



A PhD research student loads protein on a gel for Western Blot analysis.

Women's Pregnancy Research Centre

Director: Professor Shaun Brennecke

The Women's Pregnancy Research Centre's mission is to better understand the causes of pregnancy disorders that compromise the health of mothers and their babies. Common pregnancy complications such as miscarriage, pre-eclampsia, fetal growth restriction, gestational diabetes and preterm labour create significant emotional, social and economic costs within our community. Reducing the incidence or severity of pregnancy complications will significantly diminish these costs.

Our work on pregnancy and its disorders ranges from basic biomedical laboratory research through to clinical studies, treatment trials and public health initiatives. We use our findings to promote evidence-based, best clinical practice.

Women's Cancer Research Centre

Director: Associate Professor Orla McNally

Guiding our work in the Women's Cancer Research Centre is the philosophy that every woman should be afforded the opportunity to take part in research at every stage of her journey.

Not only does our experience show that many patients want to be involved in these opportunities when they arise, there is also evidence that patients who participate in research and clinical trials have better health outcomes.

Our current research focus is on gynaecological cancer, including ovarian, uterine, fallopian tube and cervical cancers; pre-cancer and risk reduction; and gestational trophoblastic disease (molar pregnancy). We are conducting a large number of clinical trials in the medical and surgical treatment of cancers and in the screening and detection of cancers.

We share the vision of the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre – to save lives through the integration of cancer research, education and patient care.

Midwifery and Maternity Services Research Unit

Director: Professor Della Forster

The Midwifery and Maternity Services Research Unit is dedicated to exploring the care we provide to women attending the hospital for pregnancy care and to give birth to ensure it is high quality evidence-based care and, as part of this, to actively seek the views of women and staff on their experiences.

Areas of research focus include increasing the percentage of women who initiate and continue breastfeeding and exploring the best way to provide support for women during pregnancy, birth and the early postnatal period. The Midwifery and Maternity Services Research Unit also aims to decrease unnecessary interventions in childbirth.

Another key aspect is the focus on building research capacity of the Women's midwives, nurses and allied health professionals.

Centre for Women's Mental Health

Director: Professor Louise Newman

The Centre for Women's Mental Health recognises that the determinants of mental health and mental illness include biological, psychological, social, environmental and economic factors, and are strongly linked with an individual's physical health.

Promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness are important components of all clinical services at the Women's. Staff from diverse areas within the hospital are involved in multidisciplinary mental health research. Our research aims to improve mental health as well as reduce the prevalence and burden of mental health problems and mental illness.

Conducted within a population health framework that takes into account the complex influences on mental health, our research encourages a holistic approach to improving mental health and wellbeing. We develop evidence-based interventions that meet the identified needs of population groups, and span from prevention to recovery and relapse prevention.

Anaesthetics Research

Director: A/Professor Alicia Dennis

The Women's Department of Anaesthesia, the first anaesthetic obstetric department in Australia, has a long history of research, teaching, education and innovation.

In one active research program, and in a world-first, we are undertaking one of the largest cardiac magnetic resonance studies in healthy pregnant women and women with pre-eclampsia. Using heart ultrasound (transthoracic echocardiography), the project will improve our understanding of healthy heart function in pregnant women and changes in the hearts of women with pre-eclampsia.

We currently have 12 ongoing research projects including two international multicentre collaborative projects.

Allied Health Research

Director: Sandra Gates

Research in the Allied Health and Clinical Support Services is continuing to develop and gain momentum at the Women's. Research projects are either undertaken within single disciplines or across multiple services. Departments such as Pharmacy and the Pauline Gandel Women's Imaging Centre play a pivotal role in research conducted by other services, and without their participation these projects would not be possible.

We encourage our staff to build their research capacity and several clinicians have participated in research for the first time, expanding the pool of staff with such experience in the Allied Health and Clinical Support Services.

Allied health research covers the Pharmacy, Nutrition and Dietetics, Social Work and Physiotherapy departments and focuses on areas such as continence, pelvic floor function in women, child protection, family violence and the impact of nutrition on various clinical conditions.



Examining a culture plate for cell growth.

Centre for Family Violence Prevention

Director: Professor Kelsey Hegarty

Established in 2016 with the appointment of Professor Kelsey Hegarty as Australia's first chair of Family Violence Prevention – a joint appointment by the Women's and the University of Melbourne - this research centre focuses on the areas of effective early intervention and prevention strategies; pathways to safety and wellbeing for those affected by family violence; and new models of care for women and families within a whole-of-health system response.

The centre aims to support health services to successfully advance the skills of health professionals in identifying and responding to family violence through training and system changes. It strives to build the evidence base for best practice in hospitals and to support people experiencing family violence to disclose and seek help.

Our future

Challenges and opportunities

The health and medical research industry in Australia has come under greater scrutiny in recent years, with increased pressure for tangible translational research outcomes. This is occurring in an environment where availability of government and non-government research funds has plateaued and competition for these funds is high. Against this background, there is a need for strategic thinking to best maximise our opportunities for research success within a hospital setting.

Research excellence and expertise

The Women's has a reputation for excellence in health and medical research, with researchers holding grants worth more than \$25 million and publishing in excess of 550 papers in 2014 and 2015 on a range of health issues affecting newborns and women. Our research capacity continues to expand with the majority of research undertaken in our 10 research centres which are each led by researchers who are world leaders in their fields.

The collaboration and integration of scientists and health professionals at the Women's allows us to embed discovery, translational and clinical research within the hospital. This approach further strengthens our leadership in innovative and translational research for women and newborns. We will continue to enhance the environment for research performance, to build a culture of research, and improve support necessary to achieve research excellence.

Research profile and culture

To promote our ongoing commitment to research excellence, we need to ensure that we provide regular communication with all external and internal stakeholders. It is important that we continue to build and promote the profile of the Women's as a research hospital and that our scope is comprehensive in its target and reach. It is also imperative that we build a culture of research in all areas of the hospital. We will continually strive to be a research hospital that students, researchers and health professionals aspire to be a part of, and where patients wish to be treated.

Research training / capacity building

Building research capacity in health and medical research is crucial for continued research excellence. We will build our workforce capacity through research training and support programs and ensure all career pathways are supported. Initiatives to increase research capacity will include support for individuals, research groups and at an organisational level. We will continue to build and tailor our research training and support to meet the needs of our diverse research workforce which covers science, medicine, nursing, midwifery and allied health.

Researchers of the future are more likely to be successful if they possess a strong foundation of research training. We need to be strategic in our processes to build research capacity among our post graduate students and clinical specialists across all disciplines, as well as attract research students to all areas within the hospital research setting.

Clinical trials and translational research

With increased national emphasis on translational research and the impact on patients and health outcomes, it is essential to be innovative in our processes and to focus on initiatives that increase and improve translational research. We will strengthen and embed research culture across the hospital to unequivocally establish the Women's as a hospital of research excellence.

Clinical trials are an essential component of the Women's research program, and form an important phase in the translation of research into clinical practice. As the largest specialist public hospital for women in Australia, the Woman's is ideally placed to lead national and international clinical trials. In 2015, more than 62 clinical trials were actively recruiting at the Women's. We will continue to capitalise on our excellent research environment within the hospital setting by supporting and streamlining processes for clinical trial management.

Future research funding

Health and medical research funding has become increasingly competitive with only 13 per cent of competitive National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grants funded in Australia for 2016. We will strengthen our capacity to attract research funding and improve existing government and non-government funding opportunities. We will explore new approaches to securing additional funding and investment sources. Attracting philanthropic and industry funding is important for continued health and medical research at the Women's. A strong partnership with the Women's Foundation, our fundraising entity, will be an essential component of philanthropic funding and building a solid financial base to support future research excellence at the Women's.

Strategic goal

The Women's Research Strategy conveys our strategic goal, directions and action plan for the 2016-2020 period. It provides a vision and course of action for supporting and continually improving all areas of research at the Women's.

Our strategic goal directly reflects strategic direction three of *the Women's Strategic Plan 2016-2020*: Our research, knowledge translation and innovation will lead and drive better health outcomes for women and newborns.

The Women's has a proud history of ground-breaking research and innovation. Our culture of discovery and our commitment to health and medical research is embedded in our specialist care for women and newborns.

Over the next five years we will strengthen our systems and processes to support research and accelerate the translation of evidence into both standard clinical practice and our models of care. We will encourage and facilitate innovation and take advantage of opportunities in the Parkville precinct, and beyond, to extend our partnerships and promote our expertise.

We will foster a culture that encourages new researchers and enables established researchers to flourish. This will include investing in research programs and training and enhancing opportunities for researchers and

clinicians to undertake, lead and participate in research.

Strengthening our capacity to attract research funding will also be a priority. We will give greater attention to raising our research profile, both nationally and internationally, alongside communicating our research to staff and our community.

We remain committed to encouraging and rewarding innovation and new ways of thinking to improve our services and the ways in which we deliver our care.

Strategic directions

Our six research strategic directions are fundamental to achieving our goal of improving the health outcomes of women and newborns through research, knowledge translation and innovation. They will allow us to more fully embed research excellence into the health system, and accelerate translation of research into clinical practice to the benefit of the community.

Our six strategic directions are:

- 1. Research excellence:** maintain our ongoing commitment to research excellence
- 2. Translation and innovation:** embed research in our programs and services
- 3. Research training:** invest in people through research training
- 4. Performance:** improve our governance and support systems
- 5. Communications:** develop communications to improve our internal and external research profile
- 6. Funding:** develop processes to increase research funding

The Women's Research Strategy 2016-2020

Strategic direction 1: Research excellence

Over the next five years we will foster an environment where research excellence can flourish and our researchers can undertake cutting-edge studies. We will focus on enhancing the environment for research capability through leadership and innovation, as well as improved support for research excellence.

1. Maintain our ongoing commitment to research excellence			
Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
1.1 Build and maintain world class research capability	1.1.1 Continue developing a funding model, using internal and external funds, that supports research excellence (Research Performance Framework) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link funding model to desired research outcomes (criteria for research excellence) • Research funding model is specific to hospital setting • Research outcomes reflect research within a hospital setting and include translation and patient outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly changes to funding model • Yearly changes to allocation of funds • Research metrics 	years 1-3
	1.1.2 Develop a process for external review of research funding model (Research Performance Framework) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish criteria for research excellence within our hospital setting • Develop a process for external review of the funding model to assess criteria for research excellence within our hospital setting • Implement external review (year 5), following incremental implementation of the new funding model (years 1-3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for research excellence developed • Timeline and plans for external review of the funding model (Research Performance Framework) • Outcomes/report of the external review • Publication of Research Performance Framework for research excellence 	years 4-5

	<p>1.1.3 Develop and implement a new upgraded format for the Women's Annual Research Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand to a 2-4 day meeting (Research Week), incorporating the current student symposium and introducing research group presentations, keynote speakers and a research dinner Showcase research excellence with student and early career awards Invitation to donor community via Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline and plans for annual research meeting Research meeting metrics and outcomes 	years 1-3
	<p>1.1.4 External review of research at the Women's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External review of research at the Women's 	years 3-4
<p>1.2 Provide leadership across research activities at the Women's</p>	<p>1.2.1 Implement annual meetings with research group directors and the Board to initiate, inform and review implementation of strategic objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual meeting and outcomes 	year 1
<p>1.3 Create a research environment that embraces uptake of future ideas and technologies in delivering better healthcare outcomes</p>	<p>1.3.1 Scan the external environment for novel research policies and ideas that can be adopted with the goal of improving health care outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy and documents for senior research staff (research directors) to visit/scan national and international hospitals, linked with existing travel, to identify novel policy or ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics on site visits to other research intensive hospitals Policy and new ideas identified and implemented 	years 3-5

Strategic direction 2: Translation and innovation

Over the next five years we will strengthen our systems and processes to support research and researchers to accelerate the translation of research into clinical practice and the community. We will capitalise on our unique environment where scientists and health professionals can work together and be innovative leaders to further build our translational research capacity.

2. Embed research in our programs and services

Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
2.1 We will be innovative leaders in health research (basic, translational and clinical) for women and newborns with a focus on driving translation into clinical practice	2.1.1 Support research programs to strengthen their translational research capabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and acknowledge the importance of clinical research training through the funding model and embed them throughout the hospital Strengthen research culture across the hospital to cement the Women's status as a research hospital Ensure a research focus is included in relevant recruitment documentation (position description, interview process) for the Women's and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Melbourne. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly changes to funding model Building research culture through recruitment procedure /documentation changes 	years 1-3 years 3-5
	2.1.2 Capitalise on expertise in Parkville precinct and beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and encourage collaboration and partnership to develop a multidisciplinary approach to patient centred care Implement communication strategies and/or platforms to better share information on expertise within the Parkville Precinct Capitalise on the partnership with Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (NHMRC, Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Strategy Information / communications platforms Communications metrics Website metrics 	years 2-4

<p>2.2 We will build translational capacity by implementing strategic approaches and processes to drive different translational pathways to achieve better health outcomes</p>	<p>2.2.1 Develop a database for up-to-date information on clinical trials and clinical audits to identify ways to improve performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a central clinical audit repository (electronic, searchable) • Implement an awareness campaign about the audit repository • Develop a clinical trials database. Information to be collected yearly to provide a detailed understanding of clinical trials and how clinical trials are best supported by the Women's • Improve processes for clinical trial administration / performance • Include clinical trials within the funding model (Research Performance Framework) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical trial database • Yearly outcomes and metrics for clinical trials • Clinical audit central repository • Yearly outcomes and metrics for audit repository • Yearly changes to funding model 	<p>years 2-3</p>
	<p>2.2.2 Enhance health services research and biostatistics capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement communication strategies and/or platforms to better share information on biostatistics expertise within the Parkville precinct • Draw on expertise within the Parkville precinct to build health services research capacity • Promote the partnership through Biomedical Research Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy • Partnerships established (MoU) • Information / communications platforms • Communications metrics • Website metrics 	<p>years 2-4</p>
	<p>2.2.3 Develop processes to assess translational research and its impact at the Women's and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current models for research impact • Develop an approach to assess research impact in a hospital setting • Introduce research impact into the funding model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact model • Impact model outcomes and metrics • Yearly changes to funding model 	<p>years 1-3</p>
	<p>2.2.4 Showcase translational research outcomes internally and externally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the research impact information collected (2.2.3) and disseminate information through relevant communications channels • Disseminate the research impact information within the donor community through the Foundation and relevant communications channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy • Impact model outcomes and metrics • Communications metrics • Foundation report / metrics 	<p>years 1-3</p>

Strategic direction 3: Research training

Over the next five years we will continue to build our workforce capacity through research training and support programs. Capacity building will be tailored to meet the needs of our broad-ranging research workforce, taking into account those with primary training in science, and those with a background and primary training in medicine and allied health practices.

3. Invest in people through research training			
Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
3.1 We will invest in our current and future workforce through education and training programs and by strengthening our workforce capability	3.1.1 Strengthen our research capacity through research training of scientists and health professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a tiered mentoring program across all levels of research that includes formal and informal components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research mentoring program Mentoring program metrics 	years 2-3
	3.1.2 Highlight research training as a priority by building training into our Research Performance Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include research students and clinical research training into funding model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly changes to funding model 	years 1-3
	3.1.3 Support early career progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a mentoring program for early career researchers Provide training and support for NHMRC grant applications Introduce early careers promotion and awards at Annual Research Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tiered research-mentoring program Mentoring program metrics Yearly early careers awards 	years 2-3
	3.1.4 Attract students through increased research profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement initiatives for attracting quality students Develop and implement initiatives for a co-ordinated approach to student recruitment and support Improve website content for current and prospective research students Increase research profile internally and externally at the Women's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research student website Student metrics Website metrics 	years 1-3

	<p>3.1.5 Provide students and early career researchers with an exceptional experience in research training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement initiatives that support and empower students and early career researchers (including a mentoring program) • Promote individual profiles internally on the Women’s website • Establish a new format for the Women’s Annual Research Meeting to include student and new investigator presentations • Expand the number of categories of student and early investigator awards at annual research meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New student initiatives • Mentoring program metrics • Communications metrics • Website metrics • Feedback from students and early investigators 	years 1-3
	<p>3.1.6 Build the research capability of health professionals by promoting their participation in research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce seed funding grants for health professional research (\$2,000 to \$5,000 grants) • Develop a strategy for change in research culture in the hospital, including a plan for a coordinated approach for health professional research participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed funding research grants metrics • Building health professional research culture through recruitment procedure /documentation changes 	years 3-5
	<p>3.1.7 Address the need for more dedicated time for research for health professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers and opportunities for dedicated time for research for health professionals • Advocate for increased full-time clinicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings, communications and outcomes 	years 4-5

Strategic direction 4: Performance

Over the next five years we will focus on improving our resources, processes and systems to enhance the research environment. We will explore new approaches and opportunities for improved governance to build greater support for researchers and enhance research performance.

4. Improve our governance and support systems			
Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
4.1 Provide governance across research activities at the Women's	4.1.1 Continue to develop efficient and streamlined governance and ethics processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a process for electronic ethics applications Continue to support the processes for multisite ethics applications Develop processes for identification and recording of mandatory training including good clinical practice training Increase awareness and compliance of mandatory training Improve information /communications platforms including links with research specific regulations and training providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics times to approval Electronic ethics application Information / communications platforms Communications metrics Website metrics 	years 2-4
4.2 We will invest in support systems to enhance the research environment and opportunities for researchers and health professionals	4.2.1 Improve administration and support services and enhance research office support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a model of a streamlined research office Maximise the allocation of research funds to research, while building a streamlined research office Fund an ongoing project officer within the research office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research office structure and services Research office outcomes / metrics 	years 1-3
	4.2.2 Be more efficient in the use of space within the research precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit of current use of space Develop guidelines based on research metrics for the allocation of space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of research precinct space Guidelines for allocation of space Space allocation metrics 	years 1-3

Strategic direction 5: Communications

Over the next five years we will be optimising investment through media, communications and the Women's Foundation. We will focus greater attention on raising our research profile nationally and internationally, as well as communicating our research to the hospital, philanthropic and research community.

5. Develop communications to improve our internal and external research profile

Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
5.1 We will raise the research profile (of people and programs) through improved communications internally and externally	5.1.1 Develop a communications strategy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the marketing and promotion of the research capabilities of the centres internally with the Women's media and communications team and through external media • Develop marketing material including annual research report, newsletters, website pages • Promote individual research successes internally and externally • Strengthen partnerships with the Women's Foundation • Communicate and make available research outcomes through the Women's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy • Communications metrics • Changes to the website • Website metrics • Research Report 	years 1-3

Strategic direction 6: Funding

Over the next five years we will strengthen our capacity to attract research funding. We will explore opportunities for improved government funding and increased philanthropic and industry funding.

6. Develop processes to increase research funding

Objectives	Actions	Success factors	Timeline
6.1 We will improve existing government funding opportunities	6.1.1 Increase opportunities for internal review of NHMRC grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a process for internal review and peer review (previous panel members) of NHMRC grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics for review of NHMRC grants NHMRC grant funding metrics 	years 2-4
	6.1.2 Training and capacity building in grant processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a training program on NHMRC grant writing, involving experts from review panels to improve the quality of grant applications Deliver annual workshops and seminars on what makes a successful grant application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops / seminars metrics 	years 2-3
	6.1.3 Advocate for NHMRC infrastructure support in hospital research settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings, communications and outcomes 	years 4-5
6.2 Increase funding opportunities through philanthropy	6.2.1 Strengthen our partnerships with the Women's Foundation to maximise funding opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strong relationships with the Foundation Collaborate with the Foundation on the communications strategy Identify components of the annual <i>Women's Research Report</i> for use by the Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation report Foundation metrics Communications metrics Research Report 	years 1-3

	<p>6.2.2 Identify new opportunities and potential sources for philanthropic funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Foundation to build a database of funding sources and better connect research groups to potential philanthropic funding opportunities • Develop information /communications platforms to include links to database of philanthropic funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database and email list • Information / communications platforms • Communications metrics • Website metrics • Philanthropic funding metrics 	years 2-3
	<p>6.2.3 Implement funding of an annual 'strategic research initiative' within the existing hospital funding model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further implement the hospital funding model established by providing an additional \$300,000 per year for strategic research initiatives. • Develop criteria for the allocation of funding for strategic research initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria and guidelines for strategic funding model • Strategic Research Initiative metrics and outcomes 	year 2
<p>6.3 Increase funding opportunities through industry</p>	<p>6.3.1 Identify new opportunities and potential sources of industry funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry funding metrics • Industry partnership metrics 	years 4-5
	<p>6.3.2 Intellectual Property (IP) and commercialisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Parkville partners to improve IP expertise and support • Establish processes to support commercial partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings, communications and outcomes 	years 4-5

Measures of success

The Board will review progress towards the goals and objectives of our Research Strategy bi-annually at the Research Board Committee meetings.

Success will be measured by the defined success factors, which provide information on key areas of performance that are essential for achieving our goal. Success factors for the objectives and action items will include qualitative and quantitative information, for both processes and outcomes, and also a range of research and communications metrics.

The Board will review accomplishments as well as review areas where we have not been able to accomplish our objectives within the expected timeline. For areas of challenge, the Board will discuss the barriers to completion, review the importance of the objective at that point in time, and decide how to best proceed. All adjustments to the plan will be documented in a plan update.

Conclusion

Our strategic plan provides a framework to attain our goal of better health outcomes for women and newborns through research, for the 2016-2020 period. It sets out our priorities for research excellence, translation and innovation, research training, performance, communications and funding. This is an ambitious but manageable plan with many actionable items. We believe the plan is flexible and can adapt to change within the research environment over the next five years. Our experienced and dedicated Board is committed to meeting the highest standards of governance, and is working closely with management to accomplish the objectives of the Women's Research Strategy.



The Women's Newborn Research Group is leading an international trial on breathing support for premature infants which is comparing the benefits of high-flow therapy and continuous positive airway pressure.

The Women's Strategic Plan 2016 -2020

Our goal, strategic directions and areas of strategic focus

The Women's is committed to transforming healthcare for women and newborns. The goal of *the Women's Strategic Plan 2016-2020* is that our patients and consumers are at the heart of everything we do. The strategic plan is made up of four strategic directions plus four areas of strategic focus. Together, these capture the breadth of our work across our clinical streams: maternity, neonatal, gynaecology and women's cancer and our associated services at Parkville and Sandringham.



The Women's Declaration

For more than 160 years, the Women's has led the advocacy and advancement of women's health and wellbeing across Victoria and further afield.

Our origins as the first hospital in Australia for women who were pregnant, vulnerable and often destitute and our founders' commitment to evidence based medicine has created a proud legacy of excellence in care for the most disadvantaged in our community.

This culture has endured through more than a century of transformations in health and health care as well as major changes in the social, economic and legal status of women.

Our Declaration, which reflects the principles and philosophies fundamental to our hospital, captures the essence of who we are and what we do.





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