



Government of **Western Australia**
WA Country Health Service



WA Country Health Service Research and Innovation Strategy 2019–24

**ACHIEVING GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP IN
COUNTRY HEALTH
RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION**

Acknowledgements

The WA Country Health Service acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Using the term—Aboriginal

Within Western Australia (WA), the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

Using the term—on country

For the purposes of this document, on country represents a term used by Aboriginal people referring to the land to which they belong and their place of Dreaming.

Definition of cultural security

Cultural security is the provision of programs and services offered by the health system that will not compromise the legitimate cultural rights, values and expectations of Aboriginal people. To be culturally secure, programs and services need to:

- identify and respond to the cultural needs of Aboriginal people
- work within a holistic framework that recognises the importance of connection to country, culture, spirituality, family and community
- recognise and reflect on how these factors affect health and wellbeing.

Please note: Aboriginal people should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or printed material.

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Increasing research activity leads
to improved health outcomes,
increased quality of life and
improved health service delivery.





Message from the Board Chair

Research and innovation are integral elements of a strong and robust health system that is evidence-based, provides clinically appropriate care and crucially, contributes to better health outcomes.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to health research and innovation as a learning organisation responsible for the governance of research conducted in all hospitals, health facilities and with communities in country WA.

To date, WACHS has been receptive to participating in research, responding to requests initiated by the broader research community and philanthropic organisations but with limited capacity to initiate research.

The **WACHS Research and Innovation Strategy 2019–24** (the Strategy) shifts the organisation's approach to become increasingly more collaborative and proactive in determining the research WACHS undertakes to address priority health issues for country people and evaluating the impact of service developments.

WACHS has many competitive advantages in conducting research, including robust governance, a unique patient population, a highly skilled clinical workforce and an innovative mindset.

As WACHS transforms into a digital health service, there is a need to understand, quantify and validate the impact of innovation and new technology on clinical practice.

Harnessing and supporting health and medical research collaboration and innovation is a core outcome of the State Government's Sustainable Health Review. The WA Health system is seeking to significantly increase medical and health research funding to achieve a contemporary research agenda including a focus on health access and equity related solutions, policy challenges and collaboration.

WACHS can optimise country health access to the State Government's Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund, by both investing in research and innovation and increasing research capacity in country WA. This supports WACHS in attracting

people to undertake research that delivers health and service benefits for consumers and communities while increasing clinician and staff involvement in research.

The evidence is clear that embedding research into clinical and non-clinical service delivery improves service quality, safety and sustainability and these factors influence and improve health outcomes, increase quality of life and improve health service delivery.

Business and economic benefits captured through research, including improved productivity, an enhanced skill base, increased investment and employment contribute to improved service culture and sustainability.

WACHS will extend its research activity and build research capacity, capability and culture through partnerships, collaborations and by actively promoting research priorities and principles to government, researchers, research funders, internal staff and communities.

WACHS aims to foster a culture of advanced learning and innovation, encouraging clinicians to evaluate their current clinical practice, adopt the best scientific evidence and test innovative healthcare delivery approaches in a country context, all of which translates to evidence-based practice.

This Strategy is the catalyst for WACHS to position itself as a respected global leader for health research.

PROFESSOR NEALE FONG
BOARD CHAIR

WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE

As WACHS transforms into a digital health service, there is a need to understand, quantify and validate the impact of innovation and new technology on clinical practice.

Why invest now?

Historically, WACHS management and staff have demonstrated a strong commitment to being innovative and resourceful in achieving the best possible health outcomes for country communities within the resources available.

The approach to innovation and research has been largely opportunistic, leveraging project funding and resources where possible. In some instances, operational staff have taken on the additional responsibility of delivering research and evaluation projects in their own time.

On average there are between 25 and 40 external research projects initiated each year in country health services. WACHS has a well-established and robust research and ethics governance function with an independently chaired WACHS Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to assess and authorise these research initiatives.

However, WACHS tends to be a passive recipient of the research and is generally not actively involved in the research design or partnering with the researchers to deliver specific outcomes for WACHS that can be transformed into better health delivery approaches and better health outcomes for communities.

There is opportunity for an abundance of human research projects arising from interest from researchers and the university sector in country WA and rural health issues. An environment is needed that assists WACHS to work in partnership with selected research groups, and to consider the appropriate research and evaluation questions, particularly those that help in making future investment decisions and guide how to best use scarce healthcare resources to greatest benefit.

WACHS can also build on its evolving evaluation culture with more areas of the business developing and leading service evaluations that can spark new ideas and create hypotheses to be tested through research.

Building on this evidence base is a core component of the WACHS research agenda. WACHS has a wide network of evaluators and those interested in research, providing an engaged resource base that can support WACHS in building its research capability.

The Strategy enables focused and comprehensive research activities, led and directed by WACHS. Creating research capacity within WACHS also promotes greater opportunity for research questions and projects to arise from frontline staff and to ensure that research and evaluation findings are translated back into clinical practice as a component of continuous quality improvement and evaluation efforts.

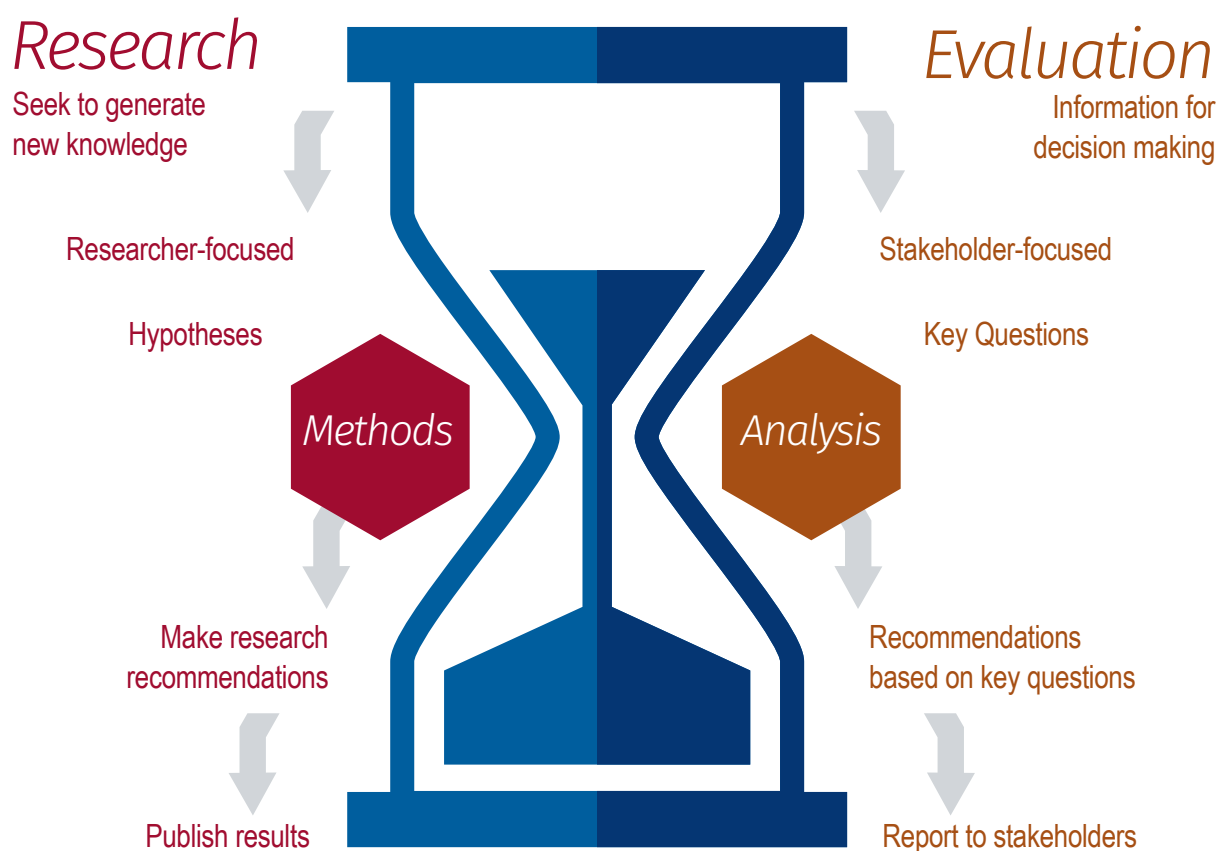
The time is right to invest in research. The State Government is establishing the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund worth up to \$40 million per annum with a focus on translation and innovation. There are also a wide range of new funding sources including from the Commonwealth's Medical Research Future Fund. These funding sources can be leveraged to generate a return on WACHS's investment in research and innovation.

The ***WACHS Research and Innovation Strategy 2019–24*** outlines key directions and actions to build capacity, take advantage of the opportunities and achieve the vision of WACHS as a global leader in country health research. It also includes initial focus areas for research based on current service delivery and investment priorities, informing future research to be undertaken by WACHS.

Why invest now?

While this strategy focuses on research activities, much of the agenda for research focuses on key service delivery improvement and evaluation questions, and economic evaluations of new technologies and service innovations.

By using research methods and economic analysis to test our service delivery innovations and new technologies, the results of our activities will have generalisable findings that can help all healthcare providers whether they are delivering services remotely or in metropolitan sites.



Source: John LaVelle

Photo courtesy of Busselton
Population Medical
Research Institute



Research and innovation focus areas

Initial opportunities for health research and innovation are outlined below:

HEALTH SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH

The sustainability of health services is a key concern for the State Government, the WA public health system, and wider community. A sustainable country health service demands that WACHS uses allocated resources efficiently and effectively in partnership with other providers and research bodies to drive improved health, clinical, economic and social outcomes. Health system research helps address this problem by identifying affordable models of healthcare and innovative approaches to the treatment and management of disease.

POPULATION COHORTS AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

According to the World Health Organisation, the social conditions in which people are born, live and work are the most important determinants of health. WA has access to a number of world-leading population cohort studies that can help us understand the biological, environmental and socio-economic factors that influence health outcomes, and where we could target preventative health programs.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Aboriginal people have a shorter life expectancy and worse health outcomes than non-Aboriginal people. WACHS will work with Aboriginal communities and prioritise translational research that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Australians to reduce health disparities and achieve greater health equity. WACHS will also help to develop and promote Aboriginal researchers' capabilities and Aboriginal research methods and relationship building.

TELEHEALTH AND DIGITAL INNOVATIONS

WACHS has demonstrated the ability to be an innovator and world leader in adopting telehealth services, and there is an opportunity to now use this technology to link WACHS communities with world-leading clinical trials, nationally and internationally.

WACHS is progressing towards a digital health system, adopting remote monitoring, electronic medical records, data analytic tools and other forms of medical technology. The introduction of these technologies needs to be supported with robust evidence on effectiveness and benefits.

CLINICAL TRIALS AND TELE-TRIALS

Improving clinical trial access to country patients, whether it is through telehealth or face-to-face, is a priority research area for WACHS. Clinical trials offer many benefits including improved access to innovative interventions, improved efficiency and effectiveness of health care delivery, attracting and retaining researchers and clinicians that drive a culture of innovation.

Having the capacity and capability to conduct clinical trials also attracts partnerships and sponsors from the broader research community. Developing collaborations and partnerships to enable.



Drive improved health, clinical, economic and social outcomes



Using cohort studies for better understanding



Reduce health disparities and achieve greater health equity



Continue progressing towards a digital health system



Enable clinical trials to occur in country regions

Research and innovation principles

WACHS's focus on health research and innovation is driven by the intention to translate innovative, leading-edge health interventions into health and clinical policy and practice.

This improves equity of access to healthcare and health outcomes for country people and creates a culture of continuous improvement and clinical excellence.

For the purposes of this Strategy, research refers to clinical and health service research and evaluation.

The following principles will inform the governance and approval of research endorsed by WACHS and supported in the regions:

- improve health outcomes and equity of access to healthcare for country people
- high relevance to country people and their greatest health needs
- used to inform policy and improve practice and sustainability of health services
- advances WACHS's understanding of social determinants of health and wellbeing and associated interventions
- leverages additional funding for WACHS's investment
- innovative and sustainable
- robust and high quality
- conducted in an ethical manner
- consumer and carer focussed and experience orientated.



CASE STUDY

ENHANCING REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS AFTER BRAIN INJURY

This project implemented the first culturally secure intervention package for Aboriginal brain injury survivors in Australia.

Aboriginal Australians experience stroke and traumatic brain injury up to three times more frequently than non-Aboriginal Australians, yet Aboriginal people remain under-represented in rehabilitation programs. The project follows on from the Missing Voices study.

The project aimed to:

- 1 Improve delivery of rehabilitation services and overall health outcomes for Aboriginal people post-brain injury (stroke and traumatic brain injury).

- 2 Conduct an economic evaluation to support the business case for funding new rehabilitation services, that contributes to the planning and sustainability of future services.
- 3 Explore the acceptability of the intervention from the perspectives of health professionals and Aboriginal people.

Findings suggested significant changes in service delivery are warranted and wanted by brain injury survivors, their families and health service providers. The evaluation of this project guided WACHS's investment decisions and helped to improve equity of access to rehabilitation services.

CASE STUDY**THE WORKING WITH CHILDREN PRACTICE SERIES:
COLLABORATIVE GOAL SETTING PROGRAM**

WACHS has partnered with a leading national children's health research centre to train health workers to work more effectively with country families.

The WACHS Population Health team worked with the Parenting Research Centre to deliver the Working with Children Practice Series: Collaborative Goal Setting program.

The program aimed to help staff improve their skills in working with families to identify and set goals to support their child's needs. In working in this family-centred way, goals will reflect the unique priorities of the family, as well as being meaningful and motivational for the family.

Delivered via the WACHS online Capabiliti LMS, the training is available to community nurses, allied health and support staff. It includes 10 e-learning modules, comprehensive practice guides, three videoconferences and local translation-to-practice activities.

Participants also have the opportunity to participate in research about the program's effectiveness to be conducted by the University of Melbourne and approved by the WACHS Research and Ethics Committee.

Collaborative Goal Setting supports the recently released WACHS Healthy Country Kids Strategy. As part of the research partnership, the training has commenced with Population Health staff. The program was released to all staff in November 2017. More than 360 staff across regional WA had already registered to take part.



Delivered via the WACHS online Capabiliti LMS, the training is available to community nurses, allied health and support staff.



Vision:

Achieving global leadership in country health research and innovation

DIRECTION 1

Promote high quality research that benefits country WA

DIRECTION 2

Build research capability, capacity and culture

Directions

DIRECTION 3

Invest in research resources, partnerships and infrastructure

DIRECTION 4

Disseminate research findings and translate into practice

Photo courtesy of Lions Outback Vision



Direction | 1

PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS COUNTRY WA

WACHS's primary interest is to provide quality health services to country people and to ensure people living in more isolated areas have access to the health care they need in a timely way. All research activities conducted by WACHS inform improvements to health service access and delivery to achieve positive health outcomes.

WACHS has many competitive advantages in conducting research and evaluation, including robust governance, a unique patient population, a highly skilled clinical workforce and an innovative mindset. WACHS has also led the way in co-designing research with consumers.

Historically, WACHS has collected vast amounts of rich data enabling population cohort studies such as the Busselton Cohort Study and many local service impact evaluations. As WACHS evolves into a digital health system, and gains greater access to large linked data sets from health and other sectors, new opportunities will present to study disease risk factors, prevention, treatments efficacy, epidemiology, Aboriginal health, and the impact of innovation.

Country WA offers an opportunity for research that can contribute to greater equity in healthcare access, improved health and mental health and more sustainable and stable services for a population known to have poorer health outcomes and higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage than their metropolitan counterparts.

Research is vital to enhance the wellbeing of communities in rural, regional and remote areas. WACHS undertakes to:

- Consult with staff, health consumers in country WA and review empirical evidence to identify areas where additional or new research is required.
- Publish research priorities, ensuring that priorities include Aboriginal people.
- Establish prize-based grants to incentivise examinations of research priorities and fund research projects in country WA.
- Ensure that research findings are implemented and monitored.

By advocating to government, researchers and research funders, WACHS can drive a research agenda across the WA health sector that focuses on the needs and solutions for geographically disadvantaged people and where the health issues and burden of disease is greatest.

These initiatives help improve physical and mental health outcomes for country people, particularly Aboriginal communities and vulnerable groups, increase the visibility of country health research, and promote WACHS as an attractive partner to the research community.



Direction | 1

PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS COUNTRY WA

OUTCOMES

WACHS promotes its interest and capability in country health research

WACHS promotes the significant advantages of studying rural and remote health populations and services to the research community, as well as communicates an interest and capability in supporting research and evaluation in country regions, to become recognised as a global leader in country health research.

- Development of a WACHS communication and promotion strategy raises awareness of the opportunities to invest in country WA's research and innovation ecosystem.
- The research community and health research funders are actively engaged to:
 - advocate for research opportunities in country health
 - foster partnerships to drive WACHS-led research initiatives
 - promote WACHS's capability and interest in supporting research in country health.
- Undertaking research and evaluation internally is promoted to staff with an interest in pursuing research.
- A streamlined research application process, including ethics approval, is developed.

THE BUSSELTON COHORT STUDY

The Busselton Cohort Study was a large multidisciplinary project investigating the causes of, and risk factors for, a wide range of conditions of public health importance in an ageing population commenced in 2010.

CASE STUDY

The Busselton Healthy Aging Study collected measures on vision and hearing disorders, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, muscle strength and physical function, obesity, diabetes, sleep disorders, bone health, spinal pain, and mental health and cognition from over 5100 adults born between 1946 and 1964.

Retesting of this cohort commenced in March 2016 using an expanded study protocol and will provide important information about the risk factors underlying disease and debilitation common to ageing.



Photo courtesy of Busselton Population Medical Research Institute

Direction | 1

PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS COUNTRY WA

OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

Health research supported by WACHS is high quality, relevant and co-designed with consumers

The principles set out in the Strategy guide all research supported by WACHS, ensuring research is relevant to and benefits country people.

For WACHS to endorse and support research and evaluation carried out at regional hospitals and health services and in the community, researchers will be required to demonstrate how their research is consistent with these principles and addresses the identified priority health issues for the WACHS population.

By co-producing research with stakeholders including consumers and communities, WACHS can lead and support relevant clinical and health system research that readily translates into improvements in clinical practice and better patient outcomes.

Co-production with patients and consumers ensures that research conducted in the communities is meaningful to the participants involved.

- WACHS, in consultation with its communities and stakeholders, develops a research agenda that identifies priority areas for research based on service delivery requirements.
- Research priorities are communicated to potential partners, encouraging partners and sponsors to align their research with WACHS's research agenda.
- Existing governance processes are reviewed to ensure research is targeted to the priority areas and increased input and consultation with communities occurs when developing research questions and methods.
- Prize-based research grants are established to incentivise research in priority focus areas. The prize awards the best research proposal and funds research projects in country WA.

WACHS develops research collaborations with respected research organisations to initiate, influence and progress health research and leverage multidisciplinary expertise outside the organisation

Collaboration with respected research organisations including the Telethon Kids Institute, the Harry Perkins Institute, the Lions Eye Institute, universities and peak bodies in the NGO sector enable WACHS to progress health research.

External organisations benefit from access to WACHS's governance, innovation, patient population, clinicians, workforce and knowledge of country health issues and strengths. Forming partnerships better positions research institutes when applying for competitive funding grants.

Collaborating with the research community should extend throughout the research process, including shaping research questions, designing the methodology, analysing and interpreting the research findings.

WACHS pursues grant programs in collaboration with Foundations to provide funding for research projects aligned with WACHS's research priorities, and supports translating research into policy and practice.

- Partnerships are established with the research community to initiate research projects.
- Grant programs and research capacity development are pursued with existing foundations.

Direction | 1

PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS COUNTRY WA

The Kimberley has an effective partnership approach between communities, health service providers and researchers that promotes the benefits of research to the community and better health outcomes.

A newly-developed process enables stakeholders - including community and health consumer representatives - to pose and co-design research questions and actively participate in contemporary research.

A broad range of stakeholders are involved in the assessment and confirmation of research questions.

Research principles and priority areas are communicated to research funders and researchers.

Collaboration with research funders aligns funding with further investment in research priority areas identified by WACHS.

Existing governance processes are reviewed to associate research with WACHS research principles and priorities.

Research is initiated within WACHS in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.



Direction | 2

BUILD RESEARCH CAPABILITY, CAPACITY AND CULTURE

In a contemporary health service, research capacity and capability needs to be developed in order to actively foster a culture of research, evaluation, continuous improvement and clinical excellence.

The ability for health and medical practitioners to undertake research projects, through the provision of adequate funding, time allocation and infrastructure, is often an important consideration when deciding where to work.

Clinicians are critical in initiating research in the regions and facilitating partnerships with universities and research institutes. Investing in people is important and providing opportunities and allocating time and resources to conduct research helps attract and retain staff.

WACHS will invest in current and future research capability by:

- enabling skills development
- providing training and mentoring opportunities
- supporting formal postgraduate study
- partnering with the WA Health Translation Network and other research bodies to develop tailored training packages and mentoring programs to build the skills of current WACHS employees.

In line with the draft WACHS Aboriginal Health Strategy 2018-23, Aboriginal staff are supported to develop their research capabilities and Aboriginal research methodologies and design will be promoted amongst all staff involved in research. Working in partnership with communities should underpin all of WACHS's research activity.

Providing clinical and non-clinical staff with support, capacity and capability enables them to undertake and embed research and evaluation in their practice. In-kind support in the form of clinical coverage provides clinicians and the workforce time to design studies, conduct research or evaluation, analyse data, and develop publications. This also helps to attract and retain high calibre staff.

Project initiatives that support post-doctoral research and clinical fellowships should be considered and designed to attract outstanding new researchers to the area of country health. Developing these projects in collaboration with research partners allows WACHS to support the additional capacity by providing ongoing training and professional development.

The establishment of a Research Office underpins the development of these programs and collaborations, enhancing the capability, quality and impact of research at WACHS.

OUTCOMES

A WACHS research function is developed

A Research Office is funded and commissioned to build on existing capacity and support and develop further research capability in WACHS. The office provides services to clinical, academic, support and research partners and performs the following tasks:

- promotes the strategic vision of WACHS research activity and executes the Strategy
- identifies, develops and facilitates research partnerships and collaborations
- drives initiatives to attract research funding for WACHS-led and partnered research projects
- provides advice on research and evaluation integrity and governance
- facilitates clinical and business process improvement through business validation and quality improvement research and evaluation
- handles contracts and intellectual property.

- A WACHS Research Office is established.
- A Director of Research is appointed and leads the research function.

Direction | 2

BUILD RESEARCH CAPABILITY, CAPACITY AND CULTURE

OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

WACHS facilitates clinical and non-clinical staff to develop skills and undertake research

WACHS builds on the research and evaluation capability of its workforce by enabling skills development, providing training and mentoring opportunities and supporting formal postgraduate study.

Training programs are developed in collaboration with partner organisations such as the WA Health Translation Network to support clinical and non-clinical staff who have an interest in research.

Programs focusing on regional training packages for early-mid career researchers build research capability and capacity at designated regional hospitals and across the WACHS regions. Research networks could also be initiated to connect interested staff across the organisation.

WACHS partners with universities to establish a research mentoring program to assist less-experienced researchers to develop their research capability. More experienced researchers can provide guidance in developing research projects and papers and writing successful research grants. Collaborations with universities and institutes help to develop multidisciplinary research teams and the internal skills necessary to write successful research grant applications.

- Clinical and non-clinical staff with an interest and intention of undertaking research are identified.
- Resources and training are provided to enable staff to understand, plan and conduct research and evaluation, and partner with leading research organisations.

WACHS is known as a centre of research excellence

WACHS dedicates resources and is known as a centre of research excellence, helping to attract and retain talented researchers.

Key initiatives that build excellence include:

- supporting post-doctoral research and clinical fellowships designed to attract outstanding new researchers to the area of country health
- providing ongoing training and professional development
- establishing career pathways for new researchers.

Excellent research requires high quality leaders as well as teams and resources to support the conduct of research. WACHS recruits appropriate support staff and supports researchers to develop teams of project staff, clinical research coordinators, epidemiologists and biostatisticians.

Legal resources are available to oversee the legal agreements set out between external commercial and non-commercial research and clinical trial sponsors.

The WACHS Library Service provides researchers with access to current evidence based resources to support research and point-of-care decision making. The Library service also assists researchers with guidance on research practices, best current resources and access to the whole of WA Health Librarians Network resources and knowledge.

- Research focused positions including post-doctoral and clinical fellowships and joint appointments are considered to attract promising new researchers to WACHS.
- Research support staff are recruited to support researchers within WACHS.
- The capacity of the WACHS Library Service is expanded to support the Research Office and advanced learning in evidence based practice.

Direction | 3

INVEST IN RESEARCH RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Conducting research is resource intensive, requires funding and equipment and close collaboration with research partners. The positive returns for communities are significant, and front-end investment is imperative.

Investing in infrastructure lays the foundation for leading-edge, international research. By assessing the current needs for infrastructure, equipment and facilities to support research in country WA, WACHS can create a long-term plan for the investment, use and upgrade of systems.

WA has access to world class health and medical research infrastructure and WACHS can partner with universities and research institutes to access the current network of research infrastructure. Working with collaborative groups such as the WA Health Translation Network, WACHS can assess what regional infrastructure and equipment may be needed to add value to the current state infrastructure as well as partnering to access what is already available in WA.

The health and medical research funding landscape is changing with the State Government introducing the new Future Health Research and Innovation Fund, worth \$35 million per annum, and the Commonwealth Medical Research Future Fund providing a \$20 billion investment in health and medical research. WACHS can pursue more funding opportunities to leverage existing state and national research funding and partner with industry bodies and other funding partners to pursue research that benefits country WA.

Country communities are known for their generosity and support for local activities. Regionally focused foundations can have beneficial impacts on local communities through locally driven research initiatives. WACHS will examine the feasibility of establishing its own foundation for health and medical research, in collaboration with supportive regional communities.

*Photo courtesy of Lions
Outback Vision*

OUTCOMES

Partner and invest in equipment and infrastructure needs

WACHS assesses current needs for research infrastructure focussing on:

- information infrastructure such as collections, archives, data banks and digital infrastructure that supports the collection, interpretation and use of large data
- high-quality clinical facilities with state-of-the-art equipment for testing, treatment and analysis
- partnership opportunities to access currently available infrastructure and equipment

- A review identifies opportunities to invest in research infrastructure, technology, systems, facilities and resources across WACHS, including a cost benefit analysis.
- Potential infrastructure funding schemes including state, federal and philanthropic funds that support the WACHS research function are identified and accessed.



Direction | 3

INVEST IN RESEARCH RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

Leveraging available state and federal funding

WACHS works with funding bodies, including state, federal and philanthropic, to develop collaborative funding models for research activities and priorities.

Better targeting of research towards WACHS's strategic objectives helps prioritise the projects supported for external funding and allows WACHS to develop projects and initiatives ready to co-fund with other partners. It also helps WACHS leverage existing investments, such as with the Digital Health Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), which is seeking industry priorities for projects and can provide PhD and other researchers to work on WACHS initiated projects.

- Potential research funding schemes for projects and people are identified and accessed.
- Partnership opportunities are assessed and progressed to support WACHS, community and clinician access to improved research infrastructure, clinical trials and population based research.

Evaluate the feasibility of a WACHS Research Foundation

WACHS examines the costs and benefits of establishing its own WACHS Research Foundation to focus on research in country WA. The feasibility assessment looks at funding sources available, governance requirements as well as costs and benefits of operating WACHS's own foundation.

- The value proposition of a WACHS Research Foundation is assessed

Photo courtesy of
Busselton Population
Medical Research Institute



Direction | 4

DISSEMINATE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE

As WACHS undertakes a greater role in country health research, this knowledge can drive changes in service delivery and policy, improving the health and wellbeing of people living in country WA.

The translation of research and innovation findings into practical service and clinical developments and improvements is vital to ensure efficient and effective health service delivery, service access and improved health outcomes.

WACHS seeks to drive a research agenda that can be readily applied to healthcare needs. Prioritising research and evaluation that supports, enables and monitors sustainable health service delivery improves access to timely and appropriate health care and closes the gap in health outcomes for those who are disadvantaged by living in more isolated regional and remote areas.

WACHS welcomes and encourages the research community to pursue these areas of research. Enabled by greater capacity, capability, infrastructure, funding and partnerships, WACHS will initiate and partner in priority areas for research.

The WACHS workforce and communities can identify areas where research and evaluation could help improve service delivery and equity of access. Co-designing research so it is relevant to on the ground needs helps promote translation of findings. It also builds a culture of using evidence to inform clinical practice and service delivery.

Translation of research often requires dissemination of knowledge as well as local champions to drive change. Establishing translation pathways and programs helps to support translation champions. All research funded or commissioned by WACHS will be disseminated across the service to ensure new knowledge gets to the frontline and consumers.

WACHS uses research to advocate for and inform changes in funding and policies to improve equity of access and health outcomes. The research also supports changes in business models for the implementation of digital innovations and new technologies.

Where appropriate, commercialisation can deliver economic and social benefits to country WA, and enable WACHS to deliver innovative market solutions.

WACHS will adopt an approach to management and ownership of intellectual property (IP) that is consistent with the State Government's IP policy, but encourages rather than inhibits innovative behaviour.

OUTCOMES

Build a culture of using evidence to support service delivery

Research funded by WACHS is co-designed with those on the ground to ensure it is relevant to country service providers and communities. This develops a culture of using evidence and ensures research is better targeted and more likely to be translated into practice.

- Work with local communities and providers to identify service delivery questions and issues to be investigated.
- Co-design research with local providers and consumers to ensure the findings and outcomes of research can be implemented into practice and the research addresses current service delivery requirements.

Photo courtesy of Busselton Population Medical Research Institute



Direction | 4

DISSEMINATE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE

OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

Establish translation pathways and champions

WACHS uses models from implementation science to establish translation pathways and identify champions to drive the implementation of new research.

Research translation plans and champions are developed and identified at the beginning of research projects to support translation and ensure the right people are engaged at the beginning of the research.

The WACHS Library Service disseminates current research, generated internally and externally to WACHS, to ensure new knowledge is available to those on the ground.

- Translation pathways are developed and champions for translation identified.
- Current research knowledge is disseminated along with findings from research commissioned by WACHS.

WACHS research drives equity in access and reduces disadvantage

WACHS works with the Department of Health and other funders to ensure policy and funding models are informed by research. Generalisable research on the economic and social outcomes of new service models as well as business models for new technologies help to inform changes in policy and practice on a larger scale.

Research undertaken in country WA is disseminated and made available to other health services not just in Australia but globally.

- WACHS uses research knowledge to inform policy and funding model changes particularly as they relate to equity of access.

*Photo courtesy of Busselton
Population Medical
Research Institute*



Direction | 4

DISSEMINATE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE

OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

Commercialisation, development and ownership of intellectual property

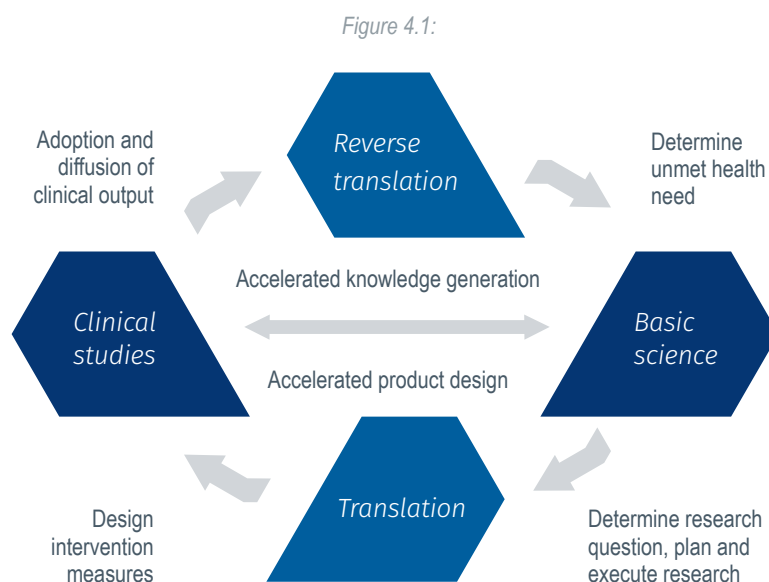
As a global leader in country health research, WACHS ensures alignment and consistent treatment of intellectual property (IP) in accordance with the WA Government IP policy in terms of:

- IP assets including data, created with government resources are identified, captured, suitably protected, responsibly managed, and transparently disposed of according to the key principles outlined in this policy.
- Rights to IP created with government resources are allocated to optimise the economic, social or environmental benefits for the State from the use, commercialisation and disposal of the IP.
- Employers and employees are encouraged to meet core operational objectives through creativity and innovation which may result in valuable and useful IP being developed and commercialised.
- Employees are recognised for their involvement in the development of IP.

- A globally competitive, innovative research capability developed by WACHS addresses worldwide market opportunities across the research and innovation continuum.
- WACHS advocates for a central point of access for potential investors and broader health sector partners to facilitate introductions to decision makers and other leaders with an interest in country WA.
- The approach to IP management and ownership incentivises, rather than impedes industry partners to contribute funding to and engage with our health and medical innovators.

Research and innovation are not linear processes with a fixed beginning and end, but dynamic processes that require the generation of knowledge in response to an unmet health need, the actioning of that knowledge to improve clinical outcomes, and the reassessment of unmet need thereafter.

Figure 4.1 presents a stylisation of the research and innovation lifecycle.



Measuring success

Over the lifetime of this Strategy, WACHS anticipates considerable growth in research and evaluation capacity, capability, activity and its reputation within the research community.

The Strategy sets out a clear and consistent direction to target funding and efforts. Periodic reviews will monitor and track performance in achieving the Strategy. High level indicators are outlined below. Baseline data will be obtained in the first phase of the implementation of the Strategy.

| INDICATOR | DIRECTION |
|---|------------------------|
| Increase in the number and type of research and evaluation initiatives supported by WACHS that align to the research priorities set out in this strategy. | Direction 1. |
| WACHS funding applications and investment decisions include a review of the supporting evidence base. | Directions 1 and 4. |
| Increase in the number of research and evaluation projects seeking to solve or understand current service delivery challenges for WACHS. | Directions 1 and 4. |
| Increase in successful competitive research funding applications initiated by WACHS. | Directions 1, 2 and 3. |
| Increase in external funding provided for research conducted at WACHS. | Directions 2 and 3. |
| Increase in the number and value of research collaborations and partnerships. | Directions 1 and 3. |
| Evaluation of the standard and quality of journals and other publications within which the research is published. | Directions 2 and 4. |
| Increase in the number of projects translating research into policy and practice. | Direction 4. |
| Increase in the number of research and evaluation projects accepted for presentation at state, national and international conferences. | Directions 2 and 4. |



Next steps

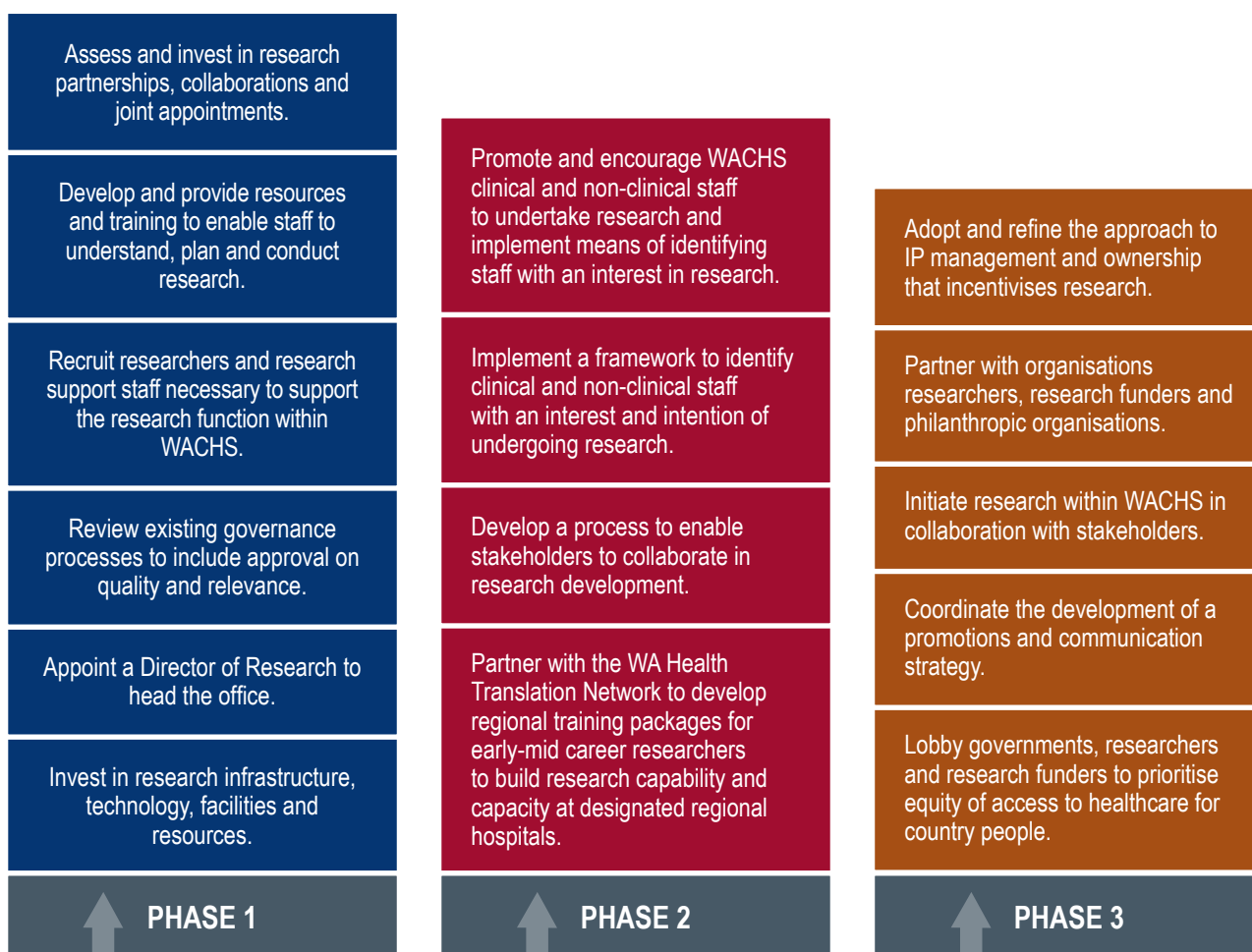
This Strategy guides WACHS's research investment decisions and governance towards achieving the vision of achieving global leadership in country health research and innovation.

There are three implementation phases to the Strategy. The first phase relates to the foundational elements required to build and develop a research function within WACHS, including investing in capacity and capability building, research resourcing requirements, partnerships and collaborations, reviewing governance arrangements and recruiting researchers and research support staff.

Phase two comprises of activities to initiate and drive research activity within WACHS including encouraging WACHS clinical and non-clinical staff to undertake research, supporting partnerships and collaboration with external stakeholders.

Phase three involves structured resourcing, funding allocation, partnerships, proactive lobbying, promotion and communication, as research activity becomes embedded within WACHS.

The figure below outlines a roadmap for research efforts and initiatives for WACHS to build research capability and achieve the vision of global leadership in country health research and innovation.



This document is available in
alternative formats on request.



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