

2023 - 2027



Research Strategy

Austin
HEALTH



Austin Health's three main campuses are on the lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respects to Wurundjeri Elders past and present and acknowledge the ongoing connections to land, waterways, culture and lore of the oldest living culture in the world.

We support the important role Indigenous people continuously hold in our society. We acknowledge the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander People and all Indigenous nations of the world, who continue to uplift communities and champion rights to land, water, language and traditions.

Let's shape the future by making Austin Health a great place to do research

I am delighted to introduce the Austin Health Research Strategy (2023-2027). International evidence tells us that research-rich health environments are better for patients and staff, delivering higher quality of care, reduced mortality, improved patient experience, increased staff satisfaction, and more efficient uptake of new innovation (AAHMS Report 2022).

Austin Health has an extensive record of world class research achievements in areas such as epilepsy, stroke, dementia, diabetes, obesity, organ transplantation, critical care medicine, metabolic bone disease, infectious diseases, respiratory medicine, cancer and haematology medicine, mental health and many other fields. While individually productive, there is potential to enhance output and recognition by engendering greater

connectivity between different departments (including University of Melbourne departments), institutes and external partners in a focussed team research effort.

The Research Strategy includes 12 Strategic Action Points that collectively will support an enhanced contribution by Austin Health to improved patient care through research.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Best".

Professor James Best
Director Research

Our Strategic Outcomes and Values



Our actions show we care



We bring our best



Together we achieve



We shape the future

Austin Health delivers outstanding patient care across a broad range of specialty and community medicine.

There is a commitment across all sections of the organisation to five core Strategic Outcomes.

Research is a fundamental part of delivering on these outcomes and achieving the purpose and vision of Austin Health.

These goals are underpinned by our purpose of ‘Helping people live healthy, productive and fulfilled lives’ and our vision of ‘Shaping the future through exceptional care, discovery and learning’.



Excellence

Organisation wide integration
of research activity

The goal of research in a healthcare setting is to improve patient care. Clinician researchers are motivated by the potential to offer their patients better quality and length of life.

To ensure this can happen at Austin Health, we will:

1

Develop 'Flagship' research programs, with a 'team research', multi-disciplinary approach.

2

Support PhD students, postdocs, early career clinicians through mentorship, training programs and facilitated interactions.

3

Revamp and co-ordinate a currently dispersed clinical trials program to position Austin Health as a leader, particularly in clinical trials that align with the flagship research programs.

4

Engage patients/ consumers in all aspects of the research process.



Partnership

Leveraging and enhancing internal and external interactions

A key issue that was frequently raised during the 12-month consultation period was fragmentation of the research effort at Austin Health. Many hospital departments have outstanding research track records and have excellent current capability.

To create long standing partnerships, we will:

1

Enhance connectivity amongst Austin Health based research institutes, university and hospital departments, craft groups through collaboration and shared facilities.

2

Leverage external partnerships with universities, Melbourne Academic Centre for Health and external Medical Research Institutes.

3

Explore a closer research partnership with Mercy Hospital for Women and other hospitals, establishing a medical research alliance.

4

Consider international strategic partnerships with other healthcare organisations.



Infrastructure

Strengthening research support

Fragmentation of the research activity across Austin Health diminishes impact and often duplicates effort.

To facilitate interaction between the complex variety of research groups, support students, postdocs and early career clinician researchers, provide access to all the components along the research pathway and support the clinical trials enterprise, the major strategy is the establishment of a **Translational Research Institute (TRI)**.

To ensure that Austin Health has the required infrastructure, we will:

1

Provide infrastructure/enablers to streamline the mechanics of research, including a changed role for the Institute of Breathing and Sleep as a TRI hub to support research operations.

2

Establish a co-ordinated program in health informatics and clinical data science.

3

Revise and strengthen research governance, policy and procedures, with an emphasis on risk management.

4

Work with the Austin Health Foundation and Corporate Communications to increase recognition of Austin Research by government and community.

From today...



Siloed research groups working towards individual aims.

No centralised tracking for PhD students.

Smaller clinical trial groups can lack expertise and resources in trial management.

Low consumer involvement in project design.



Fragmentation of research between research institutes, university and hospital departments.

Poor external partnerships to access research infrastructure.

Underdeveloped relationship with Mercy Hospital for Women.

Lack of connection with international partners.




Immature research infrastructure.

Little support for health information and clinical information science.

Limited research governance, policy and procedures as per the Ernst and Young audit report.

Reduced recognition of research by the government and community.

to 2027




Strong collaborative effort across the Austin campus, with sharing of best practice between the 'Flagships'.

Development of a mentorship program for PhD students to receive training and advice on their career pathway.

Establish a centralised clinical trials facility that will support clinical trials.

Write an Austin Health research policy in consultation with consumers and partner with VACCHO.



Establishment of a Campus Research Working Group.

A hub of MISCH will be established at the Austin Hospital campus.

Create a stronger relationship with Mercy Hospital for Women.

Identify the five most significant partnerships and look to formalise a relationship.



Develop the TRI.

The DARE Centre will formalise an international connection with a peer partner in the health informatics field.

Develop a research management and a post-approval risk base monitoring process.

Engage with the Austin Health Foundation and Corporate Communications to increase the visibility of research.

Our Strategy



Summary

Healthcare institutions that are active in research are providing patient care at the highest level.

This Strategic Plan aims to make Austin Health a great place to do research, that will improve patient care and enhance work satisfaction.

