

FHMRI

Annual Report

2025

FHMRI Strategy on a page

Vision

Healthy, Thriving Communities

Aspiration

Worldclass Health & Medical Research Institute

5 Strategic Priorities

Excellence

Foster scientific excellence and impact in areas of strength

Supportive Environments

Create systems and culture promoting excellence, diversity and inclusion

Collaboration

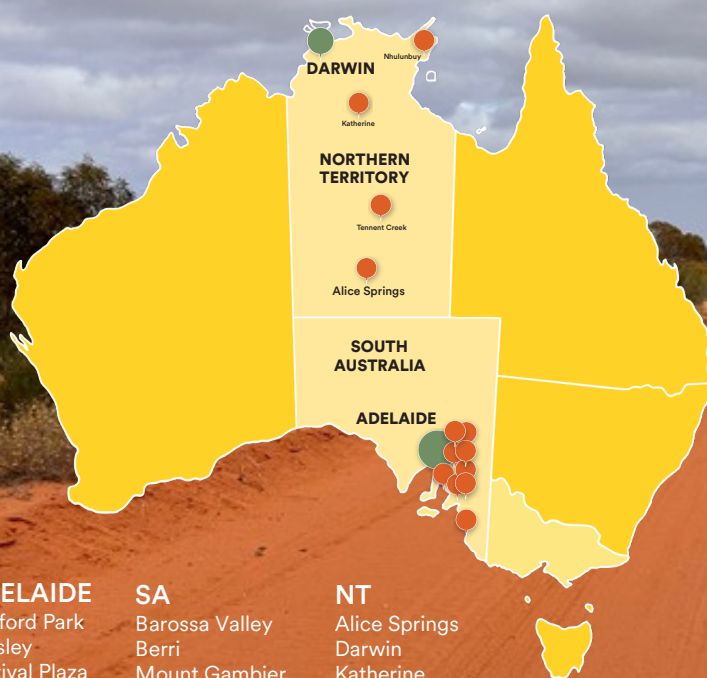
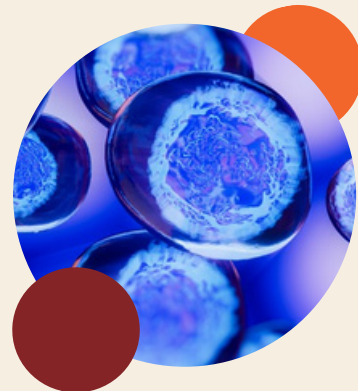
Strengthen and expand collaborations and partnerships

Equity

Advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing

Research Impact

Actively facilitate translation of research into health and social policy, practice and outcomes



ADELAIDE
Bedford Park
Tonsley
Festival Plaza

SA
Barossa Valley
Berri
Mount Gambier
Murray Bridge
Renmark
Victor Harbour

NT
Alice Springs
Darwin
Katherine
Nhulunbuy
Tennant Creek

Acknowledgment of Country

Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which its campuses are located; these are the Traditional Lands of Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the Southeast, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders and Custodians past, present and emerging.

Flinders University uses the term 'Indigenous' when referring to the programs and strategies and 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' when referring to peoples.

Photo: Maralinga Tjarutja, South Australia by A/Prof. Courtney Ryder.

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Director's Message

What a year 2025 was for FHMRI, achieving its strongest ever year of NHMRC funding.

It was also the year that seven of our researchers won NHMRC Investigator grants, growing our community of externally funded fellows to 43. Attracting this funding is important, not only because funding enables the research to happen, but also because the NHMRC represents excellence and impact.

There is no doubt that FHMRI research impact has intensified over the last five years, underpinned by a trebling of research income.

In 2025, FHMRI's research impact was included as one of only 12 NHMRC impact case studies to be showcased nationally. The case study describes the life-changing work of the Australian Corneal Graft Registry (ACGR), a collaboration between FHMRI and the co-located Flinders Medical Centre. Since its commencement in 1985, the ACGR has captured information of over 48,000 grafts, using data contributed by more than 1,000 ophthalmic surgeons. The ACGR captures information on over 90% of grafts performed in Australia, leading to improved vision for many thousands of people each year.

In 2025, the NHMRC also recognised FHMRI's best practice in involving consumers and community in research by showcasing as a case study, the *Nra:gi Ya:yun* (healthy foods) project: Co-designing a Diabetes remission Initiative on Ngarrindjeri Country.

Centering Indigenous knowledge, the program used strength-based approaches and knowledge interface methodology to combine Aboriginal dietary knowledge with recent scientific evidence on the effects of ketogenic diets on diabetes remission. This deep community leadership will ensure that the research of the *Nra:gi Ya:yun* project will benefit thousands of community members.

Behind these impacts, and more, was an extraordinary amount of work. During the year, our researchers submitted 385 funding applications as lead investigators, that is 7 grants per week, earning \$1.4 million per week in successful grants to FHMRI. Over 1700 papers were published in 2025. This included research featured in high-impact journals such as *Nature*, *The Lancet*, *The New England Journal of Medicine* and *JAMA*.

FHMRI researchers did this all while working on 518 active and funded projects.

A particularly important milestone in 2025 was the establishment of the FHMRI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, which strengthened Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, voice and accountability across our research.

While the numbers told an impressive story, FHMRI's success was ultimately about people.

Thank you to our researchers, professional staff, students, consumers, communities, partners, committees and supporters for making 2025 such an exceptional year.

I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together and grateful to everyone who contributed to FHMRI's impact throughout the year.



Professor Billie Bonevski

Dean Research, Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute
Director, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University

FHMRI 2025 Highlights



Our People

- **600** Researchers
- **257** Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students
- **100+** Consumer and Community Advisors
- **44** Researchers named in the **Stanford/Elsevier Top 2% list**
- **SA Science Excellence and Innovation Award** 2025 finalist for South Australian Motor Neurone Disease Clinical and Research Team (SAMCART)



Research Funding

- **\$53 million** income
- **\$27.6 million** NHMRC grants awarded in 2025
- **\$9 million** MRFF grants awarded in 2025
- **516 active** funded projects



Sustainable Development Goals

- **515 FHMRI research outputs** linked to United Nations SDG #3, Good Health and Well-being



Publications & Impact

- **1,800+** peer-reviewed journal publications (*SciVal, Aug 2026*)
- **2.6** Field-Weighted Citation Impact
- **17% of publications** in the **top 10%** of most cited globally
- **3%** in the **top 1% globally**



Media & Engagement

- LinkedIn **followers doubled to 2,649** followers (and growing!)
- **2910 Media mentions**
- **43.05 million** cumulative reach
- **\$60.22 million** estimated advertising space rate value

Researcher Education Development



In 2025, **Researcher Education and Development (FHMRI-RED)** facilitated a range of professional development opportunities, with a large number focused on supporting HDR students and ECRs. Initiatives included workshops, mentoring, communities of practice, grant application review panels and seminars by visiting speakers.

Inspiring Leaders Seminar Series

Prof. David MacIntyre - Imperial College London, "The pregnancy microbiome"

Prof. Nicole Rankin - University of Melbourne, "Lung cancer screening: The compelling case for implementation"

Dr. Lachlan Smith - University of Pennsylvania, "Skeletal disease in the mucopolysaccharidoses: Emerging treatments and ongoing challenges"

Prof. Lezanne Ooi - University of Wollongong, "Neuronal and glial phenotypes of ALS and FTD"

Prof. Peter van Wijngaarden - Florey Institute, "Imaging the eye to see the brain"

Prof. Joseph Trapani AO - Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, "Small molecule inhibitors of lymphocyte perforin as focused immunosuppressants for auto-immune and post-infectious immunopathologies"

Prof. Laura Downie - University of Melbourne, "Corneal immunology and tear film analysis as a gateway to understanding human health"

Prof. Fiona Blyth AM - University of Sydney, "A path through pain – building a career in an emerging field"

Prof. Thomas Cox - Garvin Institute, "The extracellular matrix: More than just a scaffold"

Mentoring Program

The FHMRI Mentoring Program uses a group mentoring model, bringing together groups of four to five HDR students with two senior research mentors. In 2025, the program supported 22 mentees with the guidance of 10 mentors.

Designed to complement the broader mentoring initiatives offered through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) portfolio, the program provides HDR students with support and guidance outside their supervisory team. It aims to help students develop professional skills and attributes, expand their networks, and strengthen their future career opportunities.



Activity highlights

- **“Scientific writing for healthcare journals”** workshop series.
- **“Data visualisation”** workshop series.
- Flinders Foundation health seed grant EMCR peer review panel.
- **“You can’t ask that”** session at College Retreat.
- **Research Roundtables:** FHMRI-RED Overview, Industry engagement opportunities, Franklin Women.
- **HDR Community of Practice events:** Coffee Catch-ups, Skills & Snacks Workshops, Journal Club
- **ECR Community of Practice events:** Coffee Catch-ups, Science in the Pub
- **Clinician HDR and ECR** welcome event.



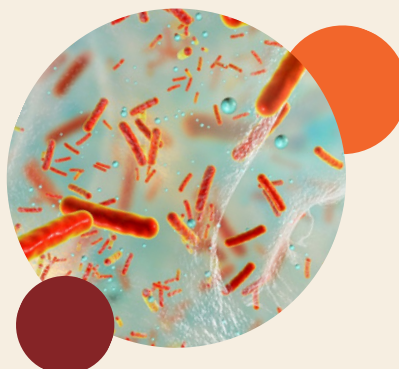
Photo: Inspiring Leaders Seminar - Prof. Thomas Cox (Garvan Institute)



Photo: Inspiring Leaders Seminar - Prof. Lezanne Ooi (University of Wollongong)

Research Roundtables

- **Franklin Women** - Dr. Melina Georgousakis
- **Transdisciplinary initiatives and 2025 plans** - Prof. Vincent Bulone
- **FHMRI-RED overview and introduction** - A/Prof. Amy Reynolds
- **FHMRI Research Development and Support** - RDS-FHMRI team
- **Industry HDRs – What do supervisors need to know?** - Nilla Wen, Prof. Lucy Lewis and panel
- **Finance matters for researchers** - Carine Thorpe
- **Consumer and Community Involvement** - Dr. Miia Rahja and Chris Trethewey
- **Research Marketing Strategy** - Peta Pool
- **Your Research and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals** - Ros Clermont and Fiona Butcher
- **From Numbers to Knowledge: Elevating Statistical Partnerships at Flinders** - Prof. Murthy Mittinty
- **Developing a budget for grant applications** - Dr. Jacqui Morey and Dr. Rebecca Keough
- **CMPH Tech services** - Dr. Andrew Blyth, Elise Tucker and Letitia Clark
- **Partnerships with Industry - Accelerating Your Research: How the Adelaide Intermediary Program Can Help and what partnering looks like from a researcher perspective** - MTPConnect SA Director Dana Bell, Prof. Krasimir Vasilev
- **BioPlatforms update 2025** - BioPlatforms team
- **University Rankings** - Adam Gardner and team
- **Flinders Clinical Trials Platform** - Dr. Kelly Loffler
- **End of year housekeeping for researchers** - CMPH Finance, People & Culture, Research Development & Support
- **Social Media for Researchers** - Simone Baker and A/Prof. Yee Lian Chew



Celebrating Students



HDR Student Growth

55 NEW HDR students commenced
50 PhD | 5 Masters
31 HDR completions. *Celebrating success.*

Pathways to Research

Road to Research
HDR recruitment event
104 students and staff
Inspiring the next generation.



Scholarships

16 Undergraduate Summer Scholarships awarded
Supporting future researchers.

Research Communities

4 Communities of Practice
> HDR Students, ECRs, Clinician ECR,
Professional Research Staff
Building skills, networks and research careers.



Student Success

FHMRI students are integral to our research community. They receive training in health and medical research, along with broad, transferable skills that prepare them for diverse career paths. We are proud to see so many of our graduates go on to become future leaders in the sector.

**Connecting people. Building capability.
Strengthening research.**



2025 HDR student completions

Katherine Mary Boschen, PhD. Thesis title *“NDIS Participants with Psychosocial Disabilities: Investigating their formal supports following a life-limiting diagnosis”*
Supervisors: Sharon Lawn, Carolyn Phelan

Thomas Darcy Burton, PhD. Thesis title *“Molecular dissection and targeting of the dengue virus NS1 protein”*
Supervisors: Nick Eyre, Jill Carr, Michael Beard

Sue Ursula Bertossa, PhD. Thesis title *“A phenomenological study of gambling and Vietnamese Australians”*
Supervisors: Kate Fairweather, Sharon Lawn

Michael Richard Couper, PhD. Thesis title *“Advancements and Areas of Need in Paediatric Liver disease, Intestinal and Pancreatic Transplantation”*
Supervisor: Scott Morris

Katharina Denk, PhD. Thesis title *“Hip fracture management: The role of hand grip strength as a predictor and outcome measure”*
Supervisors: Ruurd Jaarsma, Job Doomberg, Kimberley Ruxton

Siobhan Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, PhD. Thesis title *“Rectus diastasis of parity: Incidence, treatment, and outcomes”*
Supervisors: Nicola Dean, David Watson, Tamara Crittenden

Demi Kay Georgiou, PhD. Thesis title *“Functional characterisation of pregnancy zone protein and its relationship with maternal characteristics and pregnancy outcomes”*
Supervisors: Amy Wyatt, Claire Roberts, Tanja Karasoulos

Nicholas Andrew Gray, PhD. Thesis title *“Chronic kidney disease and selected domains of health equity (rurality, socioeconomic status, caregivers)”*
Supervisors: Jonathan Craig, Stephen McDonald

Alisha Guyett, PhD. Thesis title *“Applying Circadian-Informed Lighting to Accelerate Circadian Adjustment to Simulated Night Shifts”*
Supervisors: Nicole Lovato, Peter Catcheside, Hannah Scott

Ali Habib, PhD. Thesis title *“Development of Ferroptosis-Inducing Liposomes to Target Multiple Myeloma”*
Supervisors: Craig Wallington-Gates, Giles Best, Clive Prestidge

Amandi Nethma Abeysena Hiyare Hewage, PhD. Thesis title *“Chronic Kidney Disease in young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples: understanding links between sociodemographic factors and healthcare use”*
Supervisors: Jacqueline Stephens, Jonathan Craig, Armando Teixeira-Pinto

Loraine Dawn House, PhD. Thesis title *“What are the experiences of peer support for veterans within a military-style motorcycle club?”*
Supervisors: Louise Roberts, Sharon Nanai

Anowarul Islam, PhD. Thesis title *“Metabolic effects of aneuploidy and their relevance to cancer and neurological phenotypes”*
Supervisors: Stephen Gregory, Binoy Appukuttan, Leanne Dibbens

Stephen Matthew Rodgers Johnson, PhD. Thesis title *“Identifying and interrogating human host cell factors associated with dengue virus NS1 secretion and internalisation.”*
Supervisors: Nick Eyre, Jill Carr

Vassilios Karnaros, PhD. Thesis title *“The discovery and validation of biomarker candidates of immune dysfunction in Motor Neuron Disease”*
Supervisors: Mary-Louise Rogers, Tim Chataway

2025 HDR student completions (continued...)

Reegan Kate Knowles, PhD. Thesis title “Supporting Self-Management of Cardiovascular Disease and its Risk Factors in People Diagnosed with Cancer”
Supervisors: Bogda Koczwara, Michelle Holland, Emma Kemp

Kristina Lambrakis, PhD. Thesis title “Will Evolving the Universal Definition of Myocardial Infarction Improve Care and Outcomes?”
Supervisors: Derek Chew, Sam Lehman

Lachlan Meyers, PhD. Thesis title “The role of UGT enzymes as novel modulators of lipid biosynthesis in breast cancer”
Supervisors: Robyn Meech, Julie-Ann Hulin

Bridget Abbey Mooney, PhD. Thesis title “Environment-dependent regulation of mitosis and cytokinesis by AMP-Activated Protein Kinase”
Supervisors: Janni Petersen, Karen Lower, Iain Hagan

Rachel Lauris Mynott, PhD. Thesis title “Investigating ferroptosis as an approach to treating multiple myeloma”
Supervisors: Craig Wallington-Gates, Giles Best, Scott Ayton

Todd Matthew Pryce, PhD. Thesis title “Molecular Diagnostic Approaches Responding to New Challenges in Clinical Microbiology”
Supervisors: Jill Carr, James Flexman

Jing Xian Quah, PhD. Thesis title “Renewal AF. A novel quantitative method assessing fibrillatory dynamics in patients with atrial fibrillation. Mechanistic and therapeutic implications”
Supervisors: Anand Ganesan, Dani Dharmapran

Vinitha Nair Ragavan, PhD. Thesis title “Cotutelle: The biochemical and physiological properties of dimethylarginine dimethylaminohydrolase (DDAH) isoforms”
Supervisors: Arduino Mangoni, Roman Rodionov

Aelon Rahmani, PhD. Thesis title “Exploring the regulation of associative learning in *C. elegans* by protein proximity-labelling”
Supervisors: Yee Lian Chew, Amy Wyatt

Rekha Ravutha Gounden, MSurg. Thesis title “Patient predictors of requiring a tracheostomy and associated effects on length of stay and mortality in the Intensive Care Unit”
Supervisors: Eng Ooi, Shailesh Bihari

Samuel Rollin, PhD. Thesis title “Resolving the Androgen Receptor Enigma of Prostate Cancer”
Supervisors: Luke Selth, Michael Michael

James Alexander Sallis, MSc. Thesis title “The Cost of a Bleed – A Retrospective Analysis of Non-Variceal Upper Gastrointestinal Bleeding in Hospital-Inpatients”
Supervisors: Jon Karnon, Cameron Phillips, Greg Roberts

Harman Sharma, PhD. Thesis title “Role of Bladder Sensory Neurons in Urinary Tract Infection and Chronic Bladder Hypersensitivity”
Supervisors: Luke Grundy, Steven Taylor, Simon Brookes

Bunu Tamang, PhD. Thesis title “Biorefinery Process and Health-promoting Product Development of Hengshan Astragalus Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*) Mushroom”
Supervisors: Wei Zhang, Kirsten Heiman, Jean Winter

Cindy Tay, PhD. Thesis title “Determining the contribution of muscular and mucosal afferents to bladder sensory signalling in health and disease”
Supervisors: Luke Grundy, Andrea Harrington

Ellen Louise Wynn, PhD. Thesis title “It’s essential, and it’s expensive”: investigating Australian households’ everyday experiences of fruit and vegetable procurement”
Supervisors: Annabelle Wilson, Emma Tonkin, Trevor Webb

FHMRI fellows commencing in 2025

Dr. Beck O’Hara - National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific Trials Network Post-Doctoral Fellowship

Prof. David Currow - NHMRC Investigator

A/Prof. Amy Reynolds - ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

Dr. Danny Tsai - The Hospital Research Foundation Fellowship

Dr. Jean Winter - Cancer Council SA Mid-career Fellowship

Dr. Vi Khanh Truong - ARC Future Fellowship

Prof. Andrew Phillips - ARC Future Fellowship

Dr. Ash Hocking - iCare NSW – Dust Diseases Board Post-Doctoral Fellowship

Prof. James Smith - ARC Mid-Career Industry Fellowship

Dr. Hanif Haidari - NHMRC Investigator

Dr. Steven Taylor - NHMRC Investigator



HDR Milestone Presentations

More than **100 presentations** by HDR students were held during 2025, as students presented their research progress milestones at the Friday lunchtime forum.

- **39** presented their **Confirmation of Candidature**
- **33** presented their **Mid-Candidature Review**
- **42** presented their **Final Thesis Review**



Photo: Skills & Snacks workshop developed and facilitated by the HDR Community of Practice



Photo: HDR networking and peer discussion

FHMRI Flinders 3MT winners

Heat winner:

Luka Ilic - *"Magic, Microbes, and the Immune System"*

Runners Up:

Stefano Zaccagnini - *"Alcohol: Midlife Crisis or Crisis in a Bottle?"*

Ruth Canty - *"Tobacco in the Top End"*



Photo: Luka Ilic



Photo: Stefano Zaccagnini



Photo: Ruth Canty



FHMRI *Eye and Vision*

From Discovery to Diagnosis: Translating Glaucoma Research into Global Impact

Groundbreaking glaucoma genetics research developed at FHMRI is now improving the early detection of one of the world's leading causes of irreversible blindness through a globally commercialised precision medicine innovation.

Research within the FHMRI Eye and Vision Flagship has progressed from scientific discovery to clinical application through the successful commercialisation of glaucoma genetics research. Co-founded by Prof. Jamie Craig and collaborators, Seonix Bio was established to translate decades of internationally recognised research into practical tools that improve patient care.

The result is SightScore™, an innovative genetic risk assessment that helps ophthalmologists and optometrists identify people at increased risk of developing glaucoma and tailor care to their individual genetic profile.

Glaucoma is often referred to as the “silent thief of sight” because irreversible vision loss can occur before symptoms become apparent. By identifying those at greatest genetic risk earlier, SightScore™ has the potential to support earlier intervention, more personalised monitoring and better long-term visual outcomes.

Built using some of the world's largest glaucoma genetics datasets, the technology combines information from millions of genetic variants into a single genetic risk score. What began as research in South Australia has now become a clinical tool used by eye care professionals across Australasia, Singapore and North America, demonstrating the global reach and influence of FHMRI research.

The success of Seonix Bio highlights the power of translational research to move discoveries beyond the laboratory and into everyday clinical practice. By transforming world-leading science into a commercial innovation, the research is improving clinical decision-making, advancing precision medicine and strengthening South Australia's reputation as a leader in biotechnology and eye health research.

This is research with global impact, turning scientific discovery into real-world solutions that help preserve sight and improve lives.



Photo: Prof. Jamie Craig



Photo: Ophthalmology diagnostic vision test

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FHMRI Sleep Health

Protecting the Health Workforce Before the First Night Shift

FHMRI research is transforming how future healthcare professionals prepare for shift work, identifying undiagnosed sleep disorders before students enter the workforce and improving the health and safety of both clinicians and patients.

Each year, thousands of nursing, paramedicine and medical graduates begin shift work, often unaware they are living with an undiagnosed sleep disorder. Affecting around one in five young adults, these conditions can increase the risk of fatigue, workplace errors, motor vehicle accidents and poor health outcomes.

Led by A/Prof. Amy Reynolds, the Sleep Check Before Shift Work Trial, funded by the Lifetime Support Authority and conducted through the AISH Sleep Health Clinics, investigated how early identification and treatment of sleep disorders could better prepare healthcare students for the demands of shift work.

Students who screened positive for a sleep disorder underwent comprehensive overnight sleep studies and received a formal diagnosis, education and supported pathways to treatment. Many also completed a simulated night shift, providing valuable insights into the effects of fatigue on performance before entering the workforce.

The research demonstrated that early intervention works. Within 12 months of diagnosis, almost 74 per cent of participants had sought treatment for their sleep disorder, compared with just 14 per cent of young adults in the broader community. The findings show that when young people are equipped with the right information, timely diagnosis and access to care, they take action to improve their health. The study has implications well beyond the university setting. It highlights an often-overlooked workforce challenge, with healthcare graduates entering clinical environments while unknowingly managing untreated sleep disorders.

Addressing these conditions before shift work begins has the potential to improve staff wellbeing, reduce fatigue-related incidents and enhance patient safety. Inspired by these findings, Flinders University has established Australia's first dedicated Sleep Shift Work Clinic for healthcare students, providing free sleep health assessments, diagnosis and treatment support before students transition into clinical practice.

This research is reshaping how we prepare the future health workforce, demonstrating that protecting healthcare workers, and the patients they care for, starts long before their first night shift.



Photo: Sleep Check team (Back Row): Phuc Nguyen, Cham Nguyen, Katrina Nguyen, Claire Dunbar, Alisha Guyett, Ashley Montero, Robert Adams, Gemma Robertson, Molly-Eve Day **(Front Row):** Nicole Lovato, Amy Reynolds, Kelly Sansom, Andrew Vakulin

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FHMRI Cancer

Research Driven by Patients, Improving Bladder Cancer Care

A research question shaped by patients is now driving a clinical trial that could improve the lives of people undergoing bladder cancer treatment by reducing debilitating side effects and helping more patients complete life-saving therapy.

For people receiving BCG immunotherapy, the standard treatment for non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer, treatment can come at a significant cost. Side effects are common, often severe, and can prevent patients from completing the full course of therapy. Despite their impact, there is currently no standard treatment available to prevent or relieve these symptoms.

Led by Dr. Luke Grundy, this FHMRI research program began by listening to patients. Through consumer consultation coordinated by BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia, people with lived experience helped identify the most pressing challenge facing those undergoing treatment. Their insights shaped the research from the outset, ensuring it addressed an issue that matters most to patients.

The multidisciplinary program brings together laboratory scientists, clinicians, researchers and students to translate discovery into patient benefit. Dr. Grundy's team identified hypersensitivity of the sensory nerves that signal bladder fullness as a key biological mechanism underlying treatment side effects. Working alongside urologists at Flinders Medical Centre, the team is investigating ways to target these pathways using existing medicines, offering a faster and more cost-effective path to improving patient care than developing new therapies.

Higher Degree by Research students and an MD Advanced Studies student are embedded throughout the program, contributing across every stage of the translational research journey. Consumers have remained active partners throughout, ensuring the research continues to reflect patient priorities and lived experience.

The program has now progressed to a clinical trial investigating whether the repurposed drug phenazopyridine hydrochloride, commonly used to relieve bladder pain associated with urinary tract infections, can reduce the side effects of BCG immunotherapy.

Participants will complete symptom assessments throughout their treatment, allowing researchers to compare outcomes between those receiving the medication and those receiving a placebo.

If successful, the study could establish a new standard of care for managing treatment-related side effects, helping more patients complete their therapy, improving quality of life and ultimately enhancing treatment outcomes.

This research demonstrates how patient partnership, multidisciplinary collaboration and translational science can accelerate discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic, delivering meaningful improvements in cancer care.

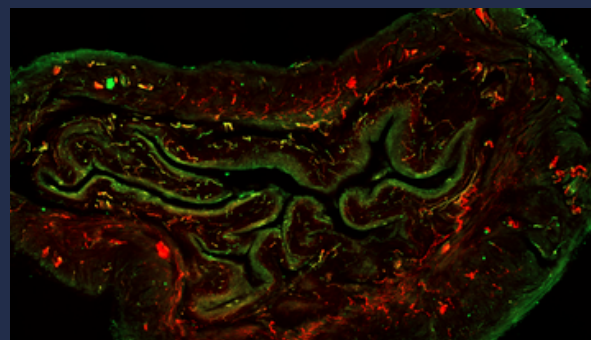


Photo: Visualisation of the sensory nerves in the bladder wall, central to the study



Photo: BEAT bladder cancer Australia annual charity walk

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FHMRI Health Equity

Community-Led Research Creates Lasting Change in Remote NT

What began as a partnership to strengthen men's social and emotional wellbeing has grown into an award-winning, community-led initiative that is improving healthcare engagement, and creating lasting change across remote Northern Territory communities.

When FHMRI researchers were invited to Nauiyu to explore ways to strengthen men's social and emotional wellbeing and improve engagement with primary healthcare, the result was far more than a research project. It became a powerful demonstration of how research, grounded in local leadership and cultural knowledge, can deliver lasting health and social impact.

Central to the initiative was a culturally grounded men's group, co-designed with the community and delivered in partnership with local leaders John Bonson and Ingrid Schreiner. During the project, they established Mamulbak, a community organisation that coordinated the men's group and a local Governance Group. John Bonson also joined the research team as a community researcher, helping ensure the project remained accountable to community priorities throughout.

Over two years, 82 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men participated in 63 weekly sessions, representing 59 per cent of all adult men in the community. Together, participants co-designed a culturally safe health check model that significantly increased engagement with preventative healthcare. The group also became a trusted space for dialogue during periods of community tension, supporting conflict resolution, strengthening social cohesion and reinforcing community leadership.

The initiative also transformed how services engaged with the community. In a setting with few established pathways for collaboration, the men's group became a trusted platform connecting local men with 26 service providers. Built on cultural authority and mutual trust, it created new opportunities for meaningful engagement and improved access to support.

The project's impact has extended well beyond the research period. Mamulbak received the 2025 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Award at the Northern Territory Mental Health Week Awards, recognising its outstanding contribution to community wellbeing.

The NT Primary Health Network has also recognised the initiative as best practice, providing ongoing investment that has enabled Mamulbak to continue the men's group while expanding its work through Women's Groups and the Positive Choices Program.

The success of the model is now informing initiatives in other very remote Northern Territory communities, including Milikapiti, through a Heart Foundation First Nations Cardiovascular Research Grant co-led by Cameron Stokes and Dr. Bryce Brickley. By integrating social and emotional wellbeing with culturally responsive approaches to healthcare, this work is helping build more equitable cardiovascular health outcomes across remote Australia.

This project demonstrates the enduring impact of research that is led with communities, guided by cultural knowledge and designed to create meaningful, sustainable change.



Photo: Prof. James Smith, Cameron Stokes, John Bonson, Ingrid Schreiner and Dr. Bryce Brickley. Mamulbak Social and Emotional Wellbeing Award at the Northern Territory Mental Health Week Awards

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POCHE SA+NT

Advancing Indigenous Data Sovereignty in Genomics: Developing a National Stewardship Model.

As one of the five Poche Centres for Indigenous Health in Australia, Poche SA+NT is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the Australian central corridor. Guided by the vision of Mr Greg Poche AO, the late Kay Van Norton Poche AO, and supported by Mr Reg Richardson AM, the team remains committed to creating spaces where Indigenous knowledge, leadership, and community priorities shape research and education.

Through a collaboration with the Australian Alliance for Indigenous Genomics (ALIGN), researchers are contributing to CONNECT, a national, multidisciplinary study led by Indigenous researchers and their scientific and institutional allies. The genomics program will inform the development of a functional Indigenous Genomics Stewardship model and harmonised data management processes to further national and technical standards in the use of genetic and non-genetic data to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander genomics.

This work, grounded in an Indigenist research methodology, adopts a range of methods to ensure an evidence-based, collective approach as follows:

- Exploratory collective case studies to understand and compare the current processes for the collection, use, storage, management, and governance of Indigenous genomic data.
- Social Network Analysis to map the current data landscape for Indigenous genomics infrastructure and workflows in Australian genomics programs.
- Deliberative consensus building to drive engagement and consultation with national stakeholders and enacted through two national workshops.

To date, the program has generated 20 interconnected data sources which have been triangulated for analysis and refined through consensus building by national workshops and governance processes.

May 2025 saw the team host their second National workshop 'Advancing Indigenous Data Sovereignty in Genomics' in Tarntanya. The workshop focused on sharing the preliminary findings of the research to multi-disciplinary stakeholders, including community members, policy, government, health, and research industry representatives.

The next phase of work will involve integrating findings into implementation plans, identifying not only the leverage points in policy and legislation but the motivators of the various agents engaged in this space, and how best to strengthen capabilities and capacities across the system to support long-term adoption.



Photo: Participants at the National workshop on 'Advancing Indigenous Data Sovereignty in Genomics', 2025

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National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

New team to inform SA government priorities and progress in alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and other drugs

Alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use comprise three of the seven leading risk factors contributing to disease burden in Australia. The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) has secured funding from Preventive Health SA to establish a new team to inform South Australian government priorities and monitor progress in reducing harms from substance use in the state.

The Substance Use Research and Evaluation (SURE) program will provide independent, high-quality expert research, monitoring and evaluation services. Co-directed by Prof. Jacqueline Bowden, with expertise in alcohol and illicit drugs, and Prof. Richard Edwards, with expertise in tobacco and e-cigarettes, the SURE Program will monitor progress against key South Australian strategies, including the SA Tobacco Control Strategy and SA Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy, and inform strategic initiatives across these areas.

As part of the program, the SURE team will derive insights from key datasets including population health surveys, hospitals, treatment services, and wastewater monitoring.

The team will undertake evaluations of activities such as social marketing campaigns, as well as strategic advice based on evidence syntheses, facilitating the translation of research into practice and effective public health responses.

The core SURE team is supported by a multidisciplinary group of academics from across Flinders University and draws on the expertise of a broader network of alcohol, tobacco and other drug researchers across Australia.

NCETA looks forward to the valuable contribution the SURE Program will make to strengthening the evidence base and supporting effective responses to substance use in South Australia.



Photo: SURE team (Front Row) Prof. Richard Edwards, Prof. Jacqueline Bowden **(Back row)** Sarah Powell, Dr. Ashlea Bartram, Chloe McDonough, Dr. Stine Hoj, Nathan Harrison

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International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing

Changing lives for the better: Advancing acute care point-of-care testing in the Northern Territory



Photo: Flinders NT POCT program team, December 2025, Blake Lovett, Cathy Waymark, Ellen Kambanaros, Kirsty Emery and Karen Thompson (Program Lead)



Photo: Rungtjirpa (Simpsons Gap) in the Tjoritja National Park

The Flinders University **International Centre for Point-of-care testing (ICPOCT)** has managed the Northern Territory point-of-care testing (NT POCT) program on behalf of the Northern Territory Government since 2008.

This longstanding collaboration was further strengthened in 2025 with the award of a new five-year service contract from NT Health, securing ongoing funding for the program through to 2030.

The NT POCT program currently manages two point-of-care devices. The i-STAT, a portable, handheld analyser used to assess acute cardiac injury, kidney function, respiratory disorders and blood clotting status with results available between 2 - 15 minutes, and a small white blood cell auto-imager, the WBC DIFF, which counts and differentiates white blood cells (total and 5-part differential) within 5 minutes. Results from the i-STAT enable on-site medical decisions to be made regarding whether a client can be stabilised on-country or undergo a medical retrieval to a tertiary hospital.

In 2025, more than 50,000 client tests were performed across both devices, representing a 5% increase from 2024. Three additional healthcare facilities joined the program during the year, bringing the total number of participating sites to 76, which are located in some of Australia's most geographically isolated regions.

Point-of-care tests measured by the devices in the program have been integrated into clinical guidelines in the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) Remote Primary Care Health Care Manuals.

Further advances in translating research excellence to community value outcomes in the Northern Territory POCT Program have included evaluation of a high-sensitivity cardiac troponin assay (introduced into routine practice in April 2026), verification of an enhanced International Normalised Ratio (INR) assay for warfarin management.

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FHMRI Leadership

Management Committee



Prof. Billie Bonevski
Director, FHMRI, and
Dean (Research)



Prof. Damien Keating
FHMRI Deputy Director



Prof. David Lynn
FHMRI Head of Strategic
Partnerships



A/Prof. Amy Reynolds
FHMRI-RED Lead (to
June '25)



A/Prof. Annabelle Wilson
FHMRI-RED Co-Lead
(from July '25)



Prof. Claire Roberts
FHMRI-RED Co-Lead
(from July '25)



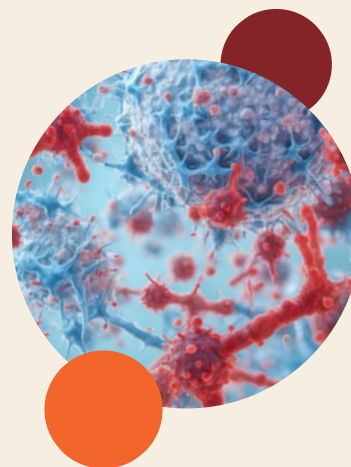
Dr. Tim Schultz
CMPH HDR Coordinator



Dr. Rebecca Keough
FHMRI Manager

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee

- **Ms. Nikki Clinch (Badimia / Yamatji)** - Deputy CEO, South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SACCON)
- **Ms. Toni Shearing** - Executive Director, Aboriginal Health, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network | SA Health
- **Mr. Lou Turner (Pitjantjatjara)** - Director Aboriginal Health Strategic Policy and Projects, Southern Adelaide Local Health Network | SA Health
- **Ms. Kylie Stothers (Jawoyn)** - Deputy CEO, Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- **Mr. Patrick Sharpe** - Partnerships and Research Manager, Far West Community Partnerships
- **Mr. Damien Shen** - Director, Aboriginal & Regional Public Health, Public Health Planning and Response | Public Health Division | SA Health
- **Ms. Rebecca Kimlin** - Executive Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing, WCHN
- **Isabella Johnson** - General Manager, Innovation, Evidence and Reform, Aboriginal Health Council of SA
- **Mr. Mark Thompson** - Director, Aboriginal Clinical Services and Strategy, Drug and Alcohol Services | SA Health



Scientific Advisory Board



Prof. Sally Redman (Chair)
Honorary Professor University of Newcastle and previous CEO Sax Institute



Prof. Andrew Bersten
Research Director, Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN)



Prof. Anne Kelso
Honorary Professor University of Melbourne, previous CEO National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)



Prof. Alex Brown
Professor of Indigenous Genomics at the Telethon Kids Institute and The Australian National University



Emeritus Prof. Deborah Hodgson
Previous University of Newcastle Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)



Dr. Helena Williams
Head of Medical Services, Amplar Health | Board member, ECH Aged Care Board | Co-chair, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)



A/Prof. Kathryn Gilbey
Executive Dean, Batchelor Institute, Alice Springs, Northern Territory



Prof. Billie Bonevski
Director, FHMRI, and Dean (Research), College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University (ex officio member)



Prof. Jonathan Craig
Vice President and Executive Dean, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University (ex officio member)

Consumer and Community Involvement Steering Group

In 2025, the FHMRI Consumer and Community Involvement Steering Group coordinated a formal submission to the national consultation on the NHMRC Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research. The Group also facilitated consultation roundtables in Adelaide and Darwin, enabling consumers, community members and researchers to contribute directly to the development of the new Statement, published in May 2026.

- **Chris Trethewey** (Co-Chair)
- **Dr. Miia Rahja** (Co-Chair)
- **Dr. Jean Winter** (Researcher)
- **Monique Bareham** (Consumer)
- **Mario Corena** (Consumer)
- **Steven Pendry** (Consumer)
- **Helen Radoslovich** (Consumer)

Centre Leads

National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

- Prof. Jacqueline Bowden – Director

International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing (IPOCT)

- Prof. Mark Shephard – Co-Director
- Dr. Susan Matthews – Co-Director

Poche SA+NT

- A/Prof. Kalinda Griffiths – Director



Flagship Program Leads

Sleep Health Flagship Program

- Prof. Danny Eckert – Program Director
- Prof. Andrew Phillips – Circadian Health
- Prof. Andrew Vakulin – Biomarkers and Risk Prevention
- Dr. Anna Hudson – Physiology of Sleep and Breathing
- A/Prof. Ching Li Chai-Coetzer – Health Services
- Dr. Hannah Scott – Clinical Sleep Health
- A/Prof. Nicole Lovato – Clinical Sleep Health
- Prof. Peter Catchside – Technological innovations
- Dr. Yohannes Melaku – Population health

Eye and Vision Flagship Program

- Prof. Justine Smith and Prof. Jamie Craig, Program Co-Directors
- Dr. Emmanuelle Souzeau – Genetic Counselling for Eye Disease
- Prof. Jamie Craig – Glaucoma Genetics
- Prof. Justine Smith – Uveitis Mechanisms and Outcomes
- Em. Prof. Keryn Williams – Australian Corneal Grant Registry
- Dr. Mark Hassall – Ocular Gene Therapy
- Dr. Miriam Keane – Clinical Ocular Registry Statistics
- A/Prof. Stewart Lake – Artificial Intelligence of Eye Disease

Impact Program Leads

Cancer Impact Program

- A/Prof Erin Symonds, Prof. Luke Selth and Prof. Chris Karapetis – Program Co-Directors
- Prof. Alan Wigg – Liver Diseases
- Prof. Andrew Rowland – Precision Medicine, Extracellular vesicles as biomarkers
- Prof. Arduino Mangoni – Drug Discovery and Repurposing
- Dr. Arnab Ghosh – Ovarian Cancer Early Detection
- A/Prof. Ashley Hopkins – Clinical Cancer Epidemiology
- Prof. Bogda Koczwara – Cancer Survivorship
- Prof. Briony Forbes – Proteins in Metabolism and Cancer
- Dr. Claire Jessup – Haematology and Immunomodulatory
- Prof. Chris Karapetis – Medical Oncology
- A/Prof. Erin Symonds – Bowel Health Service
- Dr. Ganessan Kichenadasse – Oncology and Pharmacology
- Dr. Giles Best – Haematology and Immunomodulatory
- Prof. Janni Petersen – Environmental Control of Cell Growth and Division
- A/Prof. Kalinda Griffiths – Indigenous Data Sovereignty
- Dr. Lauren Thurgood – Haematology and Immunomodulatory
- Dr. Luke Grundy – NeuroUrology
- Prof. Luke Selth – Prostate Cancer
- A/Prof. Michael Michael – Gene Expression
- Prof. Michael Sorich – Biostatistics and Machine Learning of Medicines

- Prof. Robyn Meech – Molecular Pharmacology
- Prof. Simon Conn – Alternative Splicing in Cancer
- Prof. Sonja Klebe – Dust Diseases
- Dr. Stephen Gregory – Chromosomal Instability and Cancer

Health Equity Impact Program

- A/Prof. Courtney Ryder and Prof. James Smith – Program Co-Directors
- Prof. James Smith – Rural and Remote Health
- A/Prof. Courtney Ryder – Aboriginal Health
- Prof. Anna Ziersch – Migrant and Refugee Health
- Prof. Jacqueline Bowden – Workplace Health
- Dr. Bryce Brickley – Sports Settings and Spaces
- A/Prof. Emma Kennedy – Co-Lead Strengthening Health and Medical Education Spaces
- Prof. Jaqui Hughes – Torres Strait Islander Health & Wellbeing
- Dr. Melissa Opozda – Online Spaces
- A/Prof. Nicola Dean – Gender Research
- Tahlia Johnson – Co-lead Aboriginal Health
- Dr. Nayia Cominos – Co-Lead Strengthening Health and Medical Education Spaces
- Dr. Noemi Tari-Keresztes – Lived Experience and Wellbeing

Research Group Leads

Behavioural Health

- A/Prof. Anthony Venning – Behavioural Health
- Prof. Sharon Lawn – Community and Lived Experience Mental Health

Biostatistics

- A/Prof. Murthy Mittinty – Biostatistics

Biotechnology

- Prof. Vincent Bulone – Glycobiotechnology
- Prof. Wei Zhang – Advanced Marine Biomanufacturing
- Prof. Krasimir Vasilev – Biomedical Nanoengineering

Digital Health

- Prof. Niranjana Bidargaddi – Digital Health

General Practice

- Dr. Elaine Leung – General Practice
- Prof. Richard Reed – General Practice

Health Economics

- Prof. Billingsley Kaambwa – Health Economics
- Prof. Hossein Afzali – Health Economics
- Prof. Jon Karnon – Health Economics and Health Services

Medicine

- Prof. Anand Ganesan – Cardiac Signals Analysis
- Prof. Jonathan Gleadle – Nephrology
- Prof. Joseph Selvanayagam – Cardiac Imaging
- Prof. Shailesh Bihari – Intensive Care
- A/Prof. Yogesh Sharma – Health Services and Clinical Care for Heart Failure and Frailty

Microbiology, Infectious Diseases and Immunology

- Prof. David Lynn – Systems Immunology
- Dr. Elke Sokoya – Chronic Diseases
- Dr. Feargal Ryan – Computational Multi-Omics
- Prof. Geraint Rogers – Microbe and Host Health
- Prof. Jill Carr – Virology
- Dr. Jing Jing Wang – Clinical Immunology and Autoimmunity
- Dr. Michael Roach – Bioinformatics
- A/Prof. Mihir Wechalekar – Rheumatology Synovial Tissue Translational
- Dr. Nick Eyre – Molecular Virology
- Prof. Tom Gordon – Clinical Immunology and Autoimmunity

Neuroscience

- Dr. Alyce Martin – Gut Hormones in Health and Disease
- Dr. Amy Wyatt – Neurodevelopment and Neurodiversity
- A/Prof. Arne Ittner – Molecular Memory and Dementia
- Prof. Cedric Bardy – Human Neurophysiology and Genetics
- A/Prof. Chris Bye – MND Drug Discovery
- A/Prof. Christine Barry – Musculoskeletal Neurobiology
- Prof. Damien Keating – Gut Sensory Systems
- A/Prof. Dusan Matusica – Pain and Sensory Cell Neurobiology
- Prof. Harald Janovjak – Synthetic Physiology
- Prof. Karin Nordstrom – Motion Vision
- Prof. Kim Hemsley – Childhood Dementia
- A/Prof. Mary-Louise Rogers – Motor Neurone Disease and Neurotrophic Diseases
- Prof. Nick Spencer – Visceral Neurophysiology
- Prof. Phil Dinning – Gastrointestinal Motility
- Prof. Taher Omari – Swallowing Pathophysiology
- A/Prof. Vladimir Zagorodnyuk – Bladder Neurobiology
- A/Prof. Yee Lian Chew – Worm Neuroscience
- A/Prof. Yoichiro Otsuka – Integrative Neuroscience

Paramedicine

- A/Prof. Andrew Makkink – Paramedicine

Psychiatry

- Prof. Malcolm Battersby – Mental Illness

Public Health

- Prof. Billie Bonevski – Health Behaviour Change
- Prof. Jacquie Bowden – National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction
- Prof. Marita Hefler – Tobacco Control
- Prof. Mark Shephard – Point of Care Testing
- Prof. Natalie Walker – Tobacco Control
- Prof. Richard Edwards – Tobacco Control
- Dr. Susan Matthews – Point of Care Testing

Rehabilitation and Aged Care

- Prof. Maria Crotty – Healthy Aging

Surgery

- A/Prof. Christopher Delaney – Vascular Surgery
- Prof. David Watson – Oesophageal and Gastric Diseases
- Prof. Eng Ooi – Ear, Nose, and Throat Surgery
- Dr. Fiona Taverner – Anaesthesia
- Prof. Greg Bain – Orthopaedics
- Prof. Savio George Barreto – Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Surgery

Women's and Children's Health

- Prof. Claire Roberts – Pregnancy and Beyond
- Dr. Kathryn Martinello – Neonatology and Paediatrics
- A/Prof. Luke Grzeskowiak – Reproductive and Perinatal Pharmacoepidemiology

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FHMRI acknowledges people with lived and living experience of health challenges and ill-health; and the experience of those who are carers, families or supporters. We welcome and celebrate the contribution that these people bring to health and medical research.