

16 April 2025

MEDIA RELEASE – Health and Medical Research & Innovation Critical to Unlocking Australia’s Future R&D Potential

Research Australia, the national peak organisation for health and medical research & innovation, as part of its submission to the Strategic Examination of R&D Discussion Paper, is calling for a strong and coordinated national approach to health and medical research, development and innovation (RDI), urging the Australian Government to align the forthcoming National Health and Medical Research Strategy (National Strategy) and the Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD).

As the national alliance representing the entire health and medical research pipeline, Research Australia has long advocated for a strategic framework to support the sector’s growth. With 26% of national R&D investment dedicated to health and medical research, this sector must be recognised as a pillar of Australia’s innovation economy.

“2025 presents a generational opportunity to reform Australia’s R&D system to ensure it is more responsive, sustainable and future-focused,” said Nadia Levin, CEO & Managing Director of Research Australia. “We must not treat the National Strategy and the SERD process as separate. Their alignment is essential to achieving transformative outcomes.”

Research Australia’s submission to the SERD highlights the economic urgency of diversifying Australia’s export base. Despite being among the world’s wealthiest countries, Australia ranks 99th in global economic complexity (a decrease from 91st in 2022) out of 145 countries. Over-reliance on a narrow export portfolio, exposed starkly during the COVID-19 pandemic, places the country’s economic resilience at risk.

Health innovation offers a powerful solution. The sector not only improves health outcomes and reduces costs across the health system, but also creates new revenue streams through commercialisation, clinical trials, precision medicine, and digital health.

“Bold and ambitious reform made over the next 18 months both through the SERD and National Strategy will determine whether we create a robust policy framework that embeds health RDI into Australia’s long-term innovation infrastructure,” Ms Levin said.

“It is incumbent on us all – researchers, innovators, funders and policy makers – to ensure we do not continue with fragmented, short-term and piece-meal approaches to reforming our sector”

A strong, integrated approach will unlock new opportunities for sovereign capability, export growth, and enhanced national productivity, positioning Australia as a regional hub for world-class health innovation.

Read Research Australia’s full submission to the Strategic Examination of R&D, including a summary of key recommendations [here](#).

The submission has been developed drawing on previous Research Australia submissions, the contribution of members and broader input. Research Australia thanks all member organisations who contributed to the development of this submission.

ENDS

Media Contact: Hayden Nichols – 0478 100 424