



Government of **Western Australia**  
Child and Adolescent Health Service

# CAHS Research Strategy

## 2024 - 2026

Celebrating a culture of research excellence that improves the health and wellbeing of children and young people



Neonatology | Community Health | Mental Health | Perth Children's Hospital

June 2024



# Child and Adolescent Health Service Strategic Plan

The Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) aspires to be a safe, trusted and professional leader in child and adolescent health and wellbeing, which truly partners with children, young people and their families to best meet their needs. In our Strategic Plan (2023-25) CAHS will focus on 8 priorities:



## Person-centred care

We will meaningfully engage and partner with children, young people, and their families. We will place them at the centre of every decision and provide care that is based on their needs and preferences.



## Inclusivity, diversity, and equity

We will respect, embrace, and champion the diversity of our community. We will uphold equal opportunity and we will not tolerate racism or discrimination. Our care will be culturally safe and inclusive for people who are Aboriginal, culturally, and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+ or who have disability, and we will work towards equal health outcomes.



## Organisational culture

We will continue to shape our culture, so we live our values, realise our aspirations, and create a workplace where our people feel safe, included, respected, and valued.



## High performance

We will continuously improve how we work by setting clearer expectations, strengthening our clinical governance, and better using data, benchmarking, and performance reporting.



## Prevention and early intervention

We will lead and deliver integrated, multi-disciplinary, and cross-sector initiatives that target prevention and early intervention for all children and young people, and particularly in Aboriginal health and mental health.



## Contemporary models of care

We will plan and implement models of care that are informed by children, young people, and their families, and are grounded in leading practice, research, evidence, and data.



## Workforce capability, capacity, and development

We will plan for, and grow, a sustainable workforce whose skills and experiences are harnessed in the best possible way. We will create an environment where our people can sustain a balanced work and personal life.



## External partnerships

We will develop and maintain mutually beneficial external partnerships to collectively achieve better health outcomes for children and young people.

## Research strategic context

The Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) is Western Australia's only dedicated health service provider for children and young people. It is unique in that it offers a range of services that support children from birth to young adulthood – from caring for them when they are sick to helping them to have their best health possible. We want to be a safe, trusted and professional leader in child and adolescent health and wellbeing, which truly partners with children, young people and their families to best meet their needs.

Research has an important role to play in helping us achieve our vision. As set out in our Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025, we plan to:

- strengthen our approach to research and innovation, with a focus on health outcomes and share our research with our partners to shape and promote leading practice in child and adolescent health
- invest in research and innovation that focuses on contemporary models of care and emerging treatment, so that we can deliver the best possible outcomes for children, young people, and their families
- develop and grow meaningful partnerships with other organisations to collaborate in research and innovation.

As the overarching centre for child health in Western Australia there is value in CAHS establishing a robust research culture. CAHS is in a unique position to lead improvements in the health and wellbeing of all Western Australian children and young people, especially in our most vulnerable communities. A culture, based on the CAHS values, that prioritises and guides research excellence will help CAHS to achieve its aspiration to become a safe, trusted, and professional leader in child and adolescent health and wellbeing – one which truly partners with children, young people and their families to best meet their needs.



CAHS has set itself bold aspirational targets and research will play a key role in achieving the intended outcomes. Decision making and efforts for research activity will focus on Aboriginal health, the most vulnerable populations, the first 1,000 days of life and mental health, striving for clinical excellence and use of technology-enhanced care to ensure that research is aligned with the broader CAHS priorities.

CAHS has a strong legacy of research excellence with established researchers and centres of research excellence. Building on past achievements and the passion of existing researchers – while also capitalising on an engaged workforce with a commitment to the health and well-being of children and young people – CAHS is ideally placed to expand research platforms and partnerships to drive further success.



This Strategy builds on CAHS Research Strategy 2021 – 2023 and its current (2023 – 2026) [Consumer Engagement Strategy](#), which underpins the intention to engage with children, young people and families at all stages of the research process. The Engagement Strategy is a road map towards consumers as equal partners in the continuous improvement of health care across CAHS. It aims to ensure

representative samples of consumers are engaged in the planning, design, and delivery of our services so they meet the needs of the people who use them.

There is growing emphasis from both State and Federal Governments on integrating research to enhance health service delivery and clinical outcomes. This is highlighted in the [Sustainable Health Review](#) and ongoing investment in research and innovation via the Western Australian Government’s Future Health Research and Innovation Fund and the Commonwealth Government’s Medical Research Future Fund. It is also demonstrated by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care introducing accreditation of health care facilities for the conduct of clinical trials via the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework.

Other strategic activities in the broader health context also interface with research activity and prioritisation at CAHS, with the focus on digital health platforms and technology; innovation; and better application and integration of clinical registries having an important role to play in research excellence and application.



Beneficial and enduring funding partnerships exist through several important funding bodies, including the PCH Foundation, Telethon Trust and Perron Foundation. Other opportunities to grow and develop research are available through both individual and leveraged funding opportunities.

# Research strategic pillars

**People: enhance research capacity and build a strong research culture that encourages research participation and excellence across all service areas and the clinical workforce.**

Exceptional research is born of intellectual and professional curiosity, and the hard work and talent of individual researchers and research teams. To achieve enduring research success, CAHS will invest in the attraction, retention and development of a research-active workforce and relevant projects. We will value and celebrate research success and build a strong research culture to ensure research is embraced and valued as an essential component of health service activity and planning.

**Platforms: improve research infrastructure, governance and support systems**

Strong enabling platforms and support services underpin the development of safe, quality, and high-impact research. CAHS will provide a broad platform of research support services, alongside robust and responsive ethics and governance processes, to facilitate effective, timely and safe research with a minimal administrative load. Opportunities to draw on the expertise of our research partners will aid resourcing. Developing new platforms to support clinical trials, measure research activity and research impact, and improve utilisation of existing clinical data and registries will support the translation of research into improved child health outcomes.

**Partnerships: embrace collaborative research opportunities and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders to support research excellence and capacity**

CAHS welcomes positive collaboration with all child health research organisations because we recognise that partnerships create more meaningful and impactful research. We will enhance collaboration with our research partners, funders, and consumers that aligns with our research strategy. Children, young people and families remain the foundation for how and why we do research and will be an integral part of all stages of the research process.

**Priorities: define and manage our research priorities to ensure maximum research impact**

CAHS will develop clear research priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs). These will be informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders and shaped by CAHS aspirations, clinical data and health service intelligence and requirements. We will seek the voices and address the needs of our most vulnerable communities. Priorities and KPIs will guide decisions about research investment, support services and collaborations. We will embed them in CAHS strategic plan to maximise research impact.

# Research strategic objectives

Strategic pillar	Objectives
<p><b>People</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract and develop the best people to lead our research.</li> <li>• Develop research capability and increase participation in research across CAHS.</li> <li>• Develop pathways to train and support current and future generations of clinicians and researchers to undertake quality child health research.</li> <li>• Celebrate research success and the efforts of our researchers.</li> <li>• Engage with partners and consumers in planning and conducting research.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Platforms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine ethics and governance systems and processes to enable safe, quality, and timely research.</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms that capture and measure the value, impact and translation of research at CAHS.</li> <li>• Establish sustainable and broad research infrastructure to ensure world-class research and clinical trials can translate into evidence-based care.</li> <li>• Enable researchers to access and use clinical and administrative data to drive improvements in care and shape research priorities.</li> <li>• Align research platforms with innovation and quality improvements processes across CAHS.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish CAHS as a respected leader in child health so we can inform and guide external research activity towards maximum impact on child health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Integrate the voice and needs of consumers into every stage of the research process.</li> <li>• Define and foster mutually beneficial relationships with our research partners, including research institutes, universities, health services and hospitals, funding partners and non-government organisations.</li> <li>• Collaborate with other international leading paediatric health services and networks to facilitate world-class child health research.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priorities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support wider CAHS and health priorities to achieve our aspirations and strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Engage with our community, consumers and clinicians to define our research priorities.</li> <li>• Establish systems to facilitate research in our defined priority areas, ensuring alignment with CAHS aspirations.</li> <li>• Integrate research priorities into decision making and funding decisions.</li> </ul>

## Operational plans and reporting

Actions identified against the agreed strategic pillars will be incorporated into an operational plan that will enable us to facilitate, monitor and adjust our work as needed. The operational plan will set clear targets, activities and milestones for research which will be the measures of success.

Research activity and impact at CAHS (whether CAHS led or in collaboration with our research partners) will be accurately recorded and reported on to provide a broad measure of research success. We will set key performance indicators for support services and research activity.

These will provide targets and measurable outcomes for things such as research activity, researcher participation, collaborative partnerships, research funding and research translation.

Research outcomes, translation into improved clinical care and enhancements to the health service need to be measurable and reportable to ensure future activity aligns with genuine value to the health service, child health outcomes and consumer experience.

We will regularly report KPIs and research activity to the CAHS Board and Executive to ensure we maintain appropriate organisational oversight and offer opportunities for overarching input into the operational plan and strategic research activity.



# 2021 – 2023 Research Strategy impact

We will continue to build on the outcomes of our 2021 – 2023 Research Strategy which have positioned us for research success. Phases 1 and 2 were achieved as part of the 2021 to 2023 period. As we enter the third and final phase, we will work to advance these outcomes by integrating research across the health service.

## Phase 1: 2021 – 2022

Brace – establish strong foundations for future success

Comprehensive mapping and development of necessary strategic actions positioned CAHS for research excellence. Appropriate leadership and governance structures are in place, strategic partnerships have been identified and nurtured, necessary organisational agreements have been developed, and stakeholders engaged.

## Phase 2: 2023

Bolster – refine and implement strategic actions to embed research across the health service and build research capacity

Through our research operational plan, we have articulated clear strategic actions which we continue to implement. We work closely with key stakeholders – within and external to CAHS – to refine and shape the strategic direction and priorities of our research to ensure our activity and focus achieves intended outcomes.

## Phase 3: 2024 – 2026

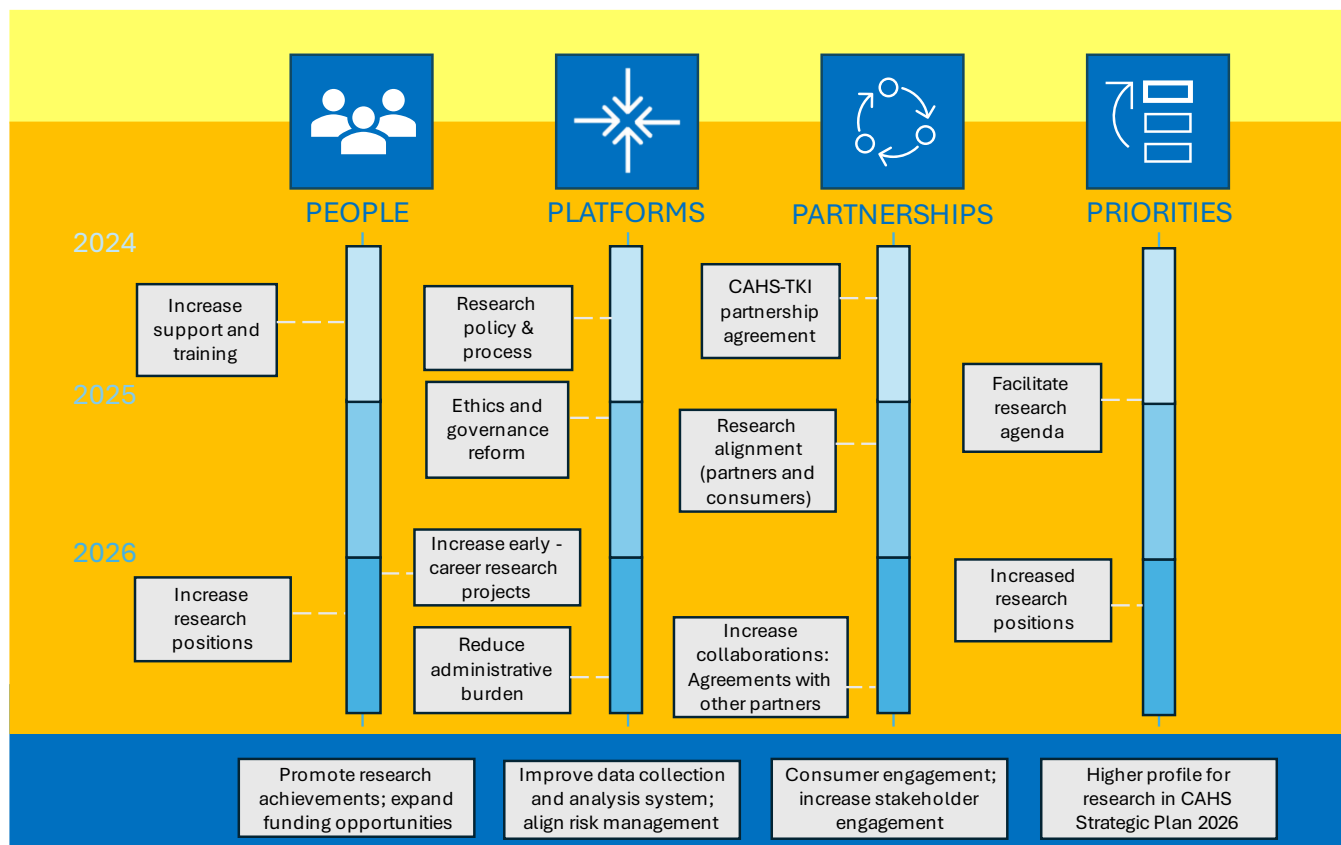
Boost – shift from development to growth outlook to drive continuous improvements to the research platform at CAHS

We will refine and manage strategies as required, and define future direction and capacity requirements. We will identify new ways to enhance our research capacity and collaborations. We will continue to integrate research across the health service and into the next CAHS Strategic Plan.



# Timeframe

To maintain meaningful change and enduring impact, we have defined key focus areas, and set realistic time frames. These will enable us to consolidate on the strong foundations we have established to ensure ongoing research success.



## Contact

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