



2023-2028  
**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

# WHO WE ARE



**Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes.**

We are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we are a global leader in tropical health research. For around 40 years, supported through our partnership with Charles Darwin University, Menzies has delivered research, generated and translated

knowledge, and provided education and training that make a difference to the lives of people throughout Australia and across the Asia-Pacific region.

We deliver this impact by working in close collaboration with our government, health service and community partners. These two-way partnerships ensure that our research is focused on the problems that matter and the solutions that work.

## Our purpose

To improve the health and wellbeing of people in our region through genuine partnerships, and excellence in research, translation and education.

# OUR APPROACH



## Place-based for global impact

Menzies is deeply grounded in, and committed to, the Northern Territory, northern Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Our location shapes our priorities, our partnerships and our people. The quality and relevance of our work means that our impact is broader: Menzies' research drives health improvements across Australia and the world.

Menzies is proud to focus on things that matter to the local communities in the places that we work. Our longstanding commitment to pursue health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - is fundamental to the work we do, the organisations we partner with and the people we employ. Our work impacts not only the current population, but future generations.

Menzies is also a global leader in research focusing on life-threatening conditions of the tropics. From this work across northern Australia and the tropical Asia-Pacific region, we have global impact. Our efforts in the region contribute to the World Health Organization's targets that include malaria elimination in at least 30 countries by 2030.

Our impact is underpinned by our commitment to excellence, building on our core values of quality, integrity, relevance and innovation. We use rigorous evidence-based methods, and test our solutions in the real world within clear ethical and safety standards.



## Cohesive and collaborative to generate sustained change

At Menzies, we know that our impact is greater when we work collaboratively. Research, generating and translating knowledge, education and capability building are core activities that shape the research we do and how we do it. Translation is built into our research design from the start and is fundamental to our research impact. Our education and capability building activities are essential to nurturing the researchers of the future, and to the broader capacity of our local health systems.

Our impact is underpinned by our two-way partnerships with others. We work closely and co-design our research projects with our community partners, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, so that our research is focused on the problems that matter and the solutions that work. We participate in collaborative research initiatives to unlock the potential of knowledge exchange. Our research translation and education activities strengthen the impact of our research and support the capability of our partners.



## Committed to supporting our people

We recognise that Menzies' impact is generated by our capable and committed staff. We maintain strong talent pathways and a culture of inclusion, innovation, collaboration and transparency. We are committed to growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and leadership at all levels. We will make Menzies an employer of choice for all, building our diversity to reflect the communities we work in.



# OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

To deliver on our purpose, we will focus on 4 strategic directions over the life of the strategy:

1. Research Excellence
2. Strong Partnerships
3. Capacity Building
4. Our People



## Strategic Direction 1:

# RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

## Research excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and tropical health

World-class and innovative research will remain the foundation of Menzies' impact. Our research priorities are grounded in what matters in the places we work, reflected in our longstanding dual focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and tropical health.

We prioritise research that can have a significant impact on the current and future health and wellbeing of local people.

The research priorities below will shape our research programs and projects, to be co-designed with our partners, including health consumers and service providers.

- Shaping health policies, programs and services relevant to the places we work.
- Enhancing maternal, youth and early childhood healthcare and development.
- Preventing and managing the burden and impact of chronic conditions across the life course.
- Tackling the burden and impact of tropical diseases.
- Addressing the social, cultural, environmental and commercial determinants of health.
- Informing the design of effective, efficient and equitable health systems.

## Priorities and strategies

### PRIORITIES

Sharpen our focus on the research priorities that matter where we work.

Deliver consistent research excellence.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Co-design our research programs and projects with health consumers and service providers in the places we work. This includes valuing and prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the research design phase.
- Articulate our collaborative research priorities to our partners and funders and seek partners' input on their priorities for research.
- Put in place processes to align our research programs and projects to our priorities.
- Promote innovation in our research.
- Adopt new technologies and methodologies to enhance our research.
- Invest in our pipeline of future researchers.
- Strengthen our research support services to improve their responsiveness to researcher needs.



## Measures of success

- Achieve high ratings in the Excellence in Research Australia (or equivalent) assessments.
- Proportion of research programs and projects co-designed with our partners and local communities.
- Proportion of Australian-based research programs with a direct connection to Closing the Gap targets.
- Adoption of new technologies and methodologies to drive innovation.

## Strategic Direction 2:

# STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## Strong partnerships to deliver effective translation and impact.

Translating research findings into sustainable health improvements is essential to Menzies' impact. We think about research relevance and translation from the start, co-designing our research projects with end users to ensure that we are finding practical solutions to the problems that matter.

We build enduring two-way partnerships with end users, including policymakers, local communities and health services. This magnifies our impact by maximising research relevance and translation, building our own and our partners' capability, and collectively building strong health systems. Our relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and other community providers are particularly important.



## Priorities and strategies

### PRIORITIES

Deepen our current partnerships and strive to develop new ones.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Formalise our collaboration with key Australian partners (including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services) and international partners through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and other partnership mechanisms.
- Expand Menzies' membership and leadership of key collaborative research networks.
- Improve internal coordination of communication with key partners.

Enhance collaborative research planning and design with end users.

- Convene regular research planning sessions with key partners.
- Consistently collaborate with relevant partners in the design and implementation phases of research projects.

Build our translation capability.

- Build translation capability across Menzies' research teams.
- Work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners to build our understanding of culturally informed solutions.
- Secure new avenues of funding to support research translation.

Understand and communicate our impact.

- Strengthen measures to track Menzies' impact efficiently and effectively.
- Enhance external communication and awareness of Menzies' key research findings and overall impact.

## Measures of success

- Number of collaborative health research networks with active Menzies participation, underpinned by meaningful partnership agreements.
- Number of joint positions between Menzies and health service providers.
- Develop and track measures of impact.



### Strategic Direction 3:

# CAPACITY BUILDING

## Enhanced health capacity through education and training

Menzies' range of education and training services plays a critical role in building capacity at various levels:

- Menzies is a leader in public health education, supporting local communities where we work and learning from community insight.
- We support the development of an expert health workforce for health service provision.
- Within Menzies, our education services offer flexible pathways for researchers and other staff to learn and develop.
- Through our Australian and offshore-based programs, we will seek to both build the capacity of, and learn from, communities, health sector employees and researchers.

## Priorities and strategies

### PRIORITIES

Provide leadership through health promotion and education.

Increase capacity of health services to deliver quality care.

Increase flexible pathways for current and future researchers.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Strengthen the breadth and reach of our health promotion activities.
- Actively partner with organisations to improve public health within Australia and abroad.
- Partner with CDU and training institutions across the Asia-Pacific region to provide education pathways.
- Investigate benefits of micro-credentials to support skills development.
- Contribute to developing the CDU-Menzies Medical Program to strengthen the local health workforce.
- Increase pathway entry points for staff, including through traineeships and scholarships.
- Sustainably grow the number of coursework and HDR students and HDR supervisors.
- Establish sustainable scholarships and fellowships for Menzies' researchers.
- Partner with Health Services to develop research pathways across prioritised health disciplines.



## Measures of success

- Increase in higher education student numbers (Equivalent Full-Time Student Load).
- Increase course enrolment and completion rates, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Education and training offerings, including pathway entry points, that meet the identified needs of partner institutions and communities.

## Strategic Direction 4:

# OUR PEOPLE

## Investment in our people

Menzies' impact is generated by our capable and committed staff. We are dedicated to ensuring Menzies is a great place to work, with an inclusive and collaborative culture, in line with our People Plan 2023-2026.

We will continue to strengthen our focus on gender equity. We are committed to growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and employment, consistent with our *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Development Strategy 2022-2027*. Planning for the academic and professional workforce of the future is a priority.



## Priorities and strategies

### PRIORITIES

Foster an inclusive, innovative, collaborative and transparent culture.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Develop our leaders to foster responsive, innovative and transparent leadership.
- Refresh our organisational values through staff consultation and incorporate them in our work.
- Improve inter-connections between offices, including Alice Springs and Timor-Leste, to benefit from cross-collaboration.

Increase the leadership and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed across Menzies.

- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in leadership at all levels.
- Provide a culturally safe and responsive workplace.
- Strengthen our internal and external support networks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Establish clear career pathways at all levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, building on existing entry pathways.

Build our current and future capability through workforce planning, capability building and talent management.

- Define Menzies' workforce of the future based on our priorities and the diversity of the community we work with.
- Put in place programs to identify, attract, develop and retain top, diverse talent.

## Measures of success

- Proportion of staff who report high levels of job satisfaction and wellbeing through the staff survey.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and leadership at all levels.
- Maintain an equitable proportion of female senior academics.
- Increase staff retention rates, including a stronger focus on Early Career Researcher (ECR) retention.







# OUR STRATEGIC ENABLERS

Strong governance and achieving organisational sustainability will underpin the delivery of this Strategic Plan. Strong governance enables us to collaborate efficiently and to be accountable to our staff, communities, partners and funders. Our financial sustainability underpins all of our work. Recognising the growing threat of climate change, we will proactively enact ways to reduce our environmental impact.

## Actions

### ENABLER

#### Our governance

We are honest and transparent, maintaining the highest standards of governance, accountability and ethics. We take responsibility for our actions and results.

#### Our sustainability

We are committed to a thriving Menzies in the long term, and to proactively shaping our environmental impact.

### ACTIONS

- Ensure transparency and accountability by creating continuous feedback and staff engagement mechanisms.
- Streamline internal processes, harnessing technology.
- Review and strengthen, where necessary, internal governance capability and processes.
- Achieve diverse funding sources, including from philanthropic donors and corporate partners.
- Maintain competitiveness for research grants.
- Undertake an audit to quantify our carbon emissions to inspire activities, guided by clear targets, that will reduce our carbon footprint.
- Embrace advancements in technology to facilitate Menzies' purpose.



### Measures of success

- Growth in all external research and translation revenue.
- Increase our revenue from philanthropic and corporate sources.
- Quantify Menzies' carbon emissions and set reduction targets.
- Effectiveness of, and confidence in Menzies' governance structure.

PO Box 41096  
Casuarina NT 0811  
Australia

John Mathews Building (58)  
Royal Darwin Hospital Campus  
Rocklands Drive, Tiwi NT 0810

T 08 8946 8600  
F 08 8946 8464  
E [communications@menzies.edu.au](mailto:communications@menzies.edu.au)  
W [menzies.edu.au](http://menzies.edu.au)

ABN: 70 413 542 847



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware this document may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

In the spirit of respect, Menzies School of Health Research acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we conduct our services and research across Australia. We recognise and value their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and deep connection with the land and waters, and value the immense contribution that they have and continue to make to our research.

© Menzies School of Health Research 2023

The material contained in this document is the subject of copyright and/or privileged information. Any use, disclosure (written or verbal), copying or dissemination of this document is prohibited without written consent from the Menzies School of Health Research.

