

Menzies' researchers 'RESPOND' to priority diseases in our global neighbourhood

21 June 2024

Under the Partnerships for a Healthy Region Initiative by the Australian Government, Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) will lead a 4-year health system strengthening partnership in the Asia-Pacific region.

Announced today, this partnership delivers more than \$11 million in funding to strengthen surveillance and responses to priority diseases, working with key country partners in the region.

Known as **RESPOND: Regional Engagement in Surveillance and response to Priority diseases, providing Opportunities for National health system strengthening and Development**, this partnership will ensure that work addresses key health priorities of Australia's neighbours and responds to emerging needs.

Drawing on over 20 years of Menzies' experience and established connections within the Asia-Pacific region, the RESPOND project has been informed by ongoing discussions with country partners, government and key stakeholders.

RESPOND will support the region to build more resilient and equitable health systems that are capable of reducing the burden of disease.

Twelve Menzies global and tropical health researchers will help lead this partnership, including Lucsendar Alves, Prof Nick Anstey, A/Prof Sarah Auburn, A/Prof Angela Devine, A/Prof Josh Francis, A/Prof Matt Grigg, Dr Benedikt Ley, Dr Chris Lowbridge, Mark Mayo, Prof Ric Price, A/Prof Kamala Thriemer and Dr Jennifer Yan.

This work will address a range of country-specific priorities such as malaria, tuberculosis, antimicrobial resistance, rheumatic heart disease, zoonotic infections, and epidemic responses. Health economic analysis and a focus on sharing and translation of research knowledge will support evidence-based changes in policy and practice.

Zoonotic diseases are spread between animals and people. To address this, RESPOND will take a One Health approach, promoting collaboration across partners working in human health, animal health and environmental sectors.

Capacity building will be achieved through side-by-side mentoring and support for two-way learning in areas including disease surveillance, clinical management and laboratory diagnostics.

RESPOND will also provide an opportunity for First Nations researchers from Australia to participate in two-way learning opportunities co-designed with counterparts in the region, sharing experience and knowledge to tackle common challenges.

The international partnerships within RESPOND will ensure that research will deliver practical and sustainable solutions both locally and potentially across the Asia-Pacific region.

Read more about the RESPOND Partnership [via the Menzies website](#).

Quotes attributable to Menzies Director, [Professor Alan Cass AO](#):

“This strategic partnership is an excellent opportunity for Menzies to continue to build on well-established collaborations with partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

“Through this work, we look to sustainably increase the resilience of health systems in key areas across the region, through research, mentoring and capacity building.

“It will provide critical evidence to co-design surveillance systems and optimise treatment strategies for priority infectious diseases, leading to significant health benefits for our global community.

“Through this partnership, we will create new opportunities for sharing knowledge that will lead to real and measurable health benefits across our region.”

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research into life-threatening illnesses. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.