

Independent Medical Research Institutes Review Secretariat

IMRI.review@health.gov.au

Monday, 23 February 2015

Re: Submission to the Independent Medical Research Institutes Review Secretariat on the Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes Discussion Paper

Dear Madam/Sir,

St Vincent's Health Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Discussion Paper released by the Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes.

St Vincent's Health Australia understands the vital role that medical research plays in improving health outcomes. Our researchers, clinicians and affiliated research partners work together to bring about advances in medical care that are directly applicable to clinical practice, so that we can deliver the best healthcare for the community and accelerate the translation of new knowledge into leading-edge practices, devices, therapies and techniques. We also believe that the best healthcare for the community is delivered in an environment where active research is also taking place, and that health services are key to ensuring research remains high quality, relevant and ultimately leads to improved patient outcomes and the best possible delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare.

This is why the priority areas that have been identified by the Panel in the *Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes Discussion Paper* resonate with St Vincent's Health Australia. The Discussion Paper reaffirms the fact that Independent Medical Research Institutes are a critical component of Australia's health and medical research sector and any actions that will ensure their long term sustainability are to be welcomed.

St Vincent's Health Australia looks forward to further engagement with the Review Panel, and would be pleased to provide further information or explanation on any of the points made in this submission. In particular, we would welcome an opportunity to demonstrate how we are providing a strong and active contribution to a vibrant, collaborative, and innovative health and medical research sector that the Panel wishes to see in Australia, as is demonstrated through our endeavours to:

- establish a multi-disciplinary collaboration of partners that will see Australia with its first hospital-based biomedical engineering facility the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery in Melbourne; and,
- further develop the St Vincent's Research Precinct Sydney, bringing together in a physical colocation the independent medical research institutes and our own translational research facilities and health services on the Darlinghurst Campus, to ultimately deliver translation research and drive better outcomes for our patients, whilst at the same time, operationally integrating in an efficient manner the shared infrastructure. The model allows through collaboration that our partners grow collectively with St Vincent's Health Australia's research agenda and also in their own right.

This submission represents the consolidated position of St Vincent's Health Australia after consultation with our key researchers and clinicians. It is anticipated that our affiliated research partners will also be making their own submissions to this Discussion Paper.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toby Hall', with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Toby Hall

Group Chief Executive Officer

St Vincent's Health Australia

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Monday, 23 February 2015



**ST VINCENT'S
HEALTH AUSTRALIA**

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

**Submission to the Independent
Medical Research Institutes Review
Secretariat on the *Review to
Strengthen Independent Medical
Research Institutes Discussion Paper***

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1. About St Vincent's Health Australia

St Vincent's Health Australia is the nation's largest Catholic not-for-profit health and aged care provider. Our services comprise 27 facilities along the east coast of Australia including six public hospitals, eight private hospitals, 13 aged care facilities and four co-located research institutes Victor Chang Cardiac Institute, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, O'Brien Institute, and St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research.

From the health services established by the Sisters of Charity in 1857 at Woolloomooloo in Sydney, St Vincent's Health Australia has grown to encompass a diverse range of tertiary services including: acute medical and surgical services; emergency and critical care; aged and sub-acute care; diagnostics; mental health; correctional health; palliative care; residential care; research and education.

St Vincent's Health Australia operates more than 2,500 hospital beds, 1,100 aged care places, employs over 16,000 staff, works with over 2,500 medical practitioners and draws on the talents of over 1,300 generous volunteers. Each year we provide care to more than 250,000 inpatients and over a million episodes of ambulatory care through our outpatient services.

We are a clinical and education leader and have a national and international reputation in various fields of translational medical research that we pursue either directly or in partnership with our leading Australian research institutes. Our areas of expertise crosses a large domain including: heart lung transplantation; bone marrow transplantation; cardiology; neurosurgery and neurosciences; cancer; HIV medicine; respiratory medicine; mental health; drug and alcohol services; aged psychiatry; homeless health care and Aboriginal health.

We have significant University partner affiliations with the, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, Australian Catholic University, University of Southern Queensland, University of Wollongong, University of Tasmania, University of Notre Dame and others.

It is the intention of St Vincent's Health Australia to remain at the service of the Australian community well into the future, reaching out particularly to the most vulnerable people in the Australian community, and to continue our strong held belief that a society is only as healthy as the least healthy among us.

2. St Vincent's Health Australia's commitment to medical research

St Vincent's Health Australia has a long and successful tradition of delivering its tripartite mission of world class clinical care integrated with research and teaching.

This tradition has been achieved through the extraordinary vision of the Sisters of Charity, the founding order St Vincent's Health Australia, who over 150 years ago committed to delivering clinical care, research and teaching, in the hope that for the thousands of patients and residents who walk through the door of our hospitals and aged care facilities each year, would in turn receive the care and compassion regardless of ethnicity, creed or economic status.

Our commitment to this tripartite mission has been further strengthened and made richer by our collaborative medical research partnerships which have evolved throughout our history, in addition to our own direct research activities to deliver improved outcomes for our patients and residents with, or at risk of, disease.

Research across St Vincent's Health Australia is carried out in:

1. Our health and aged care facilities;
2. Our Collaborative joint ventures with:
 - Kinghorn Cancer Centre (St Vincent's Health Network Sydney (SVHNS) and Garvan Institute of Medical Research)
 - The Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity in Society at UNSW
 - St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research (SVHNS)
 - Cunningham Centre for Palliative Care Sacred Heart (University of NSW, University Notre Dame & Calgary Health Care)
 - Nursing Research Institute (SVHNS & Australian Catholic University)
 - Plunkett Centre for Ethics (SVHNS & Australian Catholic University)
 - Melanoma Institute Australia, Mater Sydney
 - Huntington's Disease Unit, St Joseph's Hospital
 - Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Electro-materials Science (St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne & University of Wollongong)
 - Centre for Palliative Care (St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne with University of Melbourne)
 - Huntington's Disease Unit, St Joseph's Hospital
 - Cunningham Centre for Palliative Care
 - Nursing Research Institute with Australian Catholic University
 - Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression with UNSW
 - St Vincent's Therapeutics Centre with UNSW
 - The Poche Centre (Melanoma Institute) with the University of Sydney
 - The Patricia Ritchie Centre for Cancer Care and Research with the University of Sydney
3. Four key affiliated research institutes:
 - O'Brien Institute
 - Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

- Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research

The challenge to seek new answers, better solutions and test the emerging boundaries of knowledge, skills, processes and expertise in order to alleviate human suffering is at the heart of our organisation, and explains why these collaborations are important, and our desire to continue to deepen these relationships into the future, as well as, develop new affiliations.

3. Executive Summary

St Vincent's Health Australia has a long and proud research tradition, which, coupled with superior expertise in clinical services delivery, enables us to continue to produce outstanding results for our patients and the broader community. But we know we can do better. Through a variety of internal and external drivers, St Vincent's Health Australia faces renewed imperatives to place more focus on research.

Healthcare service delivery in Australia and globally is facing significant challenges including population growth, ageing and chronicity, rising costs of healthcare provision, increasing consumer expectations and workforce shortages. A renewed focus on health and medical research will contribute greatly to helping us face these challenges head on, through new preventions, treatments and cures and more efficient and effective ways of doing business. Ultimately, and most importantly, we know research is the key success factor in improving health-related outcomes for our patients and communities.

We are also operating in an environment where health and medical research is on the national policy agenda. Recent policy and reviews call for a renewed focus on research translation and collaboration. Translational research aims to remove barriers to multidisciplinary collaboration between researchers across the spectrum of the investigative enterprise. It brings hospital-based research to the forefront to ensure our research endeavours lead to improvements in health and wellbeing. Together, translation and collaboration will ensure that the health and medical research sector in Australia can exemplify world's best practice.

With this in mind, our aim is to maintain our reputation as a pre-eminent health and medical research collaboration in Australia, however, we know we cannot achieve this alone. The scale, efficiencies and intersectorial collaboration required to produce quality research outcomes, coupled with the reality of scarce resources, mandate effective partnerships. This is why, St Vincent's Health Australia has strategically considered the important role that health services play in translational research, and the need for forging stronger and closer relationships with Independent Medical Researchers, Industry, Universities and international research collaboration going forward.

It is therefore, by no coincidence, that the matters outlined in the *Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes Discussion Paper* have been considered as part of St Vincent's Health Australia's overall Research Strategy, particularly, the Panel's view on collaboration and the need to better embed research into the health system.

The role of health services collaborating effectively and efficiently with Independent Medical Research Institutes, is a key focus within our Research Strategy, and this is because, it is an accepted fact, that hospitals that participate in research have been demonstrated to provide better care (measured through adherence to clinical guidelines) and to have lower case-adjusted mortality rates.¹ St Vincent's Health Australia is of the opinion, that research activity within our hospitals is an essential adjunct to the delivery of the highest quality care and, it also attracts and retains Australia's best and brightest practitioners ensuring that health services are associated with excellence. Our strategic goal is to better encourage

¹ Majumdar SR, Roe MT, Peterson ED, Chen AY, Gibler WB, Armstrong PW. Majumdar SR, Roe MT, Peterson ED et al, Better outcomes for patients treated at hospitals that participate in clinical trials. *Arch Intern Med* 2008;168(6):657-62.

research and innovation in health services and to do this effectively, we recognise the need to strengthen and support our academic and independent medical research partners, if we are to become one of Australia's largest translational medical research precincts of its kind. Our commitment to this goal is particularly demonstrated through:

- our endeavours to establish a multi-disciplinary collaboration of partners that will see Australia with its first hospital-based biomedical engineering facility the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery in Melbourne; and,
- the further development of the St Vincent's Research Precinct Sydney (formerly known as Darlinghurst Research Precinct), which brings together in a physical colocation the independent medical research institutes and our own translational research facilities and health services on the Darlinghurst Campus, to ultimately deliver translation research and drive better outcomes for our patients, whilst at the same time, operationally integrating in an efficient manner the shared infrastructure. The model allows through collaboration that our partners grow collectively with St Vincent's healthcare research agenda and also in their own right.

We believe that by taking a leadership role and the adoption of a long term vision for health and medical research with our partners we will improve the quality, longevity and economic lives of the people in Australia. Put simply, the prize to be gained by this vision is enhanced quality of care and health outcomes for our communities.

We support the overall views that have been identified by the Panel on long term sustainability, efficiency, collaboration and translation of research to outcomes, and this is explored in our submission through our endeavours to establish Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery in Melbourne and, the established and recognised Academic Health Centre (Hub) on the St Vincent's Research Precinct in Sydney.

However, it also needs to be noted by the Panel that the strategic importance of ongoing public investment in research (alongside other sources of funding), particularly medical and health sciences research, for economic, social and other reasons cannot be underestimated. Although not specifically mentioned in the review, one of the best investments the Government could make is by establishing the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) which has the potential to reduce the burden of disease on the health system and the economy. How to attain and deliver the MRFF, needs in turn, to be informed by the numerous Government reviews that are currently underway that will have an impact on health and medical research including this review, the boosting the Commercial Returns from Research Review, the Higher Education Infrastructure Working Group, the review of national research infrastructure and the Reform of the Federation White Papers. The Panel should, in its final recommendations, articulate that as a nation we need to make ongoing public funding investment in health and medical research, but it should never be as a result of reduced funding for the most vulnerable groups in the community. As an organisation, we have voiced our concerns that any barriers in access to health care for socioeconomically disadvantaged Australians is not acceptable as we want to ensure that that health care is not seen as a privilege, but a right and a requirement to protect the life and dignity of every person.

Finally, St Vincent's Health Australia would welcome an opportunity to provide further information to the Review Panel, as well as, insights on our journey to date and beyond.

4. Research Collaboration

Research is inherently a collaborative endeavour and St Vincent's Health Australia advocates and supports the Panel's views that Independent Medical Research Institutes should structure themselves in a manner that promotes optimal opportunities for collaboration and leads to long term sustainability.

St Vincent's Health Australia is of the opinion that this can only be achieved by bringing together global leaders in health, medical research, education and industry which together will nurture and support current areas of excellence and build globally competitive research capacity. This type of collaboration is well established in the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, and Singapore and more recently in the UK following a review of the National Health Service, where major new funding was provided to encourage such collaboration between university, health services and industry^{2 3 4} As identified in the *Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes Discussion Paper*, the McKeon Review⁵ and the 2012 NSW Health and Medical Research Strategic Review⁶ the resonating theme is the importance for better links and increased collaboration between health and medical research that occurs in health services organisations, education and industry, in order to ensure research remains high quality, relevant and tailored to the needs of the Australian population.

Therefore for Australia to remain competitively strong in health and medical research discoveries that will lead to health innovations and commercial investments, what is required is leadership that will enable a collaboration of equals. St Vincent's Health Australia has taken on this challenge and in an Australian first, we are pursuing the establishment of the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD)⁷ (the St Vincent's Melbourne Research Precinct) - a biomedical engineering research and education hub. ACMD brings together teams of experts from leading Australian health, medical research, education institutions and industry, encouraging unprecedented levels of collaboration and building bridges between disciplines that have historically been separate. This combination of partners and disciplines has the capability to provide innovative bioengineering solutions to complex health problems, thereby helping to stem the escalating costs associated with chronic disease and healthcare in Australia.

² Grant J (Chairman). Sustaining the virtuous cycle for a healthy, competitive Australia. Investment Review of Health and Medical Research. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing; 2004.

³ Penington D. Does the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission have a real answer for public hospitals? *Medical Journal of Australia*; 2009; 191 (8); 446-447.

⁴ Lord Darzi of Denham. High quality care for all: NHS next stage review final report. London: Department of Health, 2008. http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085825 (accessed October 2011).

⁵ McKeon, S, et al (2013) Strategic Review of Health and medical research in Australia – Better Health Through Research, Australian Government, Canberra

⁶ NSW Health and Medical Research Strategic Review 2012, NSW Ministry of Health, p. 29

⁷ The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery derives its name from Mary Aikenhead, an Irish pioneer who in 1815 established the Sisters of Charity; an order devoted to the service of the poor and provision of universal healthcare, establishing hospitals and medical research across Europe and Australia.

Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, Victoria

Our shared vision to save lives, create jobs and conduct world leading biomedical research in partnership with industry that delivers a strong return on investment

The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) will be a research and industry hub – internationally recognised for translating biomedical engineering research into patient-driven solutions to chronic disease. It will be Australia's first hospital-based biomedical engineering research facility that brings together medical practitioners, engineers, scientists and industry experts to solve real patient problems. It will help capitalise Australia's position within an emerging new industry and will be the first national translational research centre with a focus on the development of biomedical products and the commercialisation of research outcomes; generating new jobs and enterprises in a growing global market. This is a crucial step forward if we are to address the Auditor General's recent 2012 report *Biotechnology in Victoria, The Public Sectors Investment* findings, which state that whilst there are more than 90 private companies in the Victorian Biotechnology sector, many of the companies were struggling to make a profit, and that a different mind frame is required to ensure sustainability in innovation and research.

Medical discoveries such as the Cochlear implant, bionic eye and more recently implantable devices to control epilepsy have established Australia as an international leader in biomedical engineering and innovation. These discoveries have also supported the development of an industry that now delivers exports of around \$4 billion per annum. Building on these achievements and increasing our share of this growing market requires being able to attract leading researchers, speed up innovation in industry, and export our patient-centric solutions. This requires a new and more collaborative multi-disciplinary approach to biomedical engineering in a hospital setting in order that we can re-model the treatment and management of disease and achieve translational research – this is potentially the different mind frame that is required going forward. ACMD will implement this approach by combining and locating together the expertise of national and global leaders in health, medical research, education and industry, including:

- St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA)
- University of Melbourne
- St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research
- Bionics Institute
- O'Brien Institute
- Australian Catholic University
- University of Wollongong
- Swinburne University
- RMIT University
- Centre for Eye Research Australia

In essence, ACMD's philosophy is about strengthening multi-disciplinary collaboration and clinical engagement, in order that we can provide the best chance of finding solutions to the range of complex health issues facing the population, and at the same time drive opportunities for increased commercialisation, through stronger sharing of resources and attracting investment by industry, which together will drive long term sustainability.

In a world first, the ACMD will also integrate graduate and post-graduate programs from medicine, engineering and science into the new facility addressing the workforce capacity issues identified in the *Review to Strengthen Independent Medical Research Institutes Discussion Paper*. This new, multi-disciplinary education, co-located with bioengineering research, will result in graduates with the advanced skills needed to underpin a competitive modern economy, and will attract the greatest international minds to study and work in Australia. This vision has now commenced with the Universities of Melbourne and Wollongong stating their intention to locate undergraduate and postgraduate medical, engineering and bioengineering programs at the new facility.

The alternative to all of the above is Australia may lose out to international competitors across North America, Europe and the United Kingdom, who are moving quickly to build or enhance their own industries. Through supporting the ACMD partners to undertake this valuable work, the Australian Government can generate both economic and healthcare benefits these include:

1. Development and expansion of biomedical engineering enterprises that secure a share of a growing global market. The economic benefit could be as high as \$2.8 billion over 10 years from the commercialisation of new products.
2. Increased employment opportunities within the biomedical engineering industry. Up to 10,000 new jobs will be created via new and existing enterprises in the biomedical engineering industry manufacturing new products. In the short-term, the construction of the new facility will create over 1,000 new jobs alone.
3. Engineering breakthroughs will provide new treatment options and better ways of managing some of the major chronic diseases that affect the lives of Australians. For example, research into new cell therapies to treat diabetes without insulin injections will not only improve the quality of life of people suffering from diabetes but could also extend their working life by at least 5 years.
4. Development of new devices that focus on improving the health and well-being of patients – such as the development of intelligent bionic implantable devices that can control epilepsy, depression and anxiety – could lead to over \$550 million in savings on healthcare costs over 10 years.
5. The ACMD will be a high profile exemplar of a 'living lab', thus strengthening Australia's international reputation and standing in biomedical engineering research and innovation. The ACMD will become only one of a handful of institutions, globally, translating biomedical engineering research into patient-driven solutions to chronic diseases. It will be able to attract the best researchers, medical practitioners and industry experts and firmly establish its status as a leader in the field. Such benefits will be possible through the development of a new purpose built facility to house ACMD partners and researchers. The facility will be located on the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne campus and provide ready access to the expertise and facilities located within the hospital, as well as, the broader medical precinct. ACMD partners are already in the process of co-locating to focus one to two select projects and embed collaborative processes to achieve demonstrable impact.

ACMD's philosophy and the shared benefits outlined above, align with the Panel's views on collaboration; translation of research to outcomes; long term sustainability supported by commercial returns on research.

St Vincent's Health Australia would welcome an opportunity to further demonstrate how ACMD will be a strong contributor to a vibrant, collaborative, and innovative health and medical research sector that the Panel wishes to see in Australia.

5. Translation of Research to Outcomes

St Vincent's Health Australia strongly endorses the Panel's view that translation of research can be better facilitated through closer relationships with clinicians, hospitals and health services.

As mentioned earlier, hospitals that participate in research, and particularly translational research, have been demonstrated to provide better care and to have lower case-adjusted mortality rates.⁸ This is why St Vincent's Health Australia engages in research, because it is an essential adjunct to the delivery of the highest quality care, and, it is a major determinant for increased investment by the Government in health and medical research.

Translational research is our prime strategic focus into the future, and explains why we are pursuing the finalisation of the St Vincent's Research Precinct in Sydney with the establishment of an Academic Health Centre. We believe that this precinct will enable the translation of research to outcomes and in turn provide the best possible delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare.

St Vincent's Research Precinct, Sydney

Our vision for better health outcomes through translational clinical research, teaching, education and public health

Translational research is critical to ensure that the Australian population receives the greatest possible benefit from government investment in health and medical research. We believe, that as Australia's largest Catholic Healthcare provider, our long and proud research tradition, coupled with superior expertise in clinical services delivery and our affiliations to some of Australia's leading research institutes, we have a significant contribution to make in translational research through our ongoing pursuit in strengthening capacity at the St Vincent's Research Precinct in Sydney, New South Wales, through the establishment of an Academic Health Centre. An Academic Health Centre will drive care continuum from innovation, to bedside, to the community, endeavouring to ensure that the latest advances and highest standards reach our patients.

As mentioned earlier, St Vincent's Health Australia's Research Strategy is premised on our goal to better encourage research and innovation in health services in order to improve health, clinical care and the quality and performance of health services. The strategy focuses on the need to strengthen and support our academic and independent medical research

⁸ Majumdar SR, Roe MT, Peterson ED, Chen AY, Gibler WB, Armstrong PW. Majumdar SR, Roe MT, Peterson ED et al, Better outcomes for patients treated at hospitals that participate in clinical trials. Arch Intern Med 2008;168(6):657-62.

partners, if we are to become one of Australia's largest translational medical research precincts of its kind that will improve the health outcomes of the populations we serve.

The opportunity and the need

The St Vincent's Research Precinct grew out of a great opportunity, namely a campus in which can be found public and private tertiary level hospitals (St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, Sacred Heart Hospice, St Joseph's Hospital, St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney and the Mater Hospital Sydney) co-located with three Medical Research Institutes (the Garvan Institute, the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Schizophrenia Research, Australia), all affiliated with a major research-intensive Medical School (UNSW Medicine), as well as, partnerships with the University of Notre Dame Australia, University of Technology, Australian Catholic University and the St Vincent's Clinic, all wanting to come together to promote their shared interests in research, teaching and clinical care.

Over the last decade, St Vincent's Health Australia and research partners like the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and the University of New South Wales have continued to pursue the creation of the St Vincent's Research Precinct Sydney as was reflected with the opening of the Lowy Packer Building in 2008, and recently, the Kinghorn Cancer Centre. However, there is now a renewed urgency and need by St Vincent's Health Australia and our research partners, to enter the next development stage of the St Vincent's Research Precinct which involves the development of a Translational Research Centre, if we are to ensure that scientific discoveries arising from basic science and clinical research will make real-world differences, particularly for those vulnerable communities and disadvantaged groups. This need creates pressure to develop collaborative processes that can apply - or 'translate' - breakthroughs as quickly as possible to practical results, making significant difference both within Australia and worldwide.

In addition, St Vincent's Health Australia along with our research partners, have been cognisant for a long time, that this urgency and need is also being driven by the challenging future landscape for the health and medical research sector in Australia, as has been documented in numerous high profile reviews, and again, addressed in this review. That is why, as an organisation, we have been collectively working together to strengthen our affiliations to some of Australia's leading research institutes and universities, to set the foundation that has delivered a world class Academic Health Centre of excellence located on the St Vincent's Research Precinct, supported by strategic leadership, collaboration, greater accountability and good governance.

We have also achieved a similar Academic Health Centre partnership in Victoria, with the Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (MACH) alliance. St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne was a founding member of MACH, which now encompasses twenty one organisations, including partner hospitals, medical research institutes and the University of Melbourne, all of which have come together to form Australia's leading collaborator in research across a number of domains.

The rationale for pursuing Academic Health Centres and networking more broadly is our belief that the best healthcare for the community is delivered in an environment where active research is also taking place. Our engagement in the wider Sydney Alliance for Research in Healthcare and Teaching (SAHRT) is further evidence of our support for increasing healthcare capability through partnership with Independent Medical Research Institutes,

Universities and Local Health Networks (LHD). Furthermore, this research and healthcare model is used by many of the world's leading academic institutions and hospitals, including Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, UCLA, Mayo Clinic and many others in the United States. It ensures that medical research breakthroughs lead to direct clinical benefits for patients. Such environments attract the brightest minds among healthcare providers and are also very attractive to those working in basic medical research because of the exposure to clinicians and the enhanced opportunities for translation from "bench to bedside". Also fundamental is the desire to break down traditional "silos" between various research-active institutions (Hospitals, Universities and Medical Research Institutes) and patient-care centred institutions, chiefly the Hospitals and Community Healthcare providers, including General Practice, to facilitate communication and collaboration between these bodies, so as to enhance both the quality and relevance of research and the translation of that research into improved patient outcomes and smoother transitions for patients between hospital and community-based services/facilities.

We believe our role in the Academic Health Centres in Sydney and Melbourne will:

- Drive treatment excellence across each of our clinical streams by investing in research that leverages and complements the expertise of our own clinicians, researchers and those of our research partners;
- Support clinical research skill development through structured education and mentoring programs for our future clinical researchers;
- Provide dedicated facilities in the form of wet and dry laboratories, clinical trials facilities and related research governance, and commercialisation expertise;
- House all our clinical research disciplines in one location so they can benefit from the sharing of expertise, ideas and facilities that will enable the delivery of highly competitive, cost effective research of an international standard; and,
- Develop a leadership structure to guide our research investments and forge effective research partnerships in pursuit of our translational research goals.

These characteristics are fundamental underpinnings for a quality research endeavour that delivers a better health system, improves health outcomes and contributes to economic growth.

These characteristics, in turn, also reflect the Panel's views on the key priority areas that will ensure that Independent Medical Research Institutes can make a strong contribution to a vibrant, collaborative and innovative health and medical research sector that continue to benefit Australians through translation of research.

St Vincent's Health Australia would welcome an opportunity to share our vision on how we aim to deliver quality, financial and reputational benefits that will reaffirm the St Vincent's Research Precinct - and the health and research entities it encompasses - as a world class medical and research campus.