



**ASTHMA
AUSTRALIA**

NATIONAL ASTHMA RESEARCH PROGRAM STRATEGY



CHANGE
IS IN
THE AIR

FOREWORD

ASTHMA AUSTRALIA IS A FOR-PURPOSE, CONSUMER ORGANISATION WITH A HISTORY OF IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA.

We are dedicated to contributing to vital asthma research to realise our vision of a world without asthma.

While we have come a long way in our understanding and management of asthma thanks to the work of outstanding researchers, we still have a long way to go to reduce the impact of asthma on Australians, the healthcare system and society in general.

We hope Asthma Australia supported research will lead us to a time where preventative measures for asthma are well-known and routinely adopted by the health industry and policy makers alike.

We want those living with asthma to be empowered with the best tools to manage their condition based on individual needs. While uncontrollable environmental triggers may still exist, we want people living with asthma to have adequate support, resources and information to manage them more easily. We also need to increase our investment into the short, medium and long term impacts of the changing environment on people with asthma in order to pursue the change we all hope for.

And while we are expanding our research vision and heading towards a more personalised approach, we respect and value the contributions our program can make towards the development of early and mid-career researchers and the potential of such research to lead to profound outcomes.

We must continue growing our support for asthma research to accelerate our understanding of asthma and to work towards better treatment, prevention and a cure. We have reimagined and expanded our historic Research Program to encompass a broad range of investigation. This document provides a vision that will guide and inform Asthma Australia's research activity and investment between 2019 and 2021, over which time we will lead the development of a National Research Agenda for asthma as called for in the National Asthma Strategy to inform and influence future investment.

Michele Goldman
CEO | Asthma Australia



INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years the Asthma Australia National Asthma Research Program has resulted in significant contributions to important discovery science, clinical, and population health research projects, as well as PhD Scholarships and research fellowships to promote emerging researchers in the field.

Generous private and corporate donor support has enabled the growth and sustainability of this important program that has supported emerging and leading researchers across the country to find solutions for people with asthma, their carers and the wider community.

In 2018-2019 we undertook an internal evaluation and extensive consultation process to inform the direction of the National Asthma Research Program.

Within the new strategic framework for research, we have aligned the research priorities with the strategic direction of the organisation so research outcomes are most able to lead to tangible improvements for Australians with asthma.

Asthma Australia's goal is to halve the number of avoidable hospital presentations from asthma by 2030.

Currently out of the 40,000 hospitalisations across the country that are recorded annually, 80% are considered avoidable. Our target is to reduce the avoidable asthma hospitalisations down from 32,000 to 16,000 by 2030.

Our research objective is to invest in research capability and activity to improve the lives of people with asthma through both new discoveries and improved interventions. We will work towards the development of a National Research Agenda for asthma as called for in the National Asthma Strategy to guide future investment, and to inform new treatments, practices and policies to effectively improve the lives of millions of Australians with asthma.



NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM STRATEGY

VISION

Asthma Australia will invest in progressive approaches to make, translate and implement new discoveries that improve the lives of people with asthma

PRINCIPLES



CONSUMER-CENTERED



PROGRESSIVE



ACCOUNTABLE



COLLABORATIVE

STRUCTURE

- Project Grants (Including Seed Grants)
- Fellowships, Scholarships and Travel Grants
- Partnership Grants
- Program Implementation and Evaluation
- Translation and Advocacy

PRIORITIES



PREVENTION



VULNERABLE GROUPS



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



MODELS OF CARE/SUPPORT



**INFLUENCING RESEARCH,
HEALTH AND RELATED POLICY**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Increase impacts of the National Research Program
- Improve researcher experience within the Program
- Increase asthma research funding and return on investment

VISION

ASTHMA AUSTRALIA WILL INVEST IN PROGRESSIVE APPROACHES TO MAKE, TRANSLATE AND IMPLEMENT NEW DISCOVERIES THAT IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA.

Our role is twofold:

- To champion the expressed needs of people who live with asthma and ensure their inclusion in our research program, and
- To lead, influence and support efforts to increase and leverage funding, to maximise benefits of asthma research.

Our vision involves pushing the boundaries, and not being limited to classical research methods, to investigate the issues and find solutions for the myriad of factors detrimental to the wellbeing of people with asthma. We will fund and support research which is most likely to help Australians breathe so they can live freely.

We look forward to expanding this vision with the development of a National Research Agenda beyond 2021 which we hope will be an ambitious, internationally relevant, widely collaborative agenda to focus and coordinate efforts in order to accelerate new discoveries, and maximise translation potential of quality outcomes into policies and practice.



PRINCIPLES

Asthma Australia's research activities will be informed by four principles. These principles will determine the focus and prioritisation of research funding:



CONSUMER-CENTREDNESS

Informed by consumers, involving consumers and driven by consumers. Consumers are all people who consume our information and include the professional community.



PROGRESSIVENESS

Research includes but also extends beyond the classical approach to quantitative and qualitative methods. Approaches might include social innovation and design thinking methods where these are deemed relevant to the question being asked.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We will be accountable for the use and value of the scarce resources we have the privilege of investing.



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Core to our values is collaborating with others to pool knowledge, expertise and resources to amplify impact.



PRIORITIES

Asthma Australia will fund high quality and potentially impactful research in the following priority areas.



PREVENTION

This priority encompasses research that focuses on primary and secondary **prevention**. Australia has seen a steady regression in the prevalence rate for asthma over the past six years by 12%. Projects which focus on primary prevention and secondary prevention outcomes addressing increasing prevalence will be important.



VULNERABLE GROUPS

Research, interventions and other methods of enquiry which seek to address the inequity of asthma's impact on **vulnerable groups** in Australia are the focus of this priority area, including Aboriginal People, people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, people with severe asthma and children.



MODELS AND SYSTEMS

Research or design and testing of **models of care** and approaches which seek to address the systemic contributors to asthma health or illness will be the focus. We need to challenge the current models of care and systems of support around people with asthma and will lead the way to explore new approaches which seek to address the systemic contributors to asthma health or illness. Implementation research will figure highly in this priority area testing and demonstrating new ways to organise services with the person with asthma at the centre.



ENVIRONMENT

This encompasses research which explores and minimises the impact of the changing **environment** on asthma health which includes air quality and other impacts of global warming. Contributing to the evidence base to improve our understanding and influence profound policy change are going to be important priorities going forward. Also included here is research looking at solutions, contingency planning, collective impact, health promotion and health protection methods.



INFLUENCING POLICY

The focus of this priority is **influencing policy** through the consolidation of our experience, insights and consultations with the wider research community. As well as organising the growing base of evidence to influence asthma research funding and the prioritisation of asthma research for government and other key actors.

We will continue to support the quest for new discoveries, and to attract researchers into asthma and build their capacity to attract further funding, through our early career grants (described following).

STRUCTURE

Asthma Australia will allocate funds through the following mechanisms in order to achieve the strategic objectives.

PROJECT GRANTS

Funding for standalone, well defined and reasoned research projects whose aim is to produce tangible benefits for people with asthma are funded in this grant. We will retain a focus on seed grants which enable future opportunities for funding and include discovery research projects.

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND TRAVEL GRANTS

Funding for projects delivered by early career and mid-career researchers is provided in this grant. Investment in projects and working with people whose career aims to improve the lives of people with asthma aligns with our values and aspirations. Researchers funded in this stream will be future asthma ambassadors. E/MCRs who participate in discovery research are encouraged to use this grant stream.

Funding will be available for travel-related costs for early researchers to promote the results of their research, attract new research funding, and develop future partnerships which support translation.

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Partnership project funding is an investment in quality outcomes which deliver meaningful impact for people with asthma. Projects whose likelihood of success is increased by virtue of collaborations between leading institutions and across disciplines will be considered for funding under this grant stream.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This grant category will enable funding for program implementation and evaluation where the program is aligned with Strategic Research Priorities. The evaluation can be executed internally or externally and will include accountability and reporting commitments.

TRANSLATION AND ADVOCACY

Asthma Australia will allocate funding to support the efforts of researchers and other interest groups in the translation of research outcomes into policy and practice.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the National Asthma Research Program strategy are distinct from those of the Asthma Australia’s organisational objectives. Asthma Australia will demonstrate the value of its investment in the National Asthma Research Program through achievement of its program objectives. Monitoring of the following measures will be reported annually.

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE THE IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

This is a unique national dedicated asthma research program which we are committed to designing, delivering, measuring and reporting on to maximise the return on investment and impact through the program, in outcomes for people living with asthma; in research skills and capability outcomes and in new discoveries that prevent and reduce the risk and burden of asthma.

Impact will be a function of the multiplier effect – indicated through increased funding for quality and credible asthma research, building the evidence base, and translating research project outcomes into policy and practice.

OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Publication and dissemination of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of peer reviewed publications, conference presentations and reports/grey literature outputs linked to funded research
Demonstrating new research collaborations and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of reported collaborative research projects • Number of new research partnerships reported • Measures of collaborations and partnerships¹ • Case studies of successful collaborations
Subsequent research success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new research partnerships and projects reported in subsequent years
Projects lead to demonstrated change in policy and/or practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of pre-designated translatable projects translated • Case studies of successes or failures in translation efforts



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (CONT.)

OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE RESEARCHER EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Our research community are a committed group of individuals who have championed the needs of people with asthma and been strong ambassadors for the cause and the work of Asthma Australia.

The research landscape in this time has changed significantly with contraction of research funding and greater insecurity of funding for the research community. Securing funding is time consuming and very competitive, and we appreciate the many demands on their time.

We want to engage curious, determined, experienced and collaborative researchers across all forms of inquiry and aspire to create an efficient, supportive and user-friendly experience for all who engage with us.

OUTCOMES	MEASURES
<p>Rate of success of applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of reports are submitted on time • 100% payments made on time upon deliverables being met • % successful applications
<p>Enhancing the involvement of people affected by asthma research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on the involvement of people affected by asthma in the National Research Program’s governance and review processes² • Number of research projects reporting the involvement of people affected by asthma in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ developing research questions ○ the research process¹ • Case studies of the involvement of people affected by asthma in research • Net promoter score



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (CONT.)

OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE ASTHMA RESEARCH FUNDING AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

We know that a high quality program that delivers demonstrable outcomes will engender greater support, which in turn will enable us to expand our research efforts and grow our impact.

OUTCOMES	MEASURES
<p>Increasing the amount of funding available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase net funding contribution to National Research Program
<p>Demonstrating return on investment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of the amount of related research funding secured during the funding period and within three years of completion to the amount of Asthma Australia funding • Value of total reported subsequent related research funding • Proportion of funding recipients submitting subsequent research applications • Proportion of funding recipients receiving subsequent related research funding

¹ Using methods for appraising partnerships such as the VicHealth Partnerships Analysis Tool (19)

² These measures reflect best practices in patient centred outcomes research (18)



PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Our Research Program is governed by a Research Advisory Committee who keep abreast of the research landscape, are well networked in the research community, are well versed in the subject matter and governed by rigorous terms of reference which ensures a rigorous review process, and which manages any potential conflicts of interest.





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