

# Tasmania's Research Strategy: A Three Year Plan

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## Introduction

*Tasmania's Research Strategy: A Three-Year Plan, (the Strategy)* is the inaugural overarching research strategy for the Tasmanian publicly funded health services.

The *Strategy* has been developed in consultation with our staff across the Tasmanian public health service staff, our researchers, our Sponsors and the broader Tasmanian community.

The *Strategy* is written through the lens of the Tasmanian publicly funded health services to serve as vision for the Tasmanian's community, and to engage the broader international and national reform agenda for research and clinical trials.

Clinical trials are estimated to be worth around \$1 Billion dollars annually to the Australian economy (MTP Connect, 2017). The investment comes mostly from international Commercial Sponsors and this investment could be expanded into Tasmania by conducting more clinical trials. Early phase clinical trials conducted in Australia are cheaper than other international destinations due to the Australia's Research and Development (R&D) tax incentives making us an attractive location to do business.

*“Through innovative research, we will improve the quality and safety of health care and the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians”*

## The Vision

The Tasmanian publicly funded health services recognise the role and importance of research, including clinical trials, to improve the quality of health care delivery.

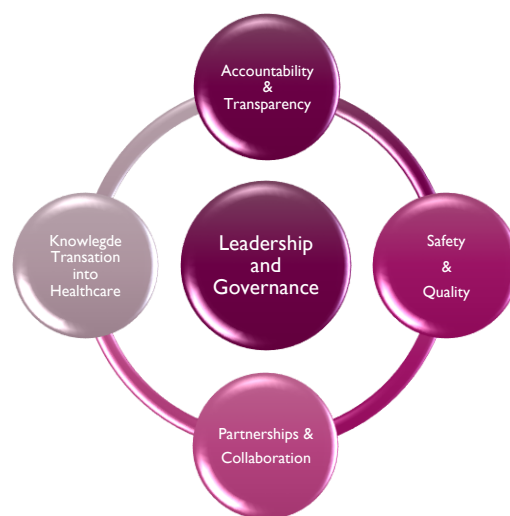
The Tasmanian publicly funded health services are committed to integrating research and clinical trials into our health services and increasing opportunities for the Tasmanian community to access novel treatments and care.

The Tasmanian publicly funded health services also recognise the role and importance of safety and quality for our patients, consumers and staff. We ensure our health services meet the highest standards of safety and quality through a robust clinical governance framework that includes clinical trials.

The vision supports the international and national reform agenda and recognises the importance of research and clinical trials to improve the safety and quality of health care we provide.

The *Strategy* builds upon the foundations of the Department of Health, Strategic Priority Areas for 2021 – 2023. Leadership and Governance are the principal objective in the *Strategy* and clustered by:

- 1 Accountability & Transparency
- 2 Quality & Safety
- 3 Partnerships & Collaboration
- 4 Knowledge Translation into Healthcare



## I Agency Overview

The Tasmanian publicly funded health services comprise of the Department of Health (DoH) and the Tasmanian Health Service (THS), including Ambulance Tasmania, Public Health Services, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate, Oral Health Services Tasmania, Child Health and Parenting Service, Population Screening and Cancer Prevention and the following statewide services, Mental Health Services, Hospital Pharmacy, and Allied Health Services.

As 'One Agency' we deliver a diversity of services to a diverse community in an environment that is appreciated for its natural and remarkably large wildness, despite being one of the smallest states.

*"Improving the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians"*

The diversity of functions, roles and professions unite for the collective purpose *"Improving the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians"*. This collective purpose is reflected in Department of Health, Strategic Priorities 2021 – 2023.

### DoH Strategic Priority Areas for 2021-2023

The Department of Health Strategic Priorities sets out the priorities, actions and enablers over the next two years to provide our strategic direction to ensure that Tasmanians receive the best possible health services.

There are six priority areas:

- 1 Continuing to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- 2 Improving access and patient flow across our health system.

- 3 Delivering care in clinically recommended times.
- 4 Reforming the delivery of care in our community.
- 5 Prioritising mental health and wellbeing.
- 6 Building the infrastructure for our health future.

These priorities are supported by three internal foundation areas:

- 1 Build and develop a sustainable and positive workforce we need now and for the future.
- 2 Strengthen our governance, risk and financial management, performance and accountability.
- 3 Strengthen clinical safety, quality, and regulatory oversight.

Whilst the DoH, as the System Manager, focusses on strategic policy reform, the THS realises the reforms by operationalising them.

As one agency we aim to provide a high quality, safe and sustainable health services system for all Tasmanians. Together as one agency we work together with patients, clients, consumers and their partners as well as the community.

## Department of Health

The DoH, improves, promotes, protects and maintains the health, safety and wellbeing of Tasmanians through service planning, managing, monitoring, procuring and delivering high quality health services.

Within the DoH there are operational groups involved in the direct provision of services to the public through the Community, Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolio.

## Community, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing, manages the delivery of a broad range of community-facing health services, with a strong focus on preventative health and health promotion and improvement services.

### **Ambulance Tasmania**

Ambulance Tasmania (AT) provides integrated, high quality, pre-hospital emergency and health transport and medical retrieval services to the Tasmanian community.

There are 52 ambulance response locations across the State, including two aircraft response locations to dispatch and coordinate road ambulances, fixed wing, rotary wing and non-emergency patient transport services through the State Operations Centre.

AT is staffed by highly qualified paramedics in urban and rural areas across the State, including approximately 500 Volunteer Ambulance Officers, provide response services, and Extended Care Paramedics provide services to allow patients to be treated at home without the requirement to attend hospital.

### **Public Health Services**

Public Health Services (PHS) protects and improves the health of all Tasmanians by helping Tasmanians to make healthy choices and to live in safe environments.

PHS develops and delivers state-wide public health policy, plans and programs, public health information; and administers public health legislation. PHS also manages public health threats and risks, such as communicable disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.

### **Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate**

The Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate provides a system focus to support the delivery of

mental health, alcohol and drug and forensic health services that are strongly consumer and carer focussed, sustainable, accessible, safe and of a high quality.

### **Oral Health Services Tasmania**

Oral Health Services Tasmania (OHST) provides dental services to eligible Tasmanians including adults who are holders of a current health care card or pensioner concession card. The children's dental service is a universal service for all Tasmanians aged 0-17 years. OHST operates from over 30 sites across Tasmania including major centres, several special care dental units and two mobile dental units.

### **Child Health and Parenting Service**

Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS), provides a statewide universal child health service to families with children between 0-5 years of age.

CHaPS have a nurse led service model aligned with the National Framework for Universal Child and Family Health Services and receives a referral for every child born in Tasmania. Services are home delivered or can be provided in any of the 70 sites across Tasmania.

CHaPS delivery includes growth and development screening and surveillance from newborn to school age, child health information, advice and support to parents such as perinatal mental health screening, breastfeeding support, developmentally focused parent/child relationship and behaviour management.

### **Population Screening and Cancer Prevention**

Oversees the delivery of the three national cancer screening programs to the Tasmanian population:

- BreastScreen Tasmania
- Tasmanian Bowel Cancer Prevention Program
- Tasmanian Cervical Cancer Prevention Program

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The health promotion unit is responsible for encouraging Tasmanians to participate in the screening programs and provides community education and support in collaboration with other agencies to encourage cancer-preventing health behaviours by Tasmanians.

### **Statewide Mental Health Services**

Statewide Mental Health Services (SMHS) supports a wide range of clients including people experiencing complex and chronic disease, severe mental health illness, alcohol and drug issues, including clients within the corrections and justice system.

Services include the provision of inpatient, hospital based, and community-based services, with many provided in partnership with community sector organisations.

### **Statewide Hospital Pharmacy**

Statewide Hospital Pharmacy provides hospital pharmacy services to patients of Tasmania's acute public hospitals through on-site pharmacy departments, and a remote service to the district hospitals.

Services include clinical and specialist pharmacy services, dispensing medications, on-site doses of chemotherapy, involvement in local national and international clinical trials and specialist support services including the telehealth-based Remote Clinical Pharmacy service.

### **Statewide Allied Health Services**

Statewide Allied Health Services oversees National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), maintenance and reporting of the Disability Action Plan for THS, and development of the THS Allied Health Research Strategy, the Pain Management Strategy for Tasmania, and the Statewide TasEquip Program which provides essential equipment to palliative care clients, those discharging from hospital and eligible clients in the community.

## The Tasmanian Health Service (THS)

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The THS provides and coordinates public sector health services and health support services through a range of inpatient, outpatient, community health, residential aged care and in-home settings.

Services delivered by the THS include acute, subacute, emergency, non-admitted, primary health care, palliative care, oral health, cancer screening, mental health and alcohol and drug services, and community-based child health services for children 0-5 years and their families.

The THS aims to provide an integrated, holistic and patient-centered approach to health care delivery, services are flexible to target specific needs at the different stages of a patient's health journey.

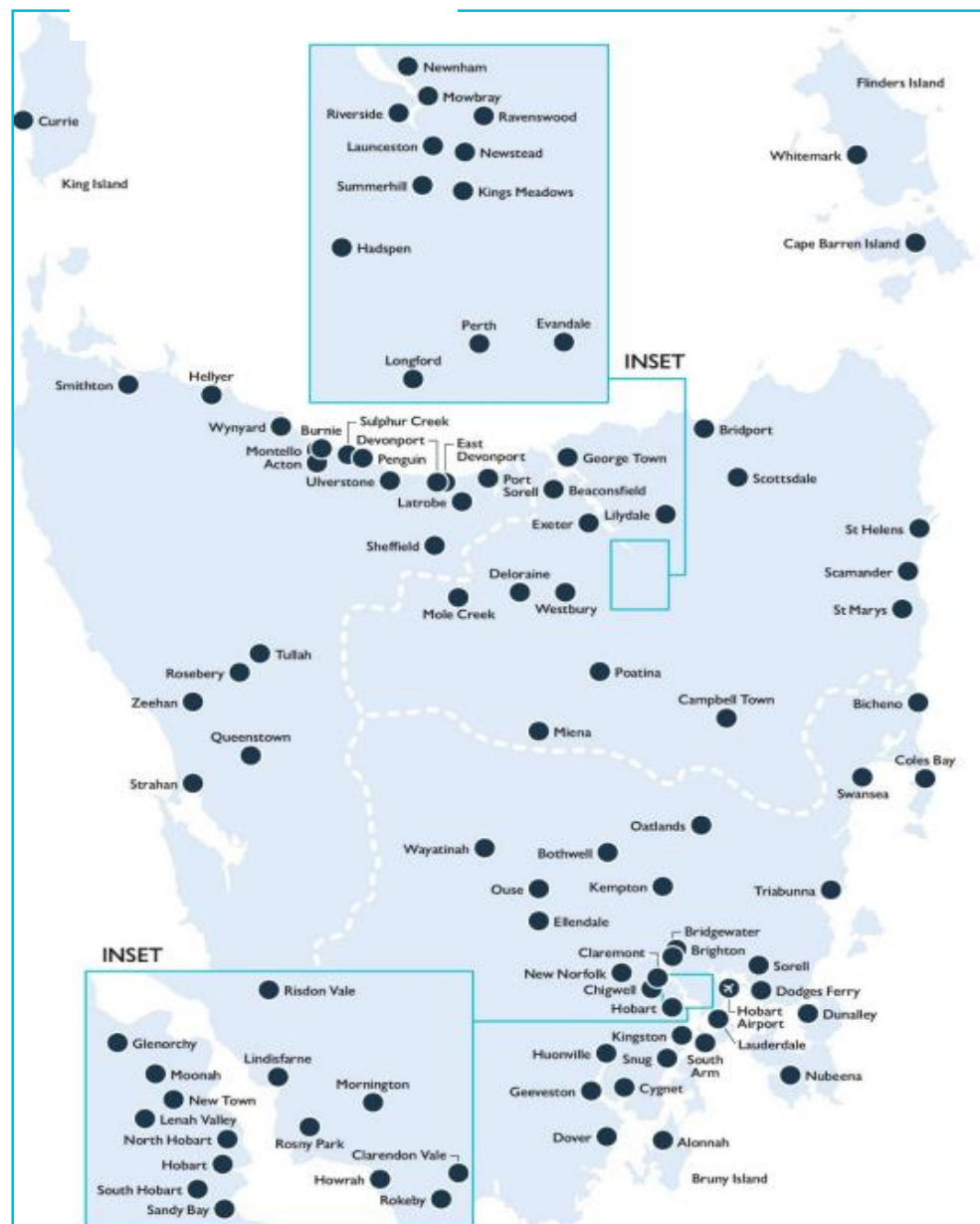
The Tasmanian Role Delineation Framework (TRDF) and Clinical Services Profile (CSP) sets out the levels of service provision, with some clinical areas leading research and clinical trials, whilst other clinical areas actively participating in research, clinical trials, and multi-disciplinary research projects, or having an active role in supporting research.

The THS operates four major hospitals, each providing core clinical services and clinical support services delineated to service capacity, to ensure services are delivered in a safe, efficient and appropriate manner.

- Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) provides high complexity inpatient and ambulatory care services, and multiple tertiary level services for the State.
- Launceston General Hospital (LGH) provides moderate to high inpatient and ambulatory care services, and a few tertiary level services for residents in the North and North West of the State.

## Tasmania's Research Strategy: A Three- Year Plan

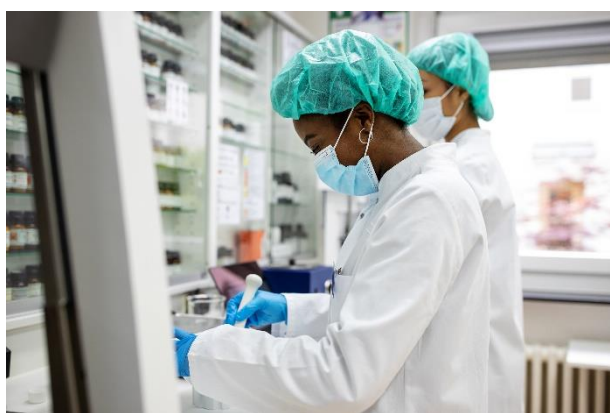
- North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) provides moderate inpatient and ambulatory care services in the North West Region.
- Mersey Community Hospital (MCH) at Latrobe provides a mixture of low to moderate inpatient and ambulatory care services and day procedure services.
- Rural Inpatient Facilities are provided in 13 locations in Tasmania, including King Island and Flinders Island.





## 2 Our Research

The DoH and THS are actively engaged in national and local reforms to provide care and services for patients in the best possible way through an integrated system that supports individuals and communities to be active in their own health and wellbeing. This includes being able to access clinical trials and novel research.



### Research Governance Policy Framework

The *Research Governance Policy Framework (RGPF)* for the Tasmanian public health service was released in 2020.

The *RGPF* is the principal Policy framework that the Agency must comply with to ensure that the conduct for all human research activities is appropriately reviewed, authorised, conducted, monitored and governed.

The *RGPF* a governance framework to ensure that the conduct and management of all human research activities comply with applicable legal, regulatory and institutional requirements, appropriate ethical and scientific standards, and standards of quality, safety, privacy, risk management and financial management. It also establishes monitoring and reporting requirements.

The *RGPF* ensures all personnel involved in research activities share responsibility and

accountability for all human research activities. This includes that those studies conducted are fully understood, enacted and maintained and in accordance with legal, regulatory, institutional and ethical and scientific standards. This must be done within the levels of the public health services' delegation and risk framework.

The *RGPF* ensures that a research governance framework integrates human research activities into routine healthcare delivery to enable the public health system to adapt to the changing health needs and requirements of the community. It also ensures a level of social and economic benefits for consumers through improved health outcomes and that outcomes are communicated to the community.

The *RGPF* ensures that human research fosters innovation and is promoted as a valued activity in the public health system. It seeks to promote a culture of responsible research practice that protects and respects the rights of participants, members of our community, and researchers. It also ensures research and clinical trials is seen as 'core' business.

### Our Research Priority Areas include:

Research priorities are a synthesis of government priorities and a response to health trends across our State and creates a basis for researchers, sponsors and the THS to focus.

- Improving transfer of care for multi-service users (e.g. a person who uses primary care, Ambulance Tasmania, THS acute services, and subacute services).
- Improving care for specific groups with complex support needs, e.g. users of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and either Aged Care or Acute Care.
- Reducing low value care and unwarranted clinical care variation.
- Reducing the burden of chronic disease and complexity of multi-morbidity.

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- Evaluation of policy decisions and assessing impact on clinical service delivery.

## The National Clinical Trials Governance Framework

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health (the Department) and all states and territories were commissioned to develop the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework (the Framework) with a view to embedding research and clinical trials as 'core' business activities.

The Framework aligns to the Commission's existing National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (second edition) and the National Model Clinical Governance Framework. Actions within the Framework align with Clinical Governance Standard (Standard 1) and Partnering with Consumers Standard (Standard 2) which are already embedded in all health service organisations (HSOs).

It is anticipated that, embedding clinical trial services into routine practices of HSOs through the NSQHS Standards will deliver measurable operational efficiencies across multiple therapeutic areas delivering clinical trial services. These include optimising organisational strategic planning to deliver clinical trial services and more efficient trial operations, such as:

- Pre-trial assessment of a trial site (trial site selection, feasibility assessment)
- Pre-recruitment activities (ethical and local site specific assessment review and approval time frames)
- Recruitment activities and trial management
- Workforce training and engagement
- Trial related business and financial management.

Tasmanians participating in research and clinical trials can be assured their participation meets the highest quality and safety standards.

## Research Governance Office

The Research Governance Office (RGO) is currently situated within the DoH and provides a state-wide centralised coordination unit for the Tasmanian publicly funded health service.



### Our Performance

Since the implementation of the *RGPF* and establishment of the RGO role, whilst activity is unprecedented and demand exceeds current resourcing capacity, there is improved oversight of research activities. Strategies are being put into places to address resourcing capacity.

Since October 2020, figures show there are about 500 active projects within the Tasmanian publicly funded health service.

Quantification of research activities will improve, as will governance, with the implementation of the IT system to manage ethics and governance submissions.

### Training and Education

The RGO coordinates a research training and education program for DoH staff and local researchers that cover the spectrum of the research project life-span.

The program includes the provision for Good Clinical Practice (GCP), this ensures staff have the level of knowledge, skill and expertise required to conduct clinical trials within the health services.

## 3 Research Forward

### International and National Perspectives

The Australian Trade & Investment Commission published the *Clinical Trial* report in 2018. Data in the report sourced from the *Australia New Zealand Clinical Trial Registry (ANZCTR)* and *ClinicalTrials.gov* in 2015 showed 1,360 clinical trials commenced in Australia which represented an estimated \$1.1 Billion of direct expenditure into Australia. Of this, approximately \$830 million came from commercial entities, the majority via international inbound investment.

The *Australia: Preferred Destination for Early Phase Clinical Trials*, White Paper report also highlights that Australia's Research and Development (R&D) tax incentives makes early phase clinical trials conducted in Australia approximately 28% cheaper than conducting the project in the United States (before tax) incentives and a reported 60% cheaper after-tax incentives.

In 2016, at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council, the Australian Health Ministers agreed to better support and streamline clinical trials processes in Australia to promote Australia as a preferred location for trials.

In response to the COAG decision the then *Clinical Trials Jurisdictional Working Group (CTJWG)* with membership from all jurisdictions set out a program of priority action areas. The now *Clinical Trials Project Reference Group (CTPRG)* under the Australian Government's *Encouraging More Clinical Trials in Australia* initiative provided \$7 Million dollars in funding for jurisdictions. The initiative was aimed to strengthen Australia's reputation and advance Australia's clinical trials environment.

The following national initiatives all aim to promote the advancement of research in science in Australia:

- Global Innovation Strategy

- Australia's Longer-Term National Health Plan
- Australia's National Science Statement
- Australia 2030 Prosperity Through Innovation
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Research Quality Strategy
- National Innovation and Science Agenda
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG), Health Council Clinical Trials Reform Agenda, underpinned by:
  - Culture and ambition: enhance the national culture of innovation by launching ambitious National Missions.
  - Partnerships and collaborations are at the core of any success.
  - Workforce support is central – capacity, capability and predictability and career pathways.
  - Knowledge and transparency – KPIs, data, accountability, value offer.

### The Statewide Vision

Tasmanian seeks foremost to improve the quality and safety of health care in the Tasmanian publicly funded health services to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

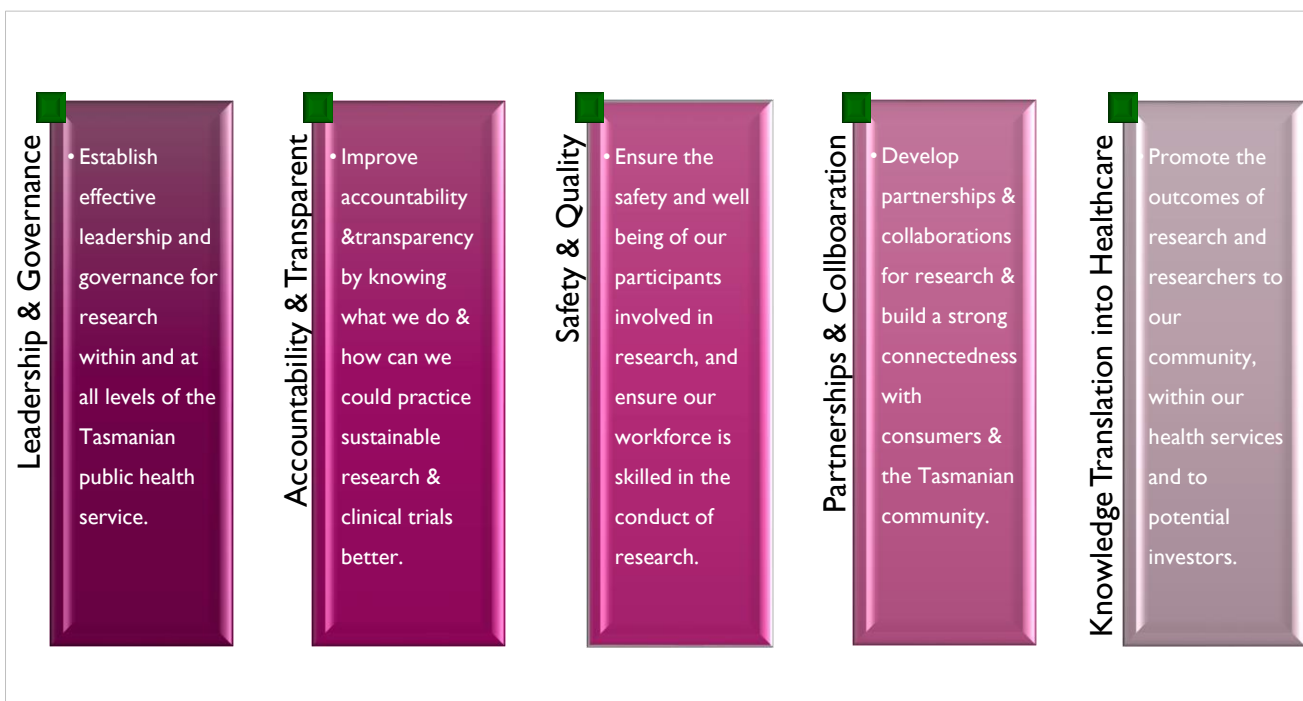
Improving and increasing access to research will benefit the Tasmanian community in the short and long term. This will be achieved through the principal objectives of the *Strategy*: leadership and governance, improved accountability and transparency, and partnerships and collaboration.

# Tasmania's Research Strategy: A Three- Year Plan

## Strategic Objectives

The Tasmanian publicly funded health services want to:

- Establish effective leadership and governance for research and clinical trials within, and at all levels of, the Tasmanian public health service.
- Improve our accountability and transparency by knowing what we do and how we can better conduct sustainable research and clinical trials.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of our participants involved in research and clinical trials, and ensure our workforce is skilled in the conduct of research and clinical trials.
- Develop partnerships and collaborations for research and clinical trials and build a strong connectedness with consumers and the Tasmanian community.
- Promote the outcomes of local research and clinical trials by our researchers to our community, within our health services and to potential investors.



## 4 Action Plan

Strategic Objective	Actions	Timeframe
<b>Establish effective leadership &amp; governance</b>	✓ Continue to implement an integrated governance framework for the effective governance of research and clinical trials at all levels of the organisation	2022 / 2023
	✓ Continue to imbed the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework	2022 /2023
	✓ Establish processes to improve financial accountability and transparency for research and clinical trials	2023 /2024
	✓ Establish workforce education and training programs for research and clinical trials	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establish a workforce retention and succession strategy for research and clinical trials	2023 / 2024
	✓ Establish a consumer engagement strategy for research and clinical trials	2023 / 2024
	✓ Establish an Intellectual Property Policy for the Tasmanian publicly funded health services	2022 / 2023
<b>Transparency &amp; Accountability</b>	✓ Implement an IT systems to improve the review, approval and monitoring of research and clinical trials	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establish an annual report for research and clinical trial activities within the Tasmanian publicly funded health service	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establish performance metrics KPIs and data, including safety and quality performance metrics for research and clinical trials (in the Service Plan/Service Agreement	2022 / 2023
	✓ Ensure the effective management human resources in the workforce for the conduct of clinical trials and research	2023 / 2024
	✓ Establish research and clinical trials that align with health service priorities and demand using health service data	2023 / 2024

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<b>Develop Partnerships &amp; Collaborations</b>	✓ Increase the number of commercially & collaboratively sponsored research and clinical trials	2023 / 2024
	✓ Collaborate with jurisdictions and universities to leverage International, Commonwealth and State (R&D) funds for research and clinical trials	2022 / 2023
	✓ Link research and clinical trials with other areas of the health service e.g. library services, health services planning	2022 / 2023
	✓ Implement the teletrials as a service delivery model for conducting clinical trials	2022 / 2023
<b>Ensure the Safety &amp; Well-being of Participants</b>	✓ Continue to imbed the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework into the organisation	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establish a monitoring body to monitor safety events and investigator led clinical trials	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establishing performance metrics to report and monitor safety events	2022 / 2023
	✓ Establish consumer feedback and complaints process for research and clinical trials	2022 / 2023
<b>Promote the Outcomes of Research &amp; Researchers</b>	✓ Develop collaborations that promote a genuine desire for co-production in knowledge	2022 / 2023
	✓ Ensure respectful research relationships that acknowledge investigators input according to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and produces.	2022 / 2023
	✓ Prioritise clinical and health system research that translates into improvements in clinical practice	2023 / 2024
	✓ Increase awareness about identifying and protecting research with commercial potential	2023 / 2024
	✓ Contribute to government initiatives and programs relating to health and biomedical commercialisation	2022 / 2023

## 5 Appendix

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