Government of **Western Australia**
South Metropolitan Health Service

Research Report 2025



Foreword

The South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Research Report 2025 highlights research activity undertaken across all SMHS hospitals and community-based services in the 2025 calendar year.

From the SMHS Chief Executive

It is with great pleasure I share with you our tenth annual SMHS Research Report.

2025 was a year of strong progress for research. More than 1,200 active research projects were conducted across SMHS, expanding our clinical trial capability and growing clinician and consumer participation. Research continues to drive improved care and health outcomes for our patients and community.

This report reflects the five pillars of change within the *SMHS Research Strategy 2023–2033* – Community, Collaboration, Culture, Data and Support – and our shared vision of, 'Research with purpose – working in partnership with SMHS communities and beyond to deliver excellence in health and wellbeing'.

I am particularly proud of the establishment of the inaugural SMHS Research Consumer Advisory Group as we lead the way in genuinely involving consumers in the co-design of SMHS research projects.

I am also excited that our team is developing a new dedicated research fellowship program to support our junior doctors next year.

I warmly thank our researchers, clinicians, consumers, research participants and external partners for their ongoing dedication as we build on our strong research foundations into the future.

Neil Doverty
Chief Executive
South Metropolitan Health Service



From the Director Research

As evidenced by the following highlights, 2025 was another successful and busy year for our team and our researchers.

Expanded research activity

1,280
active research projects across SMHS

367
financially active clinical trials

and

41
existing grant-funded projects

Boosted research investment

Generated **1,107** invoices

Successfully secured **26** new grants and **6** fellowship applications

5 researchers supported with publications funding

Championed research quality and integrity

Prior to the November closure of the SMHS Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

41
project approvals

+

736
amendments

PROCESSED by SMHS HREC

PROCESSED by SMHS GOVERNANCE

158
governance approvals

+

2,102
amendments

60-day national targets for both ethics and governance were achieved and well under target

32
research monitoring audits were conducted

Enhanced capability, programs and infrastructure

Delivered **10** new initiatives and **8** support programs

Procured a new DNA extraction machine and -80 °C freezer which increased the SMHS Biobank's service and storage capabilities

Supported **23** mentor–mentee pairs

Delivered **82** statistical consults

hosted **4** events and delivered **5** education sessions

Drove improvement and collaboration

- Completed **6** improvement initiatives and **5** audits
- Established the SMHS Research Consumer Advisory Group
- Achieved Clinical Trials Accreditation (Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospitals Group (FSFHG), Rockingham Peel Group and SMHS Mental Health)
- Delivered **7** presentations at state and national forums



While it was with sadness that we closed our national SMHS HREC after three decades of operation, we look forward in anticipation of the new centralised system.

I remain very proud of the achievements of our teams and researchers and am eager to see our research ecosystem continue to thrive in 2026.

Melanie Wright
Director Research
South Metropolitan Health Service

2025 **Research achievements**

Allied health research

- A/Prof Vin Cavalheri Allied Health Research Director

Strengthened our research workforce

In collaboration with university partners, we appointed:

- Honorary Research Consultant (Podiatry)
- Allied Health Postdoctoral Research Fellow
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow Research Coordinator (RITH)

Drove recognition and funding success

- Awarded **12** research grants
- Secured **4** Curtin University Research Summer Scholarships
- Awarded **1** Raine Clinician Researcher Fellowship
- Received **6** state and national awards



2025 **Research achievements**

Allied health research

Expanded research through collaboration

Ethics approval was granted for **10** new studies, contributing to a **total of 91 studies** since 2020

SMHS sites participated in **10 multicentre clinical studies**

Consolidated research capability

Funded research time for **27** SMHS allied health staff

123 research days supported by the WA Chief Allied Health Office and FSFHG

Protected time for skills and project development

Invested in clinician-led research capability

Broadcast our research findings

- **70** publications were peer reviewed, growing our total publications since 2020 to **413**
- Hosted the inaugural SMHS Dietetics Quality Improvement and Research Showcase, featuring **19** presentations from **21** dietitians from Rockingham General Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital–Cockburn Health and Fremantle Hospital



2025 **Research achievements**

Nursing and midwifery research

- Rachel West, A/ Nurse Midwife Director- Research

Expanded research activity

Responded to **151** research support enquiries

107% increase since 2024

Commenced **13** new projects

Supported 20 active nurse and midwife led research projects

Met increasing demand for specialist nursing and midwifery research support

Supported workforce and clinical trials growth

Achieved 15% workforce growth compared to 2024, with 54 nurses, midwives and support staff working in research and clinical trials



Provided clinical research nurse professional accountability across 24 research departments

Established 5 new clinical trial areas

Strengthened research capability

- Supported 9 nurses and 4 midwives through research internships and specialisation pathways, an **86%** increase from 2024
- Strengthened a sustainable nursing and midwifery research skills workforce



2025 **Research achievements**

Nursing and midwifery research

Delivered funding and research success

16 peer reviewed publications authored by nurses and midwives

Secured 8 research grants, scholarships and fellowships, demonstrating continued growth in research success and funding outcomes

Enabled collaboration and higher degree research

Appointed 6 new honorary research consultants from 4 Western Australian universities, bringing the total to 16

Supported 16 nurses and midwives undertaking master's or PhD programs across 6 universities





2025 **Research achievements**

Clinical research

- A/ Prof Abdul Ihdayhid Clinical Lead - Research

Senior Clinician Researcher Engagement Forum

This forum – established and attended by the SMHS Chief Executive, Executive Director Transformation, Clinical-Lead Research and Director Research – strengthens clinician-executive alignment on research strategy and delivery.

Outcomes from meetings held in 2025

Identified improvement opportunities in turnaround efficiency, data accessibility and mandated administrative tasks

Consultant engagement informed prioritisation of these barriers, with workstreams commenced to address them

Supported development of initiatives such as the Doctors in Training Research Fellowship to build sustainable research capacity for junior doctors

Doctors in Training Research Fellowship

Supported by SMHS Executive and established from concept through to pilot and implementation, this program addresses a recognised gap in structured research pathways for junior doctors. It improves access to mentorship, protects research time and supports the ability to present research nationally and internationally.



Received 19 applications for a 12-month, 0.5 FTE placement under supervision of senior SMHS researchers, reflecting strong demand and engagement.

Four doctors were successful in securing a place.

Research publications

Our published research — **582** publications (as of March 2026)

Our collaborators

SMHS researchers regularly author and co-author research papers in collaboration with major universities nationally and internationally. These affiliations reflect strong and growing relationships with leading academic institutions.

In 2025, these collaborative links continued to expand, reinforcing SMHS's commitment to becoming a leading research and teaching hospital.

WA based university affiliation – Top 3 = 3,079

National university affiliation – Top 3 = 1,822

Our publications catalogue

To see our full list of publications from 2017 to 2025, scan the QR code or visit **lens.org/lens/search/scholar/list?collectionId=247065&s=date_published&d=%2B&preview=true**

Enabling consumer involvement

SMHS Research Consumer Advisory Group

This diverse eight-member group – including Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse, carer and lived-experience representatives – was launched to strengthen consumer involvement in research.



Outcomes in 2025 included

Delivery of strong engagement and collaboration, holding six quorate meetings with SMHS researchers invited to share and collaborate

Endorsement of a two-year operational plan providing strategic direction in line with the SMHS Research Strategy 2023–2033

Increased consumer participation in research through the Consumer Research Registry, enabling involvement in eight SMHS research projects and contributing lived-experience and expert insight

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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Compiled: May 2026
Publication number - 2026-SMHS-2885
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