



Dear Ms Huxtable,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Clinician Science Fellowship Governance Committee at the Melbourne Children's Campus (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, University of Melbourne).

With respect to the National Health and Medical Research Strategy 2026-2036 draft document, we are delighted to see the references to clinician scientists. In addition to the current focus, we would like to encourage inclusion of **a greater emphasis on the clinician researchers themselves as the individuals carrying out impactful medical research.**

It is our campus experience, through our Clinician Scientist Fellowship program, that funding talented, productive clinician researchers facilitates:

- targeting the most challenging and important clinical problems, and
- maximises the likelihood of implementation of medical research outcomes into routine clinical practice.

We feel the document undersells their importance for this strategy to come to fruition.

As we approach the 10th anniversary of our Clinician Science Fellowship Program in 2026, we are compiling evidence to describe the success of the program. This evaluation captures research productivity and impact metrics, as well as the program's record of attracting, training, supporting and *retaining* international leading clinical researchers.

We would like to propose our CSF program as a current and successful case study to strengthen the Workforce Enabling Initiative section on page 69 (please see below).

In the lead up to publication of this evidence, we would be happy to work with you and your team to help inform the next iteration of the draft Strategy to increase uptake and decrease barriers for Australian clinician scientists.

We welcome any opportunity to meet and discuss further.

Best wishes,

Vicki Anderson

Chair of Clinician Science Fellowship Governance Committee (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, University of Melbourne)
Director Clinical Science, MCRI

Case Study: Clinician Science Fellowship (CSF) Program, Melbourne Children's Campus

The Melbourne Children's Campus CSF program was designed to decrease barriers and to support and retain successful clinical researchers at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) and Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI).

Through a competitive application process, the program identified outstanding RCH clinician researchers early in their research journey and supported them with dedicated time for research, financial top-ups to address the gap between research and clinical salaries, and mentoring to elevate their trajectory of success.

Now in its 10th year, the program boasts world-leading alumni, who drive internationally impactful research and act as leaders on campus and mentors for the next generation of clinician researchers.

Fellows and alumni of the program have become amplifiers for the sector—attracting significant external research funding, increasing PhD training capacity, and strengthening the research culture across the campus.

Peer reviewed evaluation of this program is expected 2026/27.