

Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM

Chair

National Health and Medical Research Strategy

CANBERRA ACT 2600

8 October 2025

A SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY

Generation Australia: Unlocking the value in Australia's largest child and family cohort studies to accelerate impactful research for healthier Australians and a stronger nation.

Dear Ms Huxtable,

We write on behalf of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and The Kids Research Institute Australia (The Kids); Australia's two largest children's research institutes. We welcome and strongly support the Draft National Health and Medical Research Strategy (Strategy).

Generation Australia offers the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), philanthropy and other funders, an opportunity to leverage >\$100million of already committed funds to unlock the value of Australia's existing child and family cohorts. ***Generation Australia*** is anchored by GenV and ORIGINS, two of Australia's newest, largest longitudinal child and family cohorts with 60,000 consented families from across Australia, and a unique capability to test interventions at scale.

To achieve the Strategy's vision, it's in the national interest to leverage existing world class research infrastructure as an efficient and effective approach to generating research. We recommend that cohort studies, like GenV and ORIGINS, are featured in the Strategy as extraordinary national research infrastructure – key enablers to drive research success. **Build once, use many times.**

Generation Australia will deliver the following draft Strategy outcomes:

- **Outcome 1: Accelerate funding for more research projects and deliver cost savings.** ***Generation Australia*** will enable the NHMRC, MRFF and Australian Research Council (ARC) to fund more research projects with greater efficiency and lower risk profiles. Leveraging ***Generation Australia*** can deliver cost savings to the combined ~\$2b/yr NHMRC, MRFF and ARC budgets through the availability and reduced risk associated with (1) already recruited consented participants, (2) collected biosamples, (3) linked cohort and government data, (4) infrastructure required to securely access the data, (5) a ready-made intervention and trial platform.
- **Outcome 2: Better utilisation of linked data for research.** As GenV & ORIGINS have consent to link to existing linked data assets (eg National Disability Data Asset, Person Level Integrated Data Asset), ***Generation Australia*** will add value to the government's investment in these linked data assets. Linked data alone cannot deliver on the Strategy due to a lack of adequate exposure and outcome data, and an inability to conduct trials.
- **Outcome 3: Accelerate research outputs and translation at scale.** Maximising use of existing cohorts research infrastructure reduces risk, speeds up research and research translation, accelerating the pathway to improved population health and wellbeing. The size of these new cohorts means research can be scaled in a way not previously possible and results are more relevant to the population. It will also enhance the National One-Stop-Shop, providing a ready-made platform for clinical trials.
- **Outcome 4: Large modern cohorts like *Generation Australia* are designed to leverage new technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).** MCRI and The Kids already use AI via the Baby Moves App for early identification of children with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs),

facilitating timely intervention to improve developmental outcomes and alleviating the societal and financial impacts of NDDs. There's also an opportunity to create a 'digital twin' of **Generation Australia** data to create simulated national sample population to determine the impact of research interventions on a whole population or priority populations.

- **Outcome 5: Improved productivity.** Large-scale studies overseas have demonstrated the value of improved productivity resulting from the establishment of world class research assets. Eg The UK Biobank has been gathering information from 500,000 participants since 2010, resulting in over 21,000 researchers from more than 60 countries using this resource, and more than 16,000 peer-reviewed scientific papers¹. With planned international children's megacohorts (of more than 100,000 participants) in the USA and UK either delayed or cancelled, GenV is now the only children's megacohort in the world. This presents an opportunity to demonstrate Australia's research capability to the world and influence impactful research in Australia and internationally.

The [UK Research and Innovation body](#) (UKRI), which aims to increase cross-disciplinary research may provide a useful model to consider. Apart from investing in research, UKRI also supports critical infrastructure required to enable research. Longitudinal cohorts, like **Generation Australia, are enablers of research and we welcome the draft Strategy's focus on this critical aspect of research.** Providing long term funding for the multidisciplinary workforce, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, workforce capacity and capability building, consumer and community involvement, data quality and management, cyber security and IT platforms required to support research will create efficiencies for the Australian Government and deliver more, high-quality research to benefit all Australians.

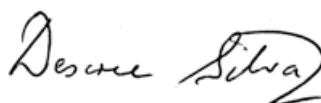
MCRI and The Kids strongly support coordination and alignment with other research programs and strategies across the Commonwealth Government eg Australian Research Council (ARC), Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD), the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and the National Science and Research Priorities. **GenV and ORIGINS are designed for cross-disciplinary and cross-sector research (health, medical, social and economic) trials, interventions and observation.** Strategic alignment across research will ultimately improve societal and economic outcomes for all Australians.

We are committed to ensuring children in Australia, no matter where they live, benefit from Australian research. As trusted partners of the Australian Government, MCRI and The Kids – through Generation Australia - will deliver for children and families across Australia AND deliver impactful research for the nation.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with you.



Professor Sharon Goldfeld AM
Deputy Director, GenV



Professor Desiree Silva
Co-Head, ORIGINS

¹ UK Biobank, <https://www.ukbiobank.ac.uk/use-our-data/> accessed 22 July 2025