
ROBINSON RESEARCH INSTITUTE FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT REPORT FROM

THE SA PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Robinson Research Institute (RRI), at The University of Adelaide, welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft report from the Inquiry. We appreciate the detailed work that the Commission has undertaken and the resulting draft report. Broadly, we believe the draft report reflects the important considerations and will lead to a constructive final report and set of recommendations. RRI's written feedback here is focused on a limited number of points to respond to relevant Information Requests and Recommendations in the draft report. RRI welcomes opportunities to engage in relevant discussion or requests for further input in the process of completing the Inquiry.

Information Request 5.2 – Structural options for SAHMRI

The RRI Executive Committee discussed the options presented for the structure of SAHMRI. The SAHMRI Women and Kids Theme's goal and its four research programs align strongly within the RRI's scope of research. While RRI collaborates with the SAHMRI Women and Kids Theme (and also significantly with other SAHMRI Themes), there would be clear opportunities for organisational synergy if Option 2 was pursued with SAHMRI (particularly the Women and Kids Theme) incorporated into the University of Adelaide or some other strategy to organisationally and strategically align the SAHMRI Women and Kids Theme and RRI. We believe this would have benefits for the State in consolidating and focusing on this area, which is a clear area of research strength for SA.

Therefore, we recommend pursuing Option 2 where research programs, currently under SAHMRI, would be incorporated into one or both of the North Terrace-based Universities, based on alignment with existing University-based research programs. It is clear that the University of Adelaide has the capability and established strengths strongly aligned with the SAHMRI themes to best accommodate this incorporation. In exercising this option, it needs to be acknowledged that SAHMRI operates as an independent organisation with critical funding from the SA Government. A transition to incorporate SAHMRI must take into consideration the ongoing funding needs to maintain the operation of the SAHMRI based research and facilities.

Additionally, we contend there is an important role for an entity that retains some elements of the SAHMRI concept which is intended to foster synergy and integration of independent University and SA Health research in the Biomed City Precinct. It is important to retain a focal point for the precinct as a unifying force facilitating integration of research across LHNs, Universities and Research Institutes with appropriate governance/reporting arrangements in place as well as ability to apply incentives to facilitate effective change in clinical as well as University/Institute settings. It is important to retain a central entity that itself does not directly implement research or administer research grants so that there are no conflicts of interest and no barriers to engagement with all precinct research organisations. Therefore, this entity likely does not qualify as a research institute itself and could be called the SA Health and Medical Research Development, or similar.

Draft recommendation 5.1

The emphasis in the draft report and in this recommendation for research with translation impact to be a priority for SA Health is of significant importance and we welcome this emphasis and this recommendation. To strengthen this recommendation we suggest that there is more inclusion of the strategic importance of LHNs and Hospitals partnering with Universities and Research Institutes to implement research and research translation programs. If LHNs and Hospitals seek to establish their own research programs, independent of existing University and Research Institute capability, then this will likely create duplication, further fracturing of research capability and have much longer timeframes. For example, the WCHN has significant opportunity to grow collaboration through increased partnership with RRI and the SAHMRI Woman and Kids Theme.

Boosting research within the Women's and Children's Hospital Network

It is important that the Inquiry particularly considers the importance of Women's and Children's research and the significant opportunity for building collaborative research within the WCHN. Our understanding is that WCHN leadership is considering options for advancing the incorporation of research within the network and building collaboration with Universities and Research Institutes in this process. There is opportunity through this Inquiry process and the resultant report to help establish a process for building these collaborations.