



WENTWEST STRATEGIC RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT



WentWest's Strategic Research Framework (the Framework) builds on the 2020 WentWest Research Strategy and Priorities and was developed to guide WentWest's research trajectory into the future.

The Framework provides a contemporary approach for WentWest to effectively engage with, support and harness high-quality research to improve health outcomes for the people of Western Sydney.

With a view of embedding high-quality research evidence across WentWest, the Framework identifies four overarching research focus areas: breaking cycles of disadvantage, health span extension, next generation of primary care and health in a changing climate.

It also outlines three key research objectives:

Objective 1: Drive the translation of research evidence into WentWest, the PHN Program and the broader primary health sector's policies, systems and practices.

Objective 2: Engage with excelling research in focus areas of strategic priority to improve the health and wellbeing of the people living and working in Western Sydney.

Objective 3: Foster genuine, balanced relationships with researchers to become recognised as a research partner of choice – especially in areas that directly affect the health and wellbeing of the Western Sydney population.

The Framework further promotes ongoing collaboration with industries, governments, communities, and academic colleagues, aiming to enhance our cross-disciplinary knowledge and advance the practical application of research.

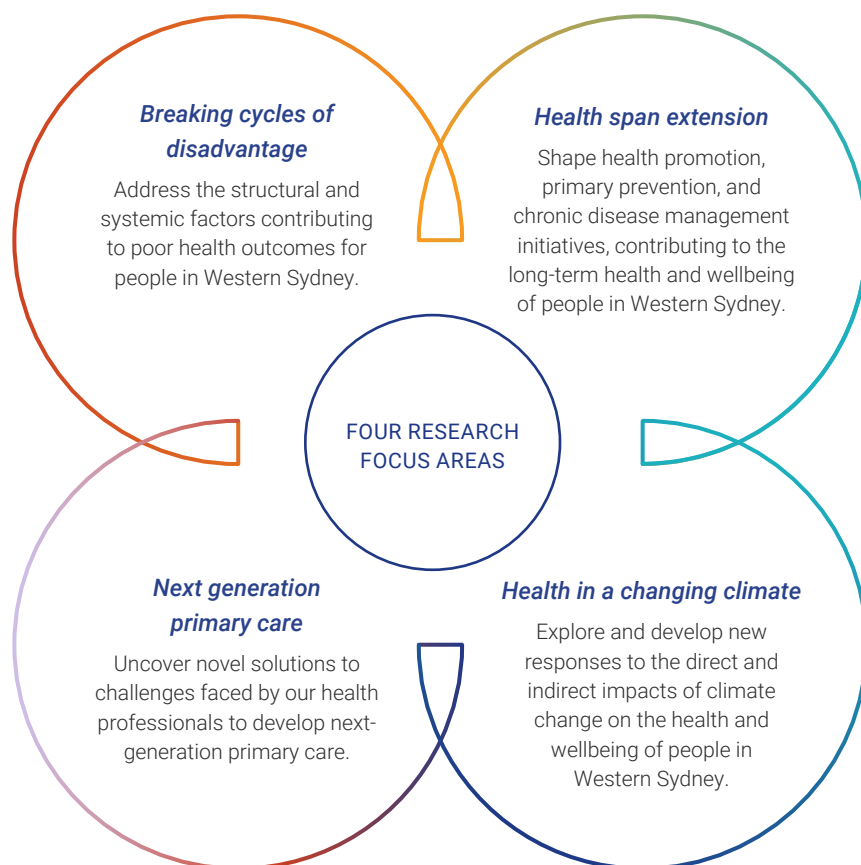
WENTWEST STRATEGIC RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE



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Objective 2: Engage with excelling research in focus areas of strategic priority to improve the health and wellbeing of the people living and working in Western Sydney.



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BACKGROUND



WentWest brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, services, and programs to solve the complex health challenges facing the people of Western Sydney. The systematic integration of research in our work provides a significant opportunity to:

- Identify and further our understanding of the communities we serve. This includes assessing the prevalence of certain health conditions, and the barriers that prevent people from seeking effective health care.
- Evaluate the programs and services we commission and identify areas where we are doing well and areas where we need to improve.
- Design new and innovative programs that can be used to improve health outcomes.
- Review our operational processes and identify areas where improvements can be made.
- Guide our policy and advocacy efforts, ensuring that we continue to advocate for policies and put forward strategies that will benefit the communities we serve.

This Framework will support WentWest's ambitions to become an evidence-based learning organisation, where service design and commissioning are based on high-quality research, thereby improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for members of the Western Sydney community and supporting progress toward health system reform.

Over our twenty years of operation, WentWest has

developed a unique blend of strategic capabilities that can be mobilised to support researchers from across the world seeking to achieve research excellence with impact. To our research partnerships, we bring:

- Deep knowledge of the Western Sydney context which can inform research questions and methods and ensure that findings are relevant and respond to the needs of our community.
- Strong community partnerships which can help drive participation and engagement in research projects.
- Interdisciplinary expertise that can be leveraged to co-design innovative solutions that address complex community health needs.
- A broad network of stakeholders across government, private and not-for-profit sectors, providing a platform for research translation into policy and practice.
- Access to data and resources that can support novel research methodologies and unlock new insights.

We believe that if the health of people in Western Sydney is to be improved and inequities are to be reduced, the capacity of research to contribute to these aims must be maximised. This Framework, therefore, provides the scaffolding for practical and mutually beneficial partnerships with researchers and universities. It builds on our past successes and paves a way forward as we continue to chart an exciting course for our research activities and further our positive impact on the health and wellbeing of people in Western Sydney.

Scope

This Framework will guide research activities that are undertaken, commissioned, and supported by WentWest.

Partnership Principles

The following principles will guide WentWest's consideration of partnership opportunities with universities and researchers in line with the objectives of this Framework.

Research WentWest engages in will be:



Relevant to the needs of the community and health care providers, and aligned to the focus areas outlined in this Framework.



Generated through genuine collaboration with WentWest, Western Sydney health care providers and the community.



Culturally competent and inclusive of the diverse communities of Western Sydney, and considerate of their different perspectives, experiences, and needs.



Sustainable by promoting, facilitating, and integrating principles of sustainability across all research activities.



Rigorous, ethical, and compliant, with best practices in relation to agreed research and data governance.

WentWest will not engage in:

- Biomedical, clinical, laboratory-based or health services research that does not have a clear link to the focus areas outlined in this Framework.
- Research that is unrelated to WentWest's core strategic objectives.
- Projects that have commenced or have been funded to commence or for which grant or funding applications have already been written and submitted.
- Projects that have been designed without input or consultation from WentWest staff.
- Projects designed without consumer involvement.
- Projects that do not include robust research translation and implementation plans to ensure the successful uptake of new evidence into Western Sydney primary care and related State or National policies and strategies.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The Strategic Research Framework is centred around three main objectives, all focused on engaging and supporting excellent research to deliver maximum benefit to the Western Sydney community.



Objective 1: Drive the translation of research evidence into WentWest, the PHN Program and the broader primary health sector's policies, systems and practices.

Ensuring the uptake of evidence into practice is an integral component of our research approach. Effective research translation means that research findings are used to inform our policies and practice, ultimately leading to better health and social outcomes for Western Sydney people. To drive research translation across our operations and with our stakeholders, we will:

1.1 Invest in building our internal capabilities of utilising research findings, including promoting a culture of inquiry and providing opportunities for our workforce to learn and apply research skills in their day-to-day operations.

1.2 Host knowledge-sharing forums to facilitate engagement between researchers and our practitioners, workforce, and community members.

1.3 Systematically measure and share the impact of the research we undertake, commission and support.



Objective 2: Engage with excelling research in focus areas of strategic priority to improve the health and wellbeing of the people living and working in Western Sydney.

Through our commitment to making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the people living in Western Sydney, we will focus on creating and supporting research that is aligned with our four focus areas outlined below while also remaining open to emerging priorities. To support our vision, we will:

2.1 Invest in a range of different types of research as part of an integrated, coherent research portfolio.

2.2 Communicate our focus areas to relevant stakeholders within Western Sydney and to the research community within NSW and across Australia.

2.3 Prioritise projects that include PhD students, early career researchers, general practitioners and other primary health care practitioners based in Western Sydney to support the development of a research workforce with experience and understanding of WentWest and our strategic imperatives.



Objective 3: Foster genuine, balanced relationships with researchers to become recognised as a research partner of choice – especially in areas that directly affect the health and wellbeing of the Western Sydney population.

We know that forming equal partnerships with researchers and universities will result in research outcomes with greater impact. To solve the challenges facing our community and achieve our vision, we must leverage our strategic advantages and capabilities to fully engage in and inform the different development phases of research projects in which we engage. To achieve this objective, we will:

3.1

Promote greater transparency regarding how we assess and engage in partnerships with researchers and universities.

3.2

Prioritise the pursuit of collaborative funding schemes that provide opportunities for our workforce, community members and stakeholders to play an active role in defining research problems and interpreting findings. This includes but is not limited to Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grants and/or National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Partnership Grants.



FOUR FOCUS AREAS OF STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Our focus areas have been identified as cross-disciplinary areas in which we aim to engage with and support world-leading research. We believe that the broad and inclusive nature of these priorities offers many opportunities for researchers to pursue their areas of expertise, while also addressing the significant challenges faced by the Western Sydney community.

Focus area 1: Breaking cycles of disadvantage

WentWest is dedicated to achieving health equity: that is, enabling all people of Western Sydney to have the resources and opportunities that lead to a healthy and fulfilling life regardless of factors such as cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, income, education level, occupation, or place of residence.

Through innovative and multidisciplinary research partnerships, we will seek to further our understanding of and support new ways of addressing the structural and systemic factors contributing to poor health outcomes for people in Western Sydney. This includes projects targeting the social and commercial determinants of poor health, as well as those concerned with interventions in early childhood.



Focus area 2: Health span extension

Though an increased prevalence of chronic disease in the community is a concern, we also know that living longer doesn't necessarily equate to living better or healthier lives. We are therefore committed to supporting research focused on extending the health span of people living in Western Sydney – that is the length of time they can live independently, with a good quality of life.

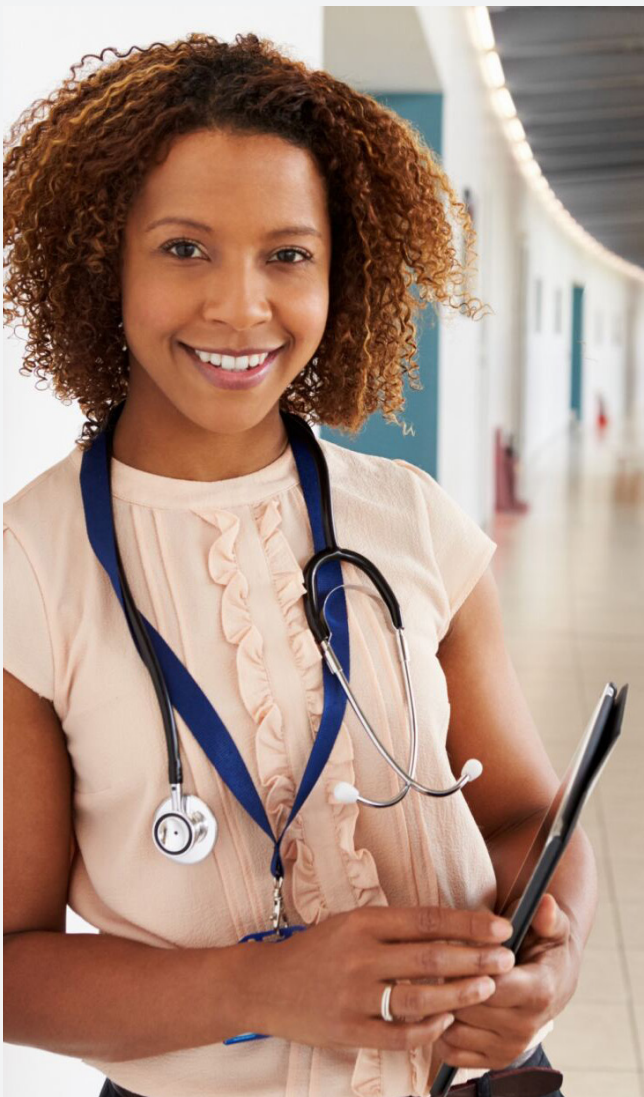
Through research, we will seek to influence health promotion, primary prevention policies and chronic disease management practices to promote healthy lifestyle habits and improve the health and wellbeing of our Western Sydney community for generations to come.



Focus area 3: Next-generation primary care

Our primary care sector is faced with unprecedented challenges from workforce shortages and long waiting times, to increasing costs and a rapidly changing technological landscape.

We will work with researchers to uncover novel solutions to challenges faced by our health professionals to develop next-generation primary care. This includes but is not limited to, projects aimed at creating models that support the delivery of personalised, patient-centred care; for example, through exploring hybrid technology and team-based models of care and the integration of primary care and behavioural health to improve outcomes.



Focus area 4: Health in a changing climate

Climate change brings new and significant challenges to the physical and mental health of the Western Sydney community. It also exacerbates existing health problems for our most vulnerable populations, such as those living in poverty or with pre-existing health conditions.

Working with researchers, we will garner and mobilise support for collaborative projects exploring and developing new responses to the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of people living in Western Sydney.



