This submission was made on behalf of InGeNA to the Have your say about the MRFF Research Mission program - Submitted on 2026-02-27.

About the MRFF Research Missions program

Familiarity with MRFF Research Missions program

How familiar are you with the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Research Missions program?
Very familiar

In your opinion, is the MRFF Research Missions program fulfilling its aim to:

Fund large programs of work: To some extent
Bring together key researchers, health professionals, stakeholders, industry partners and patients/consumers: To some extent
Tackle big health challenges: To some extent

In our view, the MRFF Research Missions Program is fulfilling its aims to some extent. The Missions have supported large, collaborative programs of work and brought together researchers, clinicians, industry and consumers around significant health challenges. However, there remains a critical gap between research excellence and sustainable system implementation, particularly in genomics and precision medicine.

While the Missions have catalysed high-quality research and pilot programs, they have not yet sufficiently supported the mainstreaming of genomics into routine clinical care. Australia risks continuing to fund outstanding discovery and translational research without establishing the policy, reimbursement and digital infrastructure settings required to embed genomics as standard practice.

The MRFF has been instrumental in building Australia's genomics capability. The next step is ensuring that this investment delivers a measurable shift in delivery from research projects to embedded clinical standards of care, supported by durable national infrastructure. Strengthening the Missions to explicitly integrate implementation, policy alignment and infrastructure development would significantly enhance their ability to tackle major health challenges at scale.

Considering the overall aims of the MRFF Research Missions program, do you have suggestions to improve the MRFF Research Missions program (e.g., design, prioritisation processes, governance or potential for impact)?

The MRFF Research Missions Program has strengthened collaboration and supported important areas of discovery. To maximise impact, we suggest the following improvements:

1. Strengthen implementation pathways
Missions should include clear plans for translating research into routine clinical care. This means embedding implementation science, early engagement with HTA and reimbursement bodies, and defined pathways to scale beyond pilot programs.

2. Align with national infrastructure
Research impact is constrained where digital, data and service infrastructure is fragmented. Missions should align with national standards for interoperability, data sharing and workforce readiness to ensure sustainable integration into the health system.

Suite 375, Level 1, 241 Adelaide Street, Brisbane Q 4000 t:
Ph: 07 5407 0452 | Fax: 07 5429 8486 | e: info@ingena.org.au

3. Enhance prioritisation and horizon scanning
Introduce structured horizon scanning to anticipate emerging technologies and system needs. Greater transparency around prioritisation criteria and expected system-level impact would improve strategic focus.

4. Strengthen cross-sector governance
Formalise roles for clinicians, industry and consumers in Mission governance to accelerate translation and ensure real-world relevance.

5. Measure system-level impact
Success metrics should extend beyond publications and include adoption into clinical practice, reimbursement outcomes, equity of access and measurable improvements in health system efficiency.

Overall, the next evolution of the MRFF Missions program should focus not only on generating excellent research, but on embedding it into national systems of care to deliver sustained and equitable impact for the health of our communities.

Considering the overall aims of the MRFF Research Missions program, are there any emerging/unmet needs or significant health challenges that should be considered within the existing MRFF Research Missions?

While the MRFF Research Missions have strengthened discovery and translational research, several emerging and unmet needs should be considered to maximise system-level impact.

1. Mainstreaming Genomics into Routine Care
A key gap is the transition from pilots to nationally coordinated implementation. Within existing Missions (e.g. Cancer, Rare Diseases, Genomics), greater emphasis should be placed on embedding comprehensive genomic profiling and precision medicine into standard clinical pathways, with clear scale-up models.

2. National Coordination of Genomic Test Evaluation
Fragmented assessment and reimbursement processes for genomic tests create duplication and inequity. Research and policy work to inform coordinated national approaches, including streamlined evaluation pathways, should be prioritised.

3. Genomic Data Infrastructure and Interoperability
Precision medicine requires secure, interoperable digital infrastructure. There is an unmet need for nationally consistent models of genomic data integration, privacy-protective consent and patient access to results.

4. Structured Horizon Scanning
Given the rapid evolution of genomics and precision technologies, Missions should incorporate forward-looking horizon scanning to inform infrastructure planning and avoid reactive adoption.

Involvement in MRFF Research Missions program application

Have you been involved in an application(s) to the MRFF Research Missions program (either as an applicant, partner or provided support)?
Yes

What capacity have you been involved in an application(s) to the MRFF Research Missions program?
Partner organisation or Associate Investigator (AI)
If other is selected for previous question, please provide details here:

Are you aware of the Research Mission strategic documents (implementation plan and roadmap)? Yes

Research Mission strategic documents

Are there any other ways in which you utilised the strategic documents, not covered in the previous question?

As an industry partner, we have utilised the MRFF strategic documents as a framework to guide engagement, alignment and co-investment across the genomics and precision medicine ecosystem. Specifically, we have used the strategic documents to:

- Align industry priorities with national research directions, ensuring member activities and partnerships support agreed Mission objectives.
- Facilitate cross-sector collaboration, bringing together industry, clinicians, researchers and consumers around shared MRFF-aligned goals.
- Inform policy and system reform discussions, particularly in relation to implementation pathways, evaluation processes and infrastructure needs.
- Engage about co-investment opportunities, where industry capability can accelerate translation and scale beyond pilot programs.
- Support consistent messaging to government, reinforcing the importance of embedding research outcomes into routine care and national infrastructure planning.

The strategic documents provide an important signal of national intent. As an industry partner, we use them to ensure engagement is coordinated,

Enablers, barriers and involvement in MRFF-funded research

Have the following enablers been helpful when applying for grant opportunities funded under the MRFF Research Missions program?
Advanced notification of future grant opportunities (e.g., via MRFF grant opportunities calendar), Custom selection criteria (for example, requirements for: early to mid-career researchers; rural, regional and remote location; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research; etc), Priority population focus,Webinars / information sessions
Please provide details if 'other' was selected above:

In your experience, what are the main barriers to applying for, securing, conducting or translating the research from a MRFF Research Missions grant?

In our experience, the main barriers relate less to research excellence and more to translation, coordination and system integration.

1. Complexity and Administrative Burden
Application processes can be resource-intensive, particularly for industry partners and smaller organisations. This can discourage participation or limit the diversity of consortia.

2. Uncertainty in Translation Pathways
There is often no clear pathway from MRFF-funded research to reimbursement, regulatory approval or routine clinical adoption. Without early alignment with HTA, payers and policy settings, promising projects risk stalling after proof of concept.

3. Fragmentation Across Jurisdictions
Variation across states in service delivery, funding and data systems makes national implementation challenging, particularly in genomics and precision medicine.

4. Infrastructure Gaps
Digital interoperability, data sharing frameworks and workforce readiness are often underdeveloped. Research may demonstrate clinical value but cannot scale without enabling infrastructure.

5. Limited Support for 'Last-Mile' Implementation
Funding typically supports research and early translation, but there is insufficient support for service redesign, guideline development and embedding innovations into standard care.

Addressing these barriers would significantly enhance the impact of MRFF Research Missions and ensure research investment delivers measurable improvements in equity, system efficiency and patient outcomes. implementation-focused and aligned with long-term health system impact.

In what ways were you/your organisation involved in the application and/or research project?
Priority setting and co-design, Dissemination of results

Are there any ways the MRFF could improve involvement of consumers and/or research end users?

While consumer involvement has strengthened over time, there are opportunities to improve meaningful engagement across the lifecycle of MRFF Research Missions.

1. Earlier and Ongoing Co-Design
Consumers and end users should be involved from priority setting through to implementation, not only at application stage. Structured co-design processes would strengthen relevance and uptake.

2. Clear Roles in Governance
Formalising consumer and end-user representation in Mission advisory and governance structures would support accountability and sustained engagement.

3. Capacity Building and Support
Dedicated funding for consumer participation, including training and remuneration, would ensure diverse and informed involvement, particularly from underrepresented groups.

4. Focus on Implementation Outcomes
Consumers should be engaged not only in research design but in defining success metrics, including access, equity, patient experience and real-world impact.

5. Feedback Loops and Transparency
Providing accessible updates on how consumer input shaped decisions would build trust and encourage ongoing participation.

Strengthening structured, supported and continuous consumer engagement would enhance translation, improve equity and ensure MRFF investments align with real-world health needs.

Other large-scale research funding programs

Are you aware of any large-scale research funding programs (national or international) that are similar in scope and purpose to the MRFF Research Missions program and have had significant impact on health outcomes?

1. UK – Genomics England and the NHS Genomic Medicine Service
The 100,000 Genomes Project transitioned from a large-scale research initiative into routine NHS clinical care. It has improved rare disease diagnosis, embedded precision oncology pathways, and established the NHS National Genomic Test Directory to standardise access and reimbursement.

Information: https://www.genomicsengland.co.uk https://www.england.nhs.uk/genomics

Relevant features for MRFF consideration: Clear pathway from research to national service delivery; Standardised national test coordination; Integrated genomic data infrastructure; Long-term funding aligned with system reform

2. United States – Cancer Moonshot (NIH)
A mission-oriented funding initiative accelerating cancer research, precision medicine and data sharing through coordinated national investment and public–private partnerships.

Information: https://www.cancer.gov/research/key-initiatives/moonshot

Relevant features: Strong emphasis on data interoperability; Cross-sector collaboration; Clear focus on accelerating translation into clinical practice

These programs demonstrate that the greatest health impact occurs when research funding is tightly aligned with implementation pathways, infrastructure development and national coordination mechanisms.

Optional additional information

Is there anything else you would like to share to inform how well the MRFF Research Missions program is going, or opportunities for improvement?

The MRFF Research Missions program has been instrumental in building Australia's genomics capability. The significant investment in cancer, rare diseases and genomics research has positioned Australia strongly in discovery and early translation. The key opportunity now is to ensure this investment delivers system-wide precision medicine and prevention.

For genomics, this means:

- Moving from pilots to routine clinical implementation of comprehensive genomic profiling and precision diagnostics
- Embedding genomics into prevention and early detection pathways, including population screening where evidence supports it
- Aligning research with national infrastructure, including interoperable genomic data systems and consistent evaluation pathways
- Ensuring equitable access so that genomic-enabled care is not dependent on postcode

Australia has the research capability and industry ecosystem to lead in precision medicine. The next phase of MRFF Missions should focus on scaling genomics into nationally coordinated models of care that deliver earlier diagnosis, more targeted treatment, and ultimately reduced disease burden and improved productivity.