

Victoria's Clinical Trials Action Plan

October 2026

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and value First Nations people as the custodians of long-standing knowledge systems developed over millennia, which continue to inform contemporary research and understanding of health, wellbeing and the environment.

This action plan acknowledges the need for continued action to achieve equality for First Nations people. We are committed to advancing Aboriginal self-determination and community involvement in clinical trials, ensuring that medical research benefits all Australians.

The Clinical Trials Action Plan aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, promoting Aboriginal self-determination and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in research decisions that affect their lives.

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Ministerial Foreword

Victoria leads our nation in clinical trials. As Minister for Medical Research, I am immensely proud of our state being a key player on the global stage. I have seen first-hand how Victoria's clinical trials industry is advancing healthcare for patients here and around the world.

I am proud that Victoria leads the nation in commercially sponsored clinical trials. Our state is internationally recognised for bringing together world-class hospitals, universities, medical research institutes and industry partners to advance discovery, translate research and improve patient care.

Victoria is well positioned to lead innovation and deliver the highest quality treatments and therapies as the global medical research landscape continues to evolve.

That is why I am pleased to present the Victorian Government's Health and Medical Research Clinical Trials Action Plan. This plan provides a clear roadmap for the future of Victoria's clinical trials industry.

It sets out our priorities to strengthen the clinical trials workforce, foster collaboration across the health technologies and medical research sector, expand access to trials, and accelerate the translation of research into commercialisation and real-world health impact.

Importantly, the plan recognises that all Victorians should have the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, research, regardless of where they live or who they are.

The Clinical Trials Action Plan was developed with stakeholders from across Victoria and reflects the priorities of the sector and the needs of Victorian patients and communities.

The Victorian Government remains steadfast in its support for the clinical trials industry and for Victoria's broader health and medical research ecosystem.

Our record investment of more than \$12 billion since 2014 has helped build a world-class research hub, powered by the skill, dedication and expertise of our talented workforce.

I look forward to continuing to work with the sector as it delivers the next generation of breakthroughs and drives the innovation, growth and healthcare of the future.



A blue ink signature of The Hon Anthony Carbines MP.

The Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Medical Research



Introduction

Victoria hosts a world-class clinical trials ecosystem, recognised internationally for its exceptional research quality, skilled workforce, advanced infrastructure and strong global connections.

Clinical trials are fundamental to the medical breakthroughs that save lives, enabling new treatments and improved care through the rigorous testing of safety and efficacy. In Victoria, clinical trials have delivered life-changing innovations with global impact. Examples of Victorian innovations include the cochlear implant, restoring hearing to people around the world, and major advances in IVF, helping millions of families to have children.

Victoria's leadership in clinical trials stems from decades of coordinated investment and policy support. This has fostered an integrated research and innovation system that links discovery, clinical care, advanced manufacturing and commercialisation. The growth of internationally recognised biomedical precincts such as Parkville and Monash Clayton, together with strong partnerships between research institutes, health services, universities and industry, has positioned Victoria as Australia's leading destination for clinical trials, accounting for around 30% of Australia's total clinical trials activity.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a powerful demonstration of Victoria's end-to-end clinical and research capabilities. Victorian researchers, clinicians and industry played a critical role in the development of life-saving vaccines and therapeutics. The pandemic also highlighted the importance of sovereign manufacturing capability

and resilient supply chains, driving investment in Victoria's manufacturing ecosystem.

Today, this is reflected in Victoria's position as the only place in the world where both Moderna and BioNTech have established research, development and manufacturing operations.

As Victoria's health technologies and medical research sector continues to grow, clinical trials remain a critical catalyst in the translation of new research discoveries into patient care and commercialisation. They improve patient access to new treatments and generate the evidence needed to advance healthcare, while also attracting investment and supporting highly skilled jobs. Research indicates that every \$1 invested in Australian investigator-initiated clinical trials generates around \$5.80 in value.

Victoria's Clinical Trials Action Plan builds on the state's strong foundation in clinical trials. It sets a clear path for the Victorian Government, in partnership with the medical research and health technologies sector, to ensure that all Victorians benefit from improved health outcomes, greater access to ground-breaking discoveries and a stronger economy. This action plan is being delivered under Victoria's *Health and Medical Research Strategy (2022-32)*, the overarching framework guiding research sector priorities and investment.



Image credit: RMIT University Discovery to Device Facility.



Vision:

Build on Victoria's global leadership in clinical trials by driving research translation – ensuring equitable access for all Victorians and delivering health and economic impact.

The Case for Action

Clinical trials are relevant to all four pillars of Victoria's *Health and Medical Research Strategy 2022-2032*. They rely on a highly skilled workforce (Talent), bring together researchers, clinicians, health services, industry and consumers (Collaborate), provide the pathway for testing and validating breakthrough discoveries (Big Ideas), and translate research into improved patient outcomes, commercialisation opportunities and economic growth (Generating Outcomes).

In a globally competitive environment where jurisdictions are increasingly seeking to attract a greater share of global clinical trial activity, this action plan will support Victoria to maintain its leadership position and build on its strengths to attract a greater share of phase 1-4 clinical trials.

The Clinical Trials Action Plan has been developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- Hospitals and health services
- Medical research institutes
- Universities
- Industry
- Researchers
- Clinical trials support staff
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
- Consumers and participants
- Peak research bodies.

Victoria's Health Technologies and Medical Research Sector at a Glance

Clinical trials are a key enabling component of Victoria's broader health technologies and medical research sector, which is recognised globally for its research excellence.

SIGNIFICANT EXPORTS



Supports over
\$3.82 billion
in **health technology**
exports per year

TRIAL ACTIVITY



Australia's
leading state
for **commercially sponsored clinical trials**,
hosting 2,085 trials from 2021–2025*

WORLD-CLASS INSTITUTES



Home to
18 world-class
medical research institutes which
together employ over **6,000 people**

ECONOMIC IMPACT



Generates
\$3.90
of economic activity
for every **\$1** of investment

COMPETITIVE FUNDING



Consistently attracts
over 40%
of competitive **Commonwealth**
medical research grant funding

LEADING UNIVERSITIES



10 universities, including
2 world top-50
institutions
for **Life Sciences & Medicine**

Victoria is one of
the top research and
biotech hubs in the
Asia-Pacific region.

HEALTHTECH INNOVATION



Home to
42%
of Australia's **ASX-listed medtech**
and **pharmaceutical** companies^

HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE



Supported by a network of over
300 hospitals
and **health**
services

* GlobalData. ^ ASX data as at 7 September 2026.

Delivering Real-World Impact

Jennifer's Story



Jennifer and her daughter Elly.
Image credit: Victorian Cancer Trials Link.

When Jennifer's oncologist first spoke to her about joining a clinical trial, she was scared this might be the last treatment option for her metastatic melanoma.

'I just thought, that's my last roll of the dice,' she says. 'My main fear was, is this going to work? But nobody knows the answer to that until we try.'

Jennifer was diagnosed with melanoma when she was 30 years old, and in the roughly 20 years since had been treating recurrences in her brain, her lung and her lymph nodes through multiple surgeries and targeted drug therapy.

Despite her treatment, the cancer continued to return, and Jennifer's oncologist recommended a clinical trial testing the efficacy of immunotherapy to help shrink tumours and decrease the risk of the melanoma coming back.

Although nervous at first, Jennifer decided to take part and soon found her fortnightly infusions became something she looked forward to.

'That first walk-in was scary, but it very quickly became a second home,' she says. 'When it finished, I kind of missed it. I missed the company and the understanding of the other people.'

Jennifer says the clinical trial became a safe space, connecting her with people who understood what she was going through.

It's been almost 10 years since the clinical trial, and Jennifer says the immunotherapy treatment was a *'lifesaver'*. She had a few side effects along the way linked to previous treatments, but the team worked with her to manage these and she's been in the clear since then.

Inspired by her experience, Jennifer now volunteers with Cancer Council Victoria's Cancer Connect program, where she draws on her own experience with cancer to support others going through it.

Jennifer says she is grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial and to be able to help others.

Macy's Story

When 15-year-old Macy hit her head while surfing on a school excursion, she seemed fine at first. But within 18 hours her mother Jo noticed she was no longer herself. When Macy returned to school, she was overwhelmed by the classroom noise, struggled to follow what her teacher was saying and ended up leaving in tears.

Macy's GP diagnosed her with concussion. When her symptoms persisted, she was referred to a sports doctor and physiotherapist.

The turning point came when the family learned about the new concussion clinic at Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), where Macy was able to participate in a clinical trial to expand her treatment options.

'It was amazing that we found the clinic, a relief and a blessing,' Jo said. 'There was hope that Macy could recover and receive all the specialist care she needed in the one location.'

The trial brought together physiotherapy, psychology and specialist medical care, providing tailored support for children experiencing ongoing concussion symptoms.

'Her recovery took about five months, which left her frustrated and frightened at times,' Jo said. 'But the girl who walked into the clinic and the one who walked out were completely different.'

Today, Macy is back to enjoying everyday life, including dancing, acting and storytelling.

The clinical trial demonstrated the benefits of early, multidisciplinary concussion care. Three months after injury, 62.5 per cent of children who received the Concussion Essentials intervention had fully recovered, compared with 37 per cent receiving standard care.



Macy's injury, after nose-diving off her surfboard.



MCRI Professor Vicki Anderson, Physiotherapist Katie Davies, Macy and her mum Jo at the clinic.



Image credit: Murdoch Children's Research Institute.



Participants are at the heart of every clinical trial. Stories like Macy's and Jennifer's demonstrate the profound personal impact of clinical trial participation and the role Victoria's world-class clinical trials ecosystem plays in supporting better outcomes for patients.

Victoria: Australia's Clinical Trials Capital

Victoria is a globally recognised destination for clinical trials, offering world-class capabilities across trial design, development and delivery.

These strengths are enabled by a favourable regulatory environment, world-class public and private healthcare networks, leading universities and medical research institutes, specialist clinical research and manufacturing organisations, and a diverse and highly engaged participant pool.

Victoria's leadership comes at a time of significant change and momentum in clinical trials. National reform, new digital and AI-enabled trial models, advances in precision medicine and growing global competition for clinical trial activity are reshaping how trials are designed, delivered and accessed. This creates an opportunity for Victoria to build on its strengths, strengthen system coordination and ensure the state remains at the forefront of next-generation clinical research.

This action plan focuses collective effort where it can have the greatest impact: strengthening workforce capability, improving sector coordination, expanding equitable access to clinical trials and supporting stronger translation, commercialisation and investment outcomes.

WORLD-CLASS SCALE



Accounts for

around 30%

of Australia's **total clinical trials activity**

COST ADVANTAGE



Reports show Australia can be up to

60% cheaper

than the **US for clinical trials** after tax incentives

MRNA INNOVATION



Only location globally

where both **Moderna and BioNTech** have established R&D and manufacturing operations

REGULATORY EFFICIENCY



Faster trial set-up

through the **National Mutual Acceptance Scheme**, reducing duplication across participating states

EXPORT LEADERSHIP



Produces

around 60%

of Australia's **pharmaceutical exports**

GLOBAL IMPACT



Almost

70% FDA-approved novel drugs

in 2025 were supported by **clinical trial activity in Victoria**

LEADING TRIAL SITES



Home to

5 of Australia's top 10

commercial clinical trial sites*

This action plan will support continued growth in clinical trial activity and strengthen Victoria's reputation for clinical trials excellence.

* GlobalData.

Clinical Trials Action Plan Priorities

The following domains and actions provide a roadmap for the Victorian Government to strengthen Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem, in collaboration with the health technologies and medical research sector. Underpinning the action plan are five system-wide enablers that cut across all domains, helping to drive implementation and create the conditions for sustained success.



Vision:

Build on Victoria's global leadership in clinical trials by driving research translation – ensuring equitable access for all Victorians and delivering health and economic impact.

System-wide enablers



Governance



Capability and Infrastructure



Partnerships



Consumer-centred research



Data, Digital and AI

01

Strengthen Victoria's clinical trial's workforce

- 1.1 Address workforce shortages to strengthen sustainability across the clinical trials pipeline
- 1.2 Build a future-ready clinical trials workforce through targeted training and education

02

Improve coordination across Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem

- 2.1 Strengthen cross-disciplinary connections and collaboration at a local and global level
- 2.2 Streamline systems and data

03

Make clinical trials accessible to all Victorians

- 3.1 Increase community awareness and access to clinical trials across Victoria
- 3.2 Strengthen consumer partnerships across the clinical trial lifecycle

04

Boost translation, commercialisation and investment

- 4.1 Position Victoria as a global destination for clinical trials, commercialisation and advanced manufacturing
- 4.2 Support the adoption of emerging and future technologies

Domain 1: Strengthen Victoria's clinical trials workforce

Talent is the cornerstone of a world-class clinical trials ecosystem. Victoria's clinical trials workforce delivers the scientific discoveries that translate into real-world health benefits for patients and communities. As the clinical trials landscape continues to evolve, so too must the skills and capabilities of Victoria's workforce.

The way Victoria's clinical trials are conducted is evolving including from the growing use of data, digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI). These changes are driving demand for new skills and capabilities and creating new opportunities for clinical trials across the state.

The Victorian Government released the *Health and Medical Research Workforce Action Plan* in 2024, outlining a roadmap to work with the sector to foster skills development, growth, diversity and inclusion. It has already delivered tangible outcomes, including improving awareness of future workforce needs and retaining talented researchers in Victoria through almost \$1 million in Fostering Achievement in Research (FAIR) Fellowships funding.

There are also opportunities for targeted clinical trials workforce development. Demand is high for skilled professionals across a range of clinical trials roles including Clinical Research Associates, Clinical Trial Coordinators, Research Nurses and Data Specialists. Actions in this domain are aimed at strengthening awareness of career paths, promoting flexible delivery models, and improving access to skills development. The case studies highlight several initiatives already fostering a stronger clinical trials workforce.

Victoria's clinical trials workforce spans a broad range of functions and roles, including:



Clinical delivery and care

Responsible for participant care, recruitment, consent, investigational product management and trial implementation.

Examples include Research Nurses, Clinical Trial Coordinators, Principal Investigators, Pharmacists and Clinical Trial Support Staff.



Data and digital

Involved in electronic data capture, AI, and real-time patient monitoring.

Examples include Data Managers, Biostatisticians, and Data Scientists.



Laboratory and manufacturing

Responsible for sample processing and analysis, biomarker and genomic testing, investigational product development and manufacture, and other technical services that support clinical trial delivery.

Examples include Laboratory Technicians, Medical Scientists, Pathologists and Manufacturing Specialists.



Regulatory and quality assurance

Ensure that trials meet ethical and regulatory requirements.

Examples include Regulatory Specialists, Research Governance Officers and Start-up Specialists.



Commercialisation and translation

Align trial design with market and health system requirements to support real-world outcomes.

Examples include Health Economists, Commercial Strategy Managers and Translational Scientists.

Workforce groups and occupations listed are indicative only and do not represent all roles involved in Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem.

Action 1.1

Address workforce shortages to strengthen sustainability across the clinical trials pipeline

Partnering with health services to build and maintain clinical trial capability through dedicated research time, trial coordination, governance support, data capability and workforce development.

Strengthening the regional and rural clinical trials workforce by supporting flexible trial delivery models, building workforce capacity and seeding further trial activity.

Increasing awareness of career paths and opportunities for both graduates and established researchers, leveraging industry and tertiary education networks.

Fostering international partnerships to enable two-way knowledge exchange and attract global talent into Victoria.

Supporting retention of the existing clinical trials workforce through career development, leadership opportunities, capability building and clearer pathways for progression.

Action 1.2

Build a future-ready clinical trials workforce through targeted training and education

Working with the sector to support the development of capability standards and accreditation pathways for Victoria's clinical trials workforce.

Delivering resources to build understanding of Victorian clinical trial processes, answer stakeholder questions, address barriers and facilitate participation in the clinical trials ecosystem.

Partnering with stakeholders to build capability across the clinical trials pipeline and ensure the workforce is equipped to meet current and future needs. Specific focus areas include:

- Flexible trial delivery
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies
- Consumer involvement in clinical trials
- Translation, commercialisation and implementation science.



Spotlight – Flexible Clinical Trial Delivery

Almost a quarter of Victorians live in rural and regional areas. While regional clinical trial capabilities continue to grow, access to trial opportunities remains uneven compared with metropolitan centres.

Flexible clinical trial delivery enables selected trial activities to occur beyond the traditional site, making participation equally accessible for participants in regional, rural and outer metropolitan communities as they are for inner-city and suburban communities.



Flexible clinical trial models range from fully decentralised trials, where participant interactions are conducted remotely, to hybrid models that combine site-based clinical activities with services delivered at home or in local health settings.

In Victoria, these models are already expanding access to clinical trials across regional, rural and outer-metropolitan communities by reducing travel burden and enabling greater participation closer to home.

As capability, experience and infrastructure continue to develop, there is potential to scale these approaches, broaden participation and improve access to clinical research across the state.

Successful delivery relies on coordinated systems, workforce capability and appropriate governance to ensure participants can access clinical trials safely and effectively, regardless of location.

CASE STUDY 1

ReACT West: Regional Access to Clinical Trials in the West

A model to support workforce capacity by seeding and supporting trial activity across multiple rural and regional sites.

Clinicians in rural and regional health services note that time constraints and competing clinical responsibilities present barriers to conducting trials. ReACT West addresses these constraints by funding protected research time for clinicians to undertake clinical trial investigator roles in western Victoria.

The Victorian Government is supporting Western Alliance – Victoria's rural and regional focused research translation centre – to deliver this initiative. The model focuses on seeding and supporting trial activity across multiple rural and regional sites, with a focus on high-impact non-cancer areas, such as cardiology and dementia.

Expected outcomes of this initiative include:

- A stronger regional clinical trials ecosystem and workforce
- Improved access to clinical trials for rural and regional communities
- A significant increase in non-cancer clinical trials and new commercial sponsors across western Victoria, boosting site revenue and economic activity.



A research nurse speaks with a clinical trial participant at South West Healthcare, Warrnambool. Image credit: Western Alliance.

CASE STUDY 2

SKILLED Clinical Trial Internship Program

Matching emerging talent with real-world clinical research experience.

Supported by the Victorian Government, the VCCC Alliance SKILLED Clinical Trials Internship Program (the SKILLED Program) is helping address critical workforce and skills shortages by creating structured pathways for university graduates to enter the clinical trials workforce. Launched in 2019, the program combines competency-based training, mentoring and hands-on workplace experience through three internship streams: Study Coordinator, Research Office Associate and Clinical Trial Administrative Officer.

The SKILLED Program supports clinical trial units across metropolitan, outer metropolitan and regional Victoria to build workforce capability and retain a vital health workforce where it is needed most. It provides tailored training, resources and mentoring to ensure consistent supervision and high-quality learning experiences for interns. Victorian Government investment has enabled the program to scale, creating more training and employment opportunities while building clinical trials capacity.

Since 2019, 154 interns have graduated from the program. Nearly 40% of placements have been in regional Victoria and 46% of graduates secured employment in regional areas post-internship. Each year, existing clinical trials staff also participate in internship training sessions, prioritising regional upskilling.

By developing job-ready talent and addressing skills shortages across the state, the SKILLED Program is helping to build a sustainable clinical trials workforce. This is ensuring Victoria's sector is equipped to support improved patient outcomes and maintain its thriving and globally competitive clinical trials ecosystem.

CASE STUDY 3

Australian Clinical Trials Education Centre

A digital platform to build skills across the clinical trials lifecycle.

The Australian Clinical Trials Education Centre (A-CTEC) is a national digital platform that provides free clinical trials educational resources for the clinical trials workforce. The platform offers evidence-based modules covering both core competencies, such as ethics and governance, and specialised training aligned to different stages of the clinical trials lifecycle, such as planning, governance, delivery, management and oversight. A-CTEC was initially established by Victoria's three research translation centres before expanding nationally in 2023, and supported by the Victorian Government.

A-CTEC has been particularly valuable for the regional and rural clinical trials workforce, where access to education and professional development has historically been more limited. The platform offers individual courses and comprehensive education packages, with training widely recognised across Australian health services.

In addition to online training, A-CTEC provides foundational and advanced practical skills development through workshops and webinars for users to apply their knowledge into practice. These interactive events encourage peer-to-peer learning and cross-sector collaboration.

CASE STUDY 4

Doherty Clinical Trials Education-to-Employment Pathways

Building a pipeline of skilled professionals for Victoria's clinical trials sector.

Doherty Clinical Trials (DCT) is Australia's first dedicated human challenge trial facility and is helping develop Victoria's specialised clinical trials workforce.

DCT is creating education-to-employment pathways for students and early career professionals, with hands-on experience in an active early-phase clinical trials environment. In partnership with Victorian universities, DCT has hosted students from a range of disciplines, including medicine, nursing, pharmaceutical science, engineering, business and information technology.

To complement its placement program, DCT has introduced paid Trial Assistant roles for final-year students. These cross-functional positions provide experience across clinical operations, laboratory activities, recruitment and project management, while exposing participants to the full clinical trial lifecycle. Through placements and paid industry roles, DCT is helping build a pipeline of skilled professionals to support Victoria's future clinical trials workforce.



Domain 2: Improve coordination across Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem

Victoria has a global reputation for efficient and high-quality clinical trials. The state's health technologies and medical research sector comprises over 300 hospitals and health services, 18 medical research institutes, 10 universities, and a thriving biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medtech industry.

Victoria's sector is a powerhouse of multidisciplinary expertise, internationally renowned in oncology, neurology, infectious diseases and paediatrics. This expertise is well-supported by the state's research and innovation precincts, which co-locate talent, infrastructure and industry to drive collaboration.

Victoria is home to nationally leading trial sites, including 5 of Australia's top 10 commercial clinical trial locations: The Alfred Hospital, Monash Health, Austin Hospital, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne*.

** GlobalData.*



However, elements of Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem are siloed and lacking in collaboration. There is an opportunity to build stronger connections across Victoria's clinical trials sites, fostering stronger networks and supporting more integrated systems and data.

Trial efficiency can be improved by better aligning administrative processes, digital platforms and data systems. This will also support the use of AI-enabled technologies and enable wider adoption of flexible trial models, helping more patients benefit from emerging therapies.

Government and sector-led initiatives are strengthening collaboration within Victoria's ecosystem, including the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Trials Network, Clinical Trials Oncology Platform, and Children's Cancer CoLab.

Action 2.1

Strengthen cross-disciplinary connections and collaboration at a local and global level

Leveraging clinical trial networks and research alliances to build a more connected and coordinated statewide trial system, growing commercial opportunities while improving patient access, resource sharing, flexible trial delivery, and the speed of trial start-up and recruitment.

Developing Victoria's digital platforms and online presence to better connect stakeholders, share resources and best-practice guidance, and promote the sector's capabilities.

Prioritising clinical trial research that capitalises on national and global opportunities.

Working with health services and Local Health Service Networks to embed and streamline clinical trials within routine care and facilitate resource sharing across the ecosystem.

Action 2.2

Streamline systems and data

Supporting implementation of the Commonwealth Government's National One Stop Shop, the national platform for streamlining clinical trial and health research approvals and administration, and the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework (NCTGF), which supports the safe integration of clinical trials into routine health service delivery.

Supporting Local Health Service Networks to create more connected systems and data-sharing approaches to streamline trial start-up and delivery.

Facilitating development of relevant governance, guidance and guardrails to support the appropriate use of artificial intelligence in clinical trials.

Identifying opportunities to integrate and streamline clinical trial systems and processes through improved ethics and governance arrangements, enhanced data sharing and interoperability, and greater use of digital technologies across the clinical trial lifecycle.

CASE STUDY 5

Monash Health Global Relations Office (MHGRO)

A dedicated international engagement office connecting Monash Health with global health, research and industry partners.

Monash Health established the MHGRO as part of its Global Relations Strategy. Acting as a gateway for collaboration with overseas hospitals, universities, research organisations and industry partners, the office is creating new opportunities for knowledge exchange, capability building and joint research activity.

MHGRO is connecting Victorian researchers and clinicians with global networks, supporting participation in international clinical trials, strengthening workforce capability and increasing opportunities to attract research investment.

By fostering stronger international connections and sharing global best practice, the MHGRO contributes to Victoria's position as a globally connected destination for clinical trials.



Children's Cancer CoLab Future Leaders Fellows, Dr Stacie Wang, Dr Claire Xin Sun and Dr Zoe Day, with CoLab CEO Dr Udani Reets, at the announcement of the fellowship awards. Image credit: Children's Cancer CoLab.

CASE STUDY 6

Children's Cancer CoLab (the CoLab)

A collaboration advancing childhood cancer research and care.

Childhood cancer remains one of the leading causes of disease-related death among Australian children, and many survivors experience lifelong health impacts from treatment. Recognising that paediatric cancer research was often fragmented across hospitals and research institutions, the CoLab was established to bring together Victoria's leading researchers, clinicians, funders and families to accelerate progress through collaboration.

A key focus of the CoLab is to expand participation in paediatric cancer clinical trials and strengthen Victoria's capacity to deliver them. By connecting researchers, clinicians and institutions, it supports greater participation in trials, improves access to innovative therapies, and helps translate research discoveries into new treatment options, particularly for hard-to-treat cancers.

Backed by a \$35 million Victorian Government investment and \$10 million contributions from both the Children's Cancer Foundation and My Room Children's Cancer Charity, the CoLab is building the infrastructure, data platforms and collaborative networks needed to deliver world-class paediatric cancer research and clinical trials. This coordinated approach aims to bring new treatments to patients sooner while improving outcomes and quality of life for children with cancer.

CASE STUDY 7

Victorian Paediatric Clinical Trial Network

A connected approach to paediatric clinical trials, bringing sites together to expand research opportunities and deliver better outcomes for children.

With a \$2 million investment from the Victorian Government, Murdoch Children's Research Institute is establishing Australia's first statewide paediatric clinical trials network, together with network partners Monash University and Deakin University. The network will link trial sites and streamline ethics, contracting and recruitment processes, helping to reduce delays and improve access to innovative treatments for Victorian children.

The network will initially include clinical trial centres at the Royal Children's Hospital, Monash Children's Hospital and Barwon Health, with plans to extend to additional sites over time. By making it easier for global sponsors to run studies in Victoria, the initiative will strengthen the state's international reputation and networks.

For children and families, it means earlier access to cutting-edge treatments, new vaccines and greater opportunities to participate in trials closer to home.



Image credit: Murdoch Children's Research Institute.



Image credit: The Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, home to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

CASE STUDY 8

Clinical Trials Oncology Platform (CTOP)

A coordinated network of leading cancer centres to streamline the delivery of oncology clinical trials, attract investment, and improve outcomes for patients with cancer.

CTOP is a platform established by BioNTech and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre that aims to connect leading Victorian health services, including Austin Health, Alfred Health and Monash Health.

Drawing on Victoria's strong cancer research and clinical capabilities, CTOP streamlines the delivery of clinical trials through efficient data collection, planning and patient access. The platform aims to expand access to BioNTech's innovative oncology trials across Australia, giving patients access to cutting-edge technologies for the treatment of solid tumours.

Established in 2025, CTOP is already improving access to BioNTech clinical trials, with Victoria accounting for around 25% of patient enrolments across Australia.



Domain 3: Make clinical trials accessible to all Victorians

Access to clinical trials varies significantly within Victoria, based on demographic, socio-economic, structural and systemic factors. This is a global issue where accessibility has a negative impact on trial participation, which then determines whose needs are reflected in healthcare-informing evidence and who benefits from new treatments.

Participation in clinical trials remains lower among a range of groups, including regional and rural communities, women and gender-diverse individuals, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (see *Accessibility of clinical trials*). Community awareness, cultural safety, trust and confidence in research can all influence participation.

Addressing these barriers requires participants and communities to be more actively involved in the design and delivery of clinical trials. Co-design can improve participant experience and help ensure research reflects community needs and priorities.

This approach is particularly relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, where partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal communities support self-determination and cultural safety. Research should also uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, recognising the rights of Aboriginal communities to govern the collection, access, use, interpretation, storage and sharing of their data.

Accessibility of clinical trials:



Regional and rural communities

Around a quarter of Victorians live in regional areas, yet only 6.8% of clinical trials are hosted outside metropolitan Melbourne.



Women and gender diverse individuals

In Australia, women are underrepresented in cardiology and nephrology, but are overrepresented in specialties such as psychiatry and aged care. Between 2007 and 2023, only 97 drug and biologic clinical trials globally explicitly included transgender participants, highlighting extremely limited inclusion.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Despite representing approximately 3% of the national population, only 1.5% of Australia's clinical trials have focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.



Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

Australia is a multicultural nation, with more than one in four people born overseas and almost half having at least one parent born overseas. Over one in five Australians speak a language other than English at home. People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can face barriers to clinical trial participation, including language, health literacy and cultural factors.

Action 3.1

Increase community awareness and access to clinical trials

Funding fellowship positions to develop scalable strategies that will:

- increase clinical trial awareness and recruitment
 - improve access for underrepresented groups
 - build workforce capacity and capability in codesign
 - boost awareness of clinical trials via digital platforms
-

Improving access to clinical trials for regional, rural and outer metropolitan Victorians, including through place-based initiatives, flexible delivery models, and promotion of Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme support for eligible participants.

Supporting underrepresented populations to access clinical trials, increasing participation from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and improving the monitoring and reporting of clinical trial participation across diverse population groups.

Improving access to paediatric clinical trials via the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Trial Network (VPCTN).

Supporting clinical trial access for patients impacted by rare cancers and diseases.

Action 3.2

Strengthen consumer partnerships across the clinical trial lifecycle

Working with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) to:

- Advance work on the Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord, supporting Aboriginal-led co-design and co-governance of clinical trials.
 - Promote uptake of the Aboriginal Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and support Aboriginal-led governance of clinical trials involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
-

Working with the sector to strengthen consumer partnerships across the design, delivery, evaluation and dissemination of clinical trials, and to better understand and measure the consumer experience.



Image credit: Austin Health/ Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health.

CASE STUDY 9

Future Leader Fellows for Clinical Trials

Developing scalable strategies to increase awareness and access to clinical trials.

The Victorian Government has partnered with the Victorian Research Translation Centre Collaborative (VRTCC) – Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (MACH), Monash Partners and Western Alliance – to support the Future Leader Fellowships in Clinical Trials program. Up to 15 Fellows will be appointed to investigate strategies to increase clinical trial awareness and recruitment, improve access for underrepresented groups and build workforce capacity and capability. The role of digital technology and AI will be considered in supporting these areas, with appropriate safeguards to ensure ethical use and protect public trust.

Fellows will be selected from VRTCC partner organisations, which collectively represent around 95% of Victoria's health and medical research activity. They will work closely with underrepresented groups, ensuring that the strategies identified align with community needs and priorities.

The outcomes of these projects will support the development of scalable strategies to increase clinical trial activity, including addressing inequities in trial participation, which could then be implemented across the sector.

CASE STUDY 10

marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medica and Wellbeing Research Accord

marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri is a Woi-wurrung language phrase that translates to: Community knowledge, Community health.

marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord was launched in 2023. It stems from decades of advocacy from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for greater control and governance over research affecting their lives.

The Accord sets out a statewide framework to embed Aboriginal self-determination in research, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to determine what research is undertaken, how it is conducted, how data is owned and managed and how research benefits are defined and shared with Communities.

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) delivers the Accord, with support from the Victorian Government. Research organisations can become signatories and commit to implementing the Accord's principles and actions by registering for the Accord Accreditation Scheme. The scheme will support organisations to improve their research practice and progress towards the Accord's vision of self-determined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.

Key aims of the Accord include increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research, aligning research with Community priorities, building trust and ensuring that research is culturally safe.

In progressing the Accord, VACCHO has established an Aboriginal-specific Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), providing ethical oversight of research impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state. VACCHO's HREC is the first committee of its kind in Victoria in over two decades.



CASE STUDY 11

Grampians Health Mobile Clinical Trials Unit

A flexible clinical trial delivery model supporting research beyond traditional hospital settings.

The Grampians Health Mobile Clinical Trials Unit is Australia's first dedicated mobile clinical trials service, designed to bring clinical research closer to people living in regional and rural communities across western Victoria. The unit enables selected trial visits, assessments and care to be delivered closer to home.

Developed by Grampians Health from a converted mobile laboratory, the unit is equipped to support a range of clinical trial activities, including patient monitoring, sample collection and other research procedures. It supports a decentralised model of clinical research, allowing participants to remain connected to trials without frequent travel to major hospitals.

Participants have reported that the unit significantly reduces travel burden. For some regional patients, this replaces round trips of several hundred kilometres to access trial appointments, reducing the time, cost and disruption associated with participation.

CASE STUDY 12

Lotjpa Yapaneyepuk (Talk together) about cancer trials

Improving access to cancer clinical trials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through community-led engagement and culturally safe research practices.

Lotjpa Yapaneyepuk was established to improve access to, and participation in, cancer clinical trials among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in regional Victoria.

The initiative brought together health services, researchers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, with Aboriginal leadership and lived experience embedded throughout its design and delivery.

The initiative identified barriers to clinical trial participation and developed strategies to address these. Lotjpa Yapaneyepuk's culturally grounded co-design approach was guided by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group and used community yarning circles to develop culturally tailored educational resources.

The project demonstrates how culturally safe, community-led approaches can support more equitable participation in clinical research and help ensure that the benefits of clinical trials are accessible to all Victorians. The resources can be found on Lotjpa Yapaneyepuk's [YouTube channel](#).



Domain 4: Boost translation, commercialisation and investment

Translation and commercialisation transform promising research into new treatments, technologies and patient benefits. Strengthening these capabilities in Victoria will deliver better outcomes for patients, while driving investment, commercialisation and economic growth across the state.

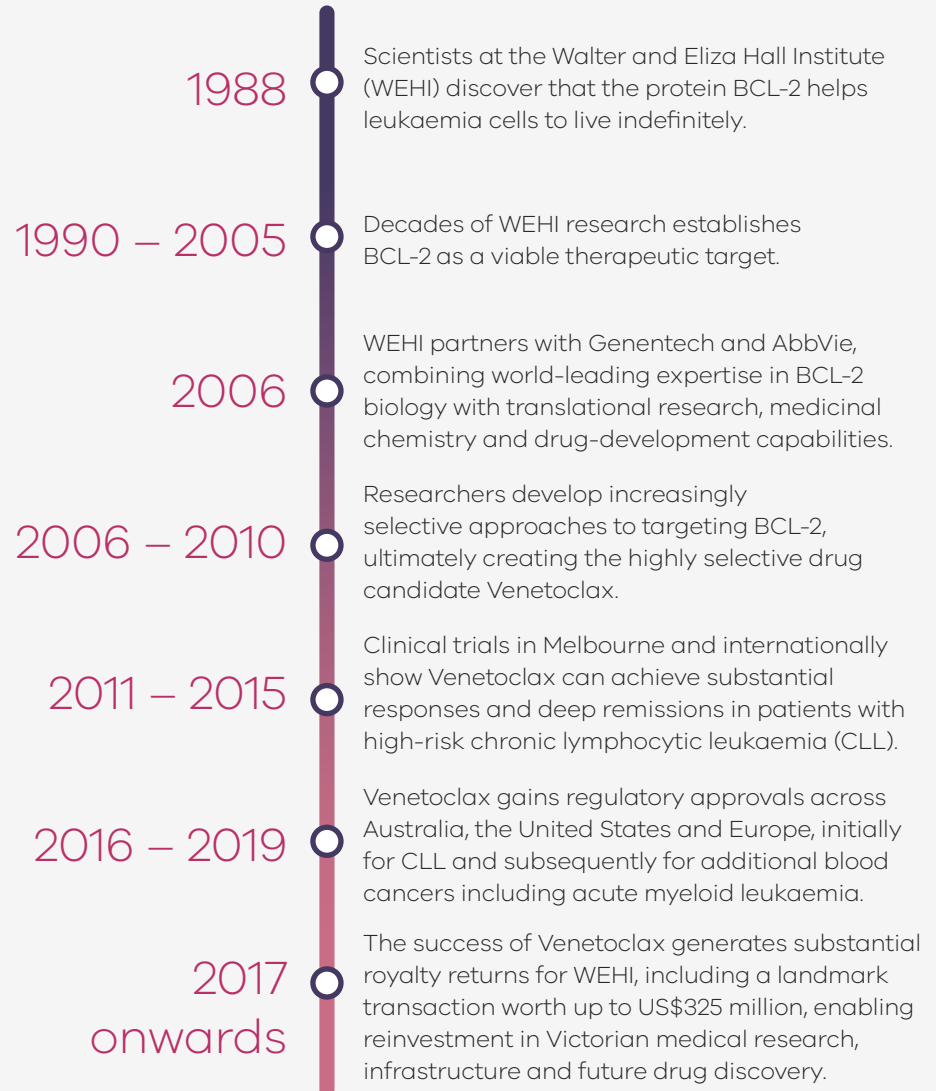
Every stage of the clinical trial pipeline is important, from discovery through to translation. While trials generate significant economic activity in their own right, the greatest gains are often realised through the intellectual property, advanced manufacturing and commercial opportunities they enable.

Realising these opportunities requires strong connections between research and industry. The Victorian Government will work with the sector to strengthen industry engagement across Victoria's health and medical research system, improving access to commercial expertise, investment and market pathways that accelerate translation and commercialisation.

Research Translation Spotlight:

Venetoclax – from discovery to global impact

Emerging from decades of Victorian biomedical research, Venetoclax has become a globally adopted cancer therapy, improving and extending the lives of patients around the world.



Global Victoria and Invest Victoria, the Victorian Government's trade facilitation and investment attraction agencies, support this effort by connecting Victoria's clinical trial providers, health technology companies, start-ups and researchers with international markets and investors. Together, they help facilitate partnerships with overseas sponsors and industry organisations seeking to undertake clinical trials, invest in innovation and collaborate with Victorian businesses and researchers.

Improving the visibility of Victoria's research ecosystem is critical to attracting international sponsors and investment. The Victorian Government will support the promotion of Victoria's clinical trial capabilities and competitive strengths through dedicated marketing materials, targeted value propositions for priority areas, enhanced digital platforms and targeted information and engagement sessions for international sponsors.

Action 4.1

Position Victoria as a global destination for clinical trials, commercialisation and advanced manufacturing

Promoting Victoria's clinical trials capabilities and strengths to global sponsors, investors and research partners through targeted digital platforms, marketing materials, and international engagement to attract clinical trial activity and investment.

Leveraging Global Victoria, Invest Victoria and Victorian Government Trade and Investment networks to connect global sponsors with Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem and foster collaboration with research partners.

Exploring opportunities to further develop Victoria's infrastructure and manufacturing capabilities, supporting the translation of Victorian discoveries into locally developed, manufactured and commercialised products.

Action 4.2

Support the adoption of emerging and future technologies

Supporting the early adoption of emerging therapeutic modalities, technologies and innovative trial approaches, including gene therapies, mRNA therapies, immunotherapies, digital health technologies and novel clinical trial designs.

Facilitating further development of relevant governance, guidance and guardrails to support the appropriate use of artificial intelligence in clinical trials.

Strengthening Victoria's AI infrastructure and building AI literacy, capability and skills across the clinical trials workforce.



Artist's impression of the BioNTech clinical mRNA manufacturing facility. Image credit: BioNTech SE, 2026.

CASE STUDY 13

BioNTech Clinical Scale mRNA Manufacturing Facility

Providing Victoria with local capability to manufacture clinical-grade mRNA therapeutics, accelerating the pathway from research to human trials.

Through targeted investment under mRNA Victoria, the Victorian Government has partnered with BioNTech to establish research and development (R&D) and clinical-scale end-to-end mRNA manufacturing capability at La Trobe University in Victoria.

The investment boosts Victoria's clinical mRNA manufacturing capability, reinforcing the state's position as a leader in next-generation vaccine and therapeutic development.

The BioNTech R&D facility will produce research-grade RNA, while the clinical mRNA manufacturing facility, once operational, will deliver investigational next-generation mRNA vaccines and treatments for clinical trials. The facilities are intended to support R&D into treatments for diseases including infectious and rare diseases and cancer.

By investing in local production capabilities such as the BioNTech facility, the Victorian Government is supporting researchers and emerging companies to progress to first-in-human studies while strengthening integration between research institutes, clinical trial networks and advanced manufacturing capability.

CASE STUDY 14

International Webinar Series

Showcasing Victoria's clinical trials capabilities to attract global partnerships and investment.

The Victorian Government is partnering with BioMelbourne Network to deliver a series of global webinars that showcase Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem and value proposition to international audiences.

Designed for international sponsors, contract research organisations, investors and research partners, the webinars will highlight the advantages of conducting clinical trials in Victoria, including access to world-class research infrastructure, experienced trial sites, a highly skilled workforce and strong collaboration across the health technologies and medical research sector. The series will also provide practical information about the benefits and opportunities from partnering with Victorian organisations and an explanation of how to navigate the state's clinical trials ecosystem.

The webinar program will be available on the Victorian Clinical Trials Gateway (VicTrials.com.au), – a central entry point for organisations seeking to engage with Victorian trial sites and research partners.

CASE STUDY 15

Australian Centre for Artificial Intelligence in Medical Innovation (ACAMI)

Developing artificial intelligence solutions to advance biomedical research from bench to bedside.

Through its support for ACAMI, the Victorian Government is accelerating the translation of AI from research environments into real-world clinical impact.

Successfully integrating AI into healthcare practice requires more than technical capability.

It requires patients and clinicians engaged in a co-design approach to ensure that tech solutions align with clinical workflows and meet patient expectations for a quality care experience, as well as workforce development to provide Victoria's clinical workforce with the confidence and skills to implement new AI technologies.

ACAMI works with partners across biotech, pharma, healthcare and medtech to develop bespoke AI solutions to solve medical research and clinical care problems, with a specific focus on improving processes and outcomes for clinical trials.

It also upskills Victoria's medical research and healthcare workforce by providing tailored training to ensure that researchers, clinicians and leaders can use new AI tools with confidence.

ACAMI delivers AI-enabled diagnostics, digital twins for precision medicine, digital twins for improved clinical trial design and federated learning platforms that ensure sovereignty and security for confidential patient data.

This strengthens Victoria's appeal to global sponsors seeking advanced data capabilities, integrated research environments and efficient validation pathways, reinforcing the state's position as a leading destination for therapeutic and digital innovation.

CASE STUDY 16

Australian Genome Research Facility (AGRF)

Enhancing Victoria's clinical genomics infrastructure to support clinical trials and precision medicine.

AGRF, through its commercial entity AGRF Clinical Pty Ltd, is establishing a Centre of Excellence for Clinical Trials Data Delivery in Melbourne.

The facility supports a wide range of clinical trials, particularly in precision medicine and oncology, where genomic testing has become the gold standard and is accepted as increasingly important for patient selection and treatment decisions.

As clinical trials generate increasingly large and complex genomic datasets, this investment will strengthen Australia's capacity to meet growing local and global demand.

It will support the integration of high-quality genomic testing for Australian trials, help Victorian patients access global clinical trial opportunities, and ensure genomic data can be securely managed and retained in Australia.

The project will include building AGRF's new state-of-the-art laboratory information management system to improve traceability, quality assurance and turnaround times.

New accredited protein biomarker testing capabilities will also complement the genomic platform.

The project is based at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, which also houses The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. This investment strengthens Victoria's position as a destination for international cancer clinical trials and drug development.

Looking Ahead

Expanding and strengthening Victoria's clinical trials ecosystem will reinforce the state's position as a global leader in medical innovation, accelerating the translation of cutting-edge discoveries from bench to bedside.

A more connected and sustainable clinical research environment is possible through a highly skilled workforce, closer partnerships and fairer access to trials. Alongside dedicated actions to support translation and commercialisation, these efforts will help Victoria capture the full health, social and economic benefits of clinical trials.

Looking ahead, Victoria is well placed to build on its existing strengths and remain at the forefront of life-saving treatments and the healthcare innovations of tomorrow.

Successful delivery of this action plan will require close collaboration between government, clinical trials stakeholders, trial participants, industry and the broader community. By drawing on the expertise and experience of those across the clinical trials ecosystem, Victoria's Clinical Trials Action Plan will generate lasting benefits for the future of all Victorians.

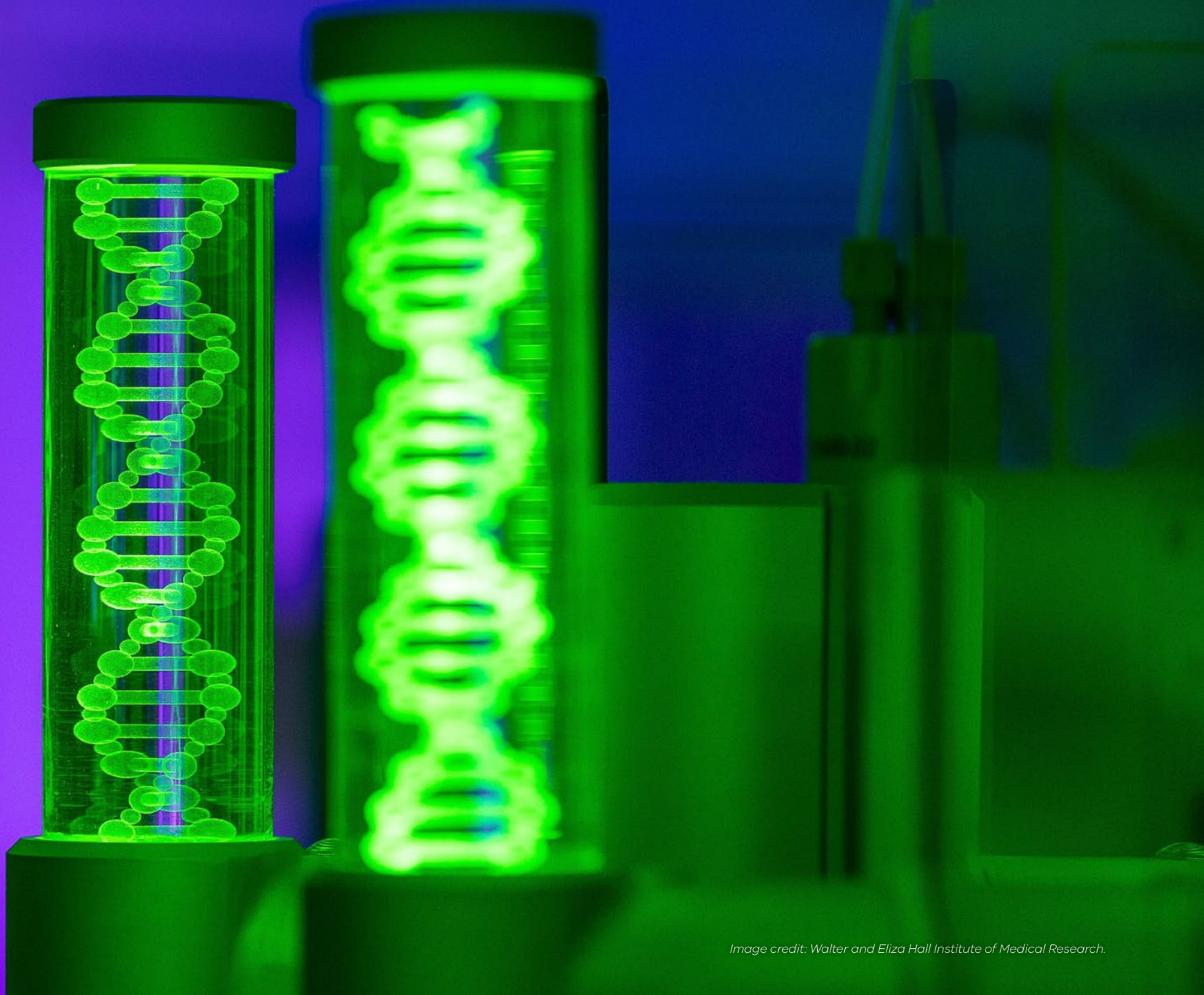


Image credit: Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.



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