



Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission Roadmap

Scope

The Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission is a research program that will invest \$185 million to June 2029 with the key aim to support older Australians to maintain their health and quality of life as they age, live independently for longer and access quality care when they need.

Vision

Healthy ageing will enable older people to contribute socially, culturally and economically to the wider community and reduce the cost burden of disease by delaying the onset of symptoms, particularly those associated with more resource intensive health and aged care services.

Mission Statement

Through health and medical research, the Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission aims to improve the quality of life for people as they age.

Rationale

The impact of dementia, ageing and aged care in Australia is considerable and continues to grow as the older population of Australia grows. In 2017, 15% of Australia's total population (approximately 3.8 million people) were aged 65 and over. By 2057, this figure is projected to grow to over 8.8 million, 22% of the population. Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia, and for women it is the number one cause of death. There are currently more than 447,000 people living with dementia in Australia, with this number expected to reach around 1.1 million by 2058.

Goals

- Address the issues of ageism and its impacts on quality of care and quality of life for older people.
- Increase the number of years a person could expect to live in optimal health as they age.
- Deliver care and services that are of high quality, takes a human rights based approach and supports an individual's wellbeing.
- Slow the progression of cognitive decline.
- Achieve timely diagnosis of dementia.
- These outcomes would be facilitated through the following elements:
 - Develop innovative care models, interventions and technologies to improve health and wellbeing.
 - Inform health and aged care system change to deliver improved quality of life and care.

- Retain and build research capacity, excellence and collaboration on these topics that is integrated into care settings across the health and aged care sector

Guiding principles

- Research priorities and projects should be designed to have an impact on policy and practice, and identify and measure a targeted improvement for the end user.
- The investment will span the research pipeline from discovery through to implementation and improve the current experience of ageing, aged care and outcomes for people living with dementia.
- Consider all older people, inclusive of all backgrounds and life experience.
- Embed a co-design approach with end-users (consumers/patients, peak bodies and philanthropic organisations, carers and the public, industry, other levels of government) in priority setting, in conducting and in translating research. Encourage and facilitate domestic and international collaboration, including collaboration with other MRFF missions and across industry sectors.
- Address the gaps in the current evidence base on supporting people with dementia and their carers across their period of living with dementia (from pre-diagnosis through to end of life).
- Foster a culture of research excellence in dementia, ageing and aged care, including through research training.
- Consider new and emerging trends in dementia, ageing and aged care.
- Seek co-investment, through partnerships and appropriate governance, from the private sector, philanthropic organisations and government.

Investment priorities

1. Research into the causes, treatment, management and potential cure of dementia.

- What interventions could be taken up that could prevent or delay onset of dementia symptoms?
- What care pathways and interventions could help to diagnose dementia earlier in the disease process?
- How can we achieve cost-effective care continuity for those living with dementia and carers from the time of diagnosis until death and the post bereavement phase?

2. What interventions or initiatives could be implemented to address ageism and improve quality of life for older people?

- How can we reduce societal stigma around ageing?
- How do we ensure age friendly and inclusive communities?

3. How do we ensure that people develop and/or maintain a sense of purpose as they age?

- How do we support and maintain meaningful engagement, participation, contribution and social inclusion to benefit people as they age?

4. How do we extend healthy, active years of life for all Australians?

- What health and medical interventions in mid-life will extend healthy, active years of life and compress the period of morbidity?
- How do we encourage more proactive health management, including health literacy for older people?

5. How can we support older people who wish to live in their own homes for as long as they prefer to do so?

- What lifestyle, medical, technological and psychosocial supports are most effective to support those ageing at home and their carers?
- What care models/support/direct provision of services and carer support options are most effective for older people as well as their carers?

6. What approaches to care provision need to be developed or adapted to ensure support and improvements in quality of care and quality of life for people as they age?

- What adaptations, including technological innovations, are required across health and aged care systems to ensure all older Australians, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged can access high quality, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed care?
- How can we ensure equitable and appropriate access to quality clinical care and minimise avoidable transitions between settings (particularly avoidable hospitalisations)?
- How can we maximise social inclusion and multi-generational engagement in all long-term care settings?