



UNSW
SYDNEY

Faculty of
Medicine & Health

Annual Report 2025





What's inside

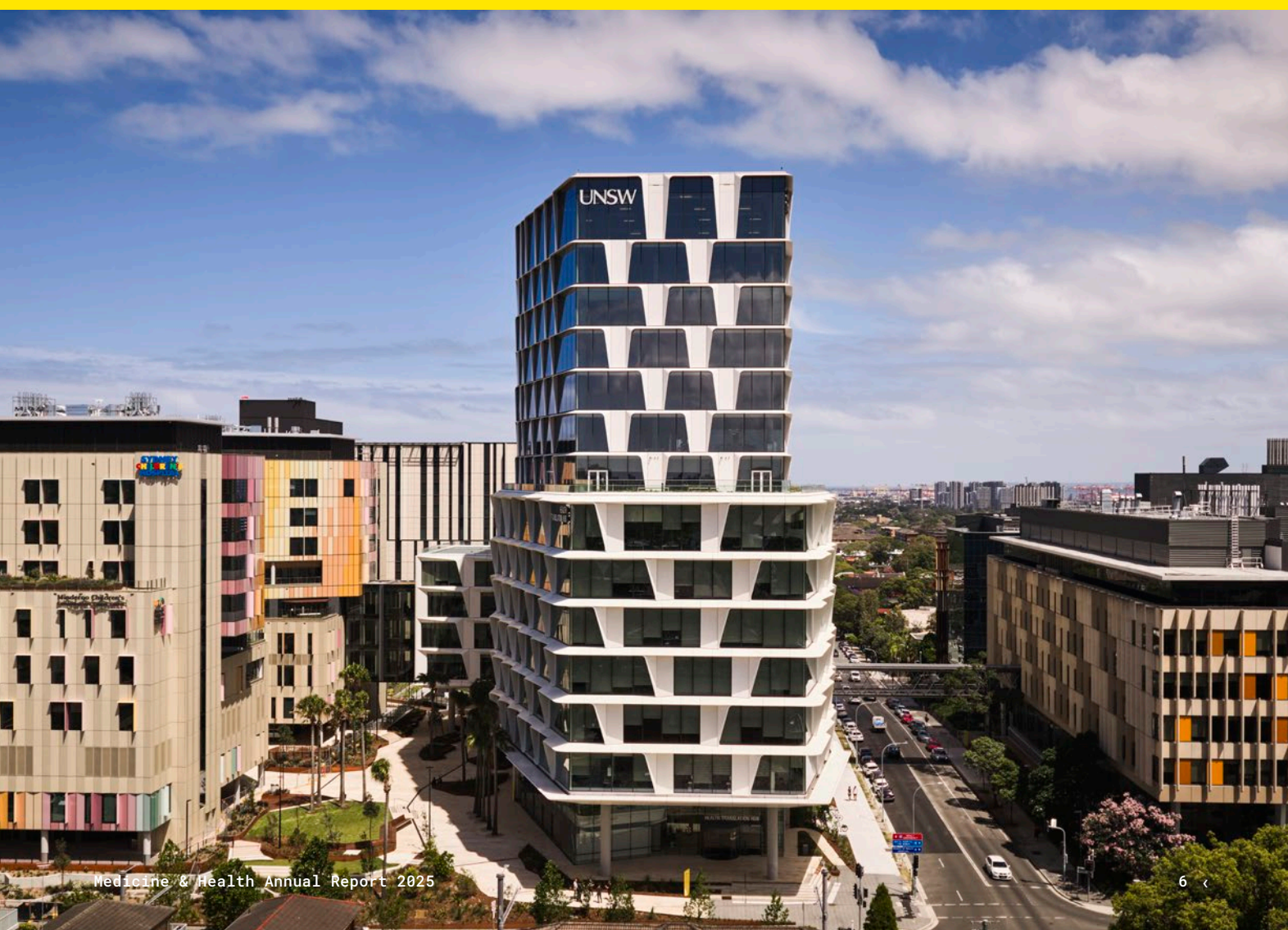
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Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Sydney is located on the unceded territory of the Bidjigal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Paddington Campuses), Wiradjuri (Albury, Wagga Wagga & Griffith), Birpai (Port Macquarie), Gumbaynggirr (Coffs Harbour) and Ngunnawal peoples (UNSW Canberra) who are the Traditional Owners of the lands, seas and waters where each campus of UNSW is situated. We honour the Elders of these Nations, as well as broader Nations that we walk together with, past and present, and acknowledge their ongoing connection to culture, community and Country.



Dean's Welcome



The Faculty of Medicine & Health had an extraordinary year in 2025. In a major milestone, the Health Translation Hub was opened. It is Australia's first dedicated building that brings together health education, research, clinicians, private industry and public health.

We were also proud that the state-of-the-art Wagga Wagga Biomedical Sciences Centre was opened, an investment in advanced medical education for our rural and regional students. Another landmark was the launch of the Ainsworth Endometriosis Research Institute (AERI), a world-first research centre that will position Australia as a global leader in women's health.

Our faculty also secured over \$360 million in research funding and raised more than \$70 million in philanthropy to tackle some of the most pressing health challenges of our time. These are not isolated milestones, they are the result of sustained ambition, deep partnerships, and the collective effort of an extraordinary community of staff, students and collaborators.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to health equity, innovation and inclusion. The establishment of the Blakcademy and the appointment of Professor Maree Toombs as our inaugural Deputy Dean Indigenous marked a profound step forward embedding First Nations leadership and cultural safety across our faculty.

Our researchers, educators and clinicians continued to be recognised on the national and global stage. Our students, from 84 countries and across every campus, are the living proof of why this work matters. Our outstanding achievements show how we are delivering better equitable health for all. I am proud to share them with you.



Professor Cheryl Jones,
Dean, UNSW Medicine & Health

Faculty Achievements

Dean's introduction to achievements page

Behind every achievement is a team of researchers, educators and professional staff committed to transforming health. In 2025, that commitment delivered outcomes of real and lasting significance that builds better, equitable health for all – not just locally, but nationally and globally.

These highlights reflect the dedication of our people and the strength of our partnerships.

✓ AERI Opening and Launch event

We had a great year for research, fundraising and impact

- › We were awarded over \$360 million dollars in research funding in 2025 (including MRIs).
- › We were awarded prestigious prizes: Dr David Khoury (Kirby Institute) was awarded the Prime Minister's Frank Fenner Prize for science and the Eureka prize. Four of our academics were appointed to the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
- › Our research and other pioneering health work was published in journals and led to 300 national and international media stories, with many expert commentaries.
- › We raised over 70 million dollars in philanthropy in 2025 including a \$50 million generous gift from the Ainsworth family to establish the Ainsworth Endometriosis Research Institute (AERI); and a \$10.8 million gift from the Sarks Macular Degeneration Research Foundation to establish the Shirley & John Sarks Chair in Age Related Macular Degeneration.
- › We opened two new research centres and appointed global leaders in Future Health Systems and the Australian Research Centre for Cancer Survivorship.

We led transformational education

- › We enrolled 1,890 new students faculty-wide into our undergraduate, postgraduate, research and non-award programs, and had more than 6,000 students from 84 countries study across the faculty and graduated over 1,636 students.
- › 11 of our new health professional programs were accredited, including Health Leadership and Management, Master of Physiotherapy and Exercise Physiology and Master of Pharmacy.

We opened state-of-the-art buildings

- › The \$21 million Wagga Wagga Biomedical Sciences Centre -purpose-built four-storey training facility adjacent to Wagga Wagga Base Hospital to train the next generation of rural health professionals.
- › We moved into the Health Translation Hub (HTH), together with the Integrated Acute Sciences building, co-located with health partners and MRIs as part of the Randwick Health & Innovation Precinct.

We advanced our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander health and leadership education and advocacy

- › We appointed our first Deputy Dean Indigenous, Professor Maree Toombs, launched the Blakcademy, an Academy of First Nations Health Education and Research.



Faculty Achievements

We had strong engagement and advocacy locally and globally

- › The MedConnect 2025: Hospital of the Future event attracted over 1,500 registrants, hosted by Medicine & Health Dean Professor Cheryl Jones, convening national and international health leaders to reimagine the future of hospital care, from traditional bricks and mortar models to person-centred, technology-enabled health systems (*please refer to the image below*).
- › The BYO Innovation Showcase spotlighted 10 Medicine & Health teams pitching health-tech solutions, with top honours awarded for smartwatch cardiac diagnostics, portable optometry equipment, and a multi-purpose Breathlessness Clinic concept.
- › Medicine & Health hosted HealthX 2025: Precision Medicine, convening multidisciplinary leaders to accelerate innovation in precision health.
- › Medicine & Health achieved 4.05 million social media impressions across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn in 2025, expanding the reach of its research and education globally.

✓ MedConnect 2025: Endometriosis

Our researchers were recognised on the national and global stage

Awards & Prizes

- › Professor David Thomas — Cancer Institute NSW Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year.
- › Professor Minoti Apte — International Herbert Falk Award, Symposium 242, Berlin.
- › Professor Patricia Davidson — American Academy of Nursing President's Award
- › Professor Perminder Sachdev — Lifetime Achievement Award, Australian Dementia Research Forum.
- › Professor Michael Farrell — Senior Scientist Award, Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs Conference.
- › Professor Rebecca McKetin — MAGNET Trial of the Year Award for the Tina Trial.
- › Professor Isabelle Jalbert — American Academy of Optometry Foundation Award for excellence in teaching and advanced education.
- › Emeritus Professor Stephen Dain — American Academy of Optometry Foundation Award for outstanding contributions to public health and environmental vision.

Fellowships

- › Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen — elected Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
- › Professor Alta Schutte — elected Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
- › Scientia Professor Julian Trollor — elected Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
- › Conjoint Professor David Ziegler — elected Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

✓ MedBYO Innovation Showcase



First Peoples

Deputy Dean Indigenous Appointed

- › Professor Maree Toombs, a Euralayie/Kooma woman from North-Western NSW, was appointed the faculty's first Deputy Dean Indigenous.
- › Her appointment placed First Nations Peoples within the faculty's executive, ensuring their voice became part of its decision-making.
- › In addition to her leadership role, Professor Toombs was awarded \$1.59 million from the Australian Research Council to conduct genomic research among First Nations Australians.

Appointed Associate Dean, First Peoples Education and Student Success

- › Associate Professor Melody Muscat was appointed to lead First Peoples Education & Students across the faculty.
- › Her appointment ensured Indigenous knowledge systems were embedded through the faculty's academic endeavours, contributing to meaningful educational transformation.

▼ Members of the UNSW Medicine & Health Blakcademy

Blakcademy Established

- › UNSW Medicine & Health launched the Academy of First Nations Health Education and Research — the Blakcademy.
- › The Blakcademy repositioned Indigenous health priorities from a reactive model to a strategic driver of institutional change across the faculty.

Our First Nations Students

- › 35 Indigenous enrolled in the Pre-Medicine & Health Program — a dedicated pathway program building the academic skills and health knowledge needed to succeed in a Medicine & Health degree.
- › 92 Indigenous students enrolled (including HDR).
- › 12 First Nations students graduated across the faculty (including HDR) — a growing pipeline of Indigenous health professionals and researchers.

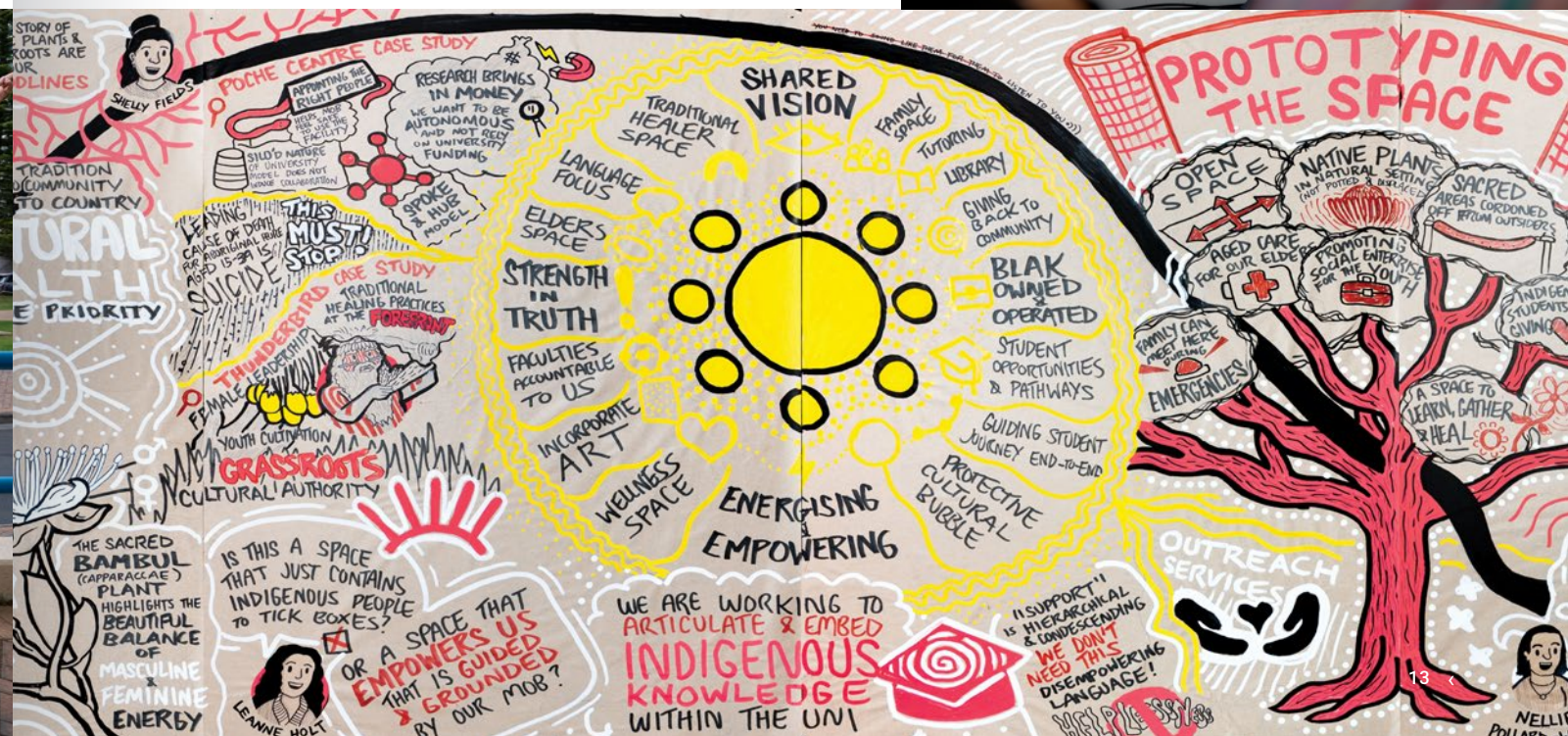
▼ Blakcademy workshop scribe



Professor Maree Toombs



Associate Professor Melody Muscat



People & Culture

A Global Workforce, Built to Scale

- › The faculty supported a community of 1,800 continuing and fixed-term staff, 900 casual staff and 2,400 honorary appointments.
- › Over 400 new staff joined Medicine & Health, strengthening the faculty's capacity to deliver impact at scale.

Leadership Capability That Enables Performance

- › Nine academics were promoted to Professor, reinforcing the faculty's research leadership across clinical medicine, population health and affiliated institutes.
- › 29 academics were promoted to Associate Professor.
- › 34 academics were promoted to Senior Lecturer.
- › 20 academics were promoted to Lecturer.
- › 22 per cent of people leaders engaged in formal leadership development.

Recognised across UNSW

- › Mary Hervir was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Respect Award for Displays Respect.

Taking Action on Inclusion and Respect

- › Faculty-wide anti-racism and Courageous Conversations training was launched, with 90 staff completing the three-day course.
- › The cohort represented the largest participation group ever delivered by the program facilitator.

∨ P&C Staff Awards

New Ways of Working Through Digital Capability

- › Medicine & Health was selected as the pilot faculty for Microsoft Copilot M365.
- › Strong uptake of ChatGPT supported teaching, research and operations across the faculty.
- › Medicine & Health established itself as a leader in responsible AI adoption across UNSW.

EDI Information

- › Thirteen staff participated in the Apte Scholarship career coaching parental leave program, reporting a 42 per cent increase in career confidence.
- › Sexual assault and gendered and family violence were positioned as clear faculty priorities through the Elimination of Violence Against Women initiative.
- › Delivered in partnership with UNSW Business School, the Building Futures through Gender Equity event integrated a financial literacy workshop achieving 93–98 per cent satisfaction and 100 per cent increased financial confidence.
- › Over 50 donations were secured through the Share the Dignity "It's in the Bag" drive in support of women experiencing hardship.
- › 16 Early Career Research and Higher Degree Research women completed the STEMM Champions Program.
- › Medicine & Health met or exceeded UNSW Council targets for senior academic women, with 56.9 per cent at Level D and 44 per cent at Level E.
- › Wear It Purple Day, International Day of People with Disability, and the Through a Lens Photographic Exhibition marked a year of broad faculty engagement in EDI initiatives.

∨ Socials End of Year party



Education

Student Experience & Program Quality

- › Postgraduate programs led the University in overall student experience.
- › The faculty achieved 89 per cent overall satisfaction in the QILT survey.
- › Student Wellbeing & Action Groups (SWAGs) were established for all undergraduate students.
- › Rural and regional student engagement was strengthened, with the Rural & Regional Gateway Outreach Event bringing 65 Riverina students into hands-on health workshops at the UNSW Wagga Wagga Biomedical Sciences Centre.
- › Gateway outreach expanded beyond admission, with new support structures embedded to retain and sustain equity cohort students after entry.
- › Work Integrated Learning compliance rate lifted from 81 per cent to 92 per cent.
- › The Academic Success Monitor was rolled out faculty-wide, enabling early identification and intervention for at-risk students across all faculty programs.

New & Emerging Programs

- › Approval was received to commence development of a new postgraduate nursing program, estimated to launch in 2028.
- › A Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Practice was introduced.
- › The reimagined Masters of Women's Health Medicine and Masters of Reproductive Medicine were approved to relaunch.

∨ HTH UNSW Simulation - Pharmacy

Educator Support

- › Implemented peer support initiatives for educators.
- › Strengthened collegial support and teaching capability across programs.

Medical Program Redesign

- › Redesign of the UNSW Medicine & Health Medical Program continued, reimagining how the faculty's flagship medical degree is taught.
- › A high-level design was adapted to align with UNSW's newly announced Flex-Semester academic calendar.

Workforce Pipeline & Commonwealth Supported Places

- › Additional Commonwealth Supported Places were secured, expanding the faculty's capacity to train the next generation of General Practitioners and rural generalists.

Health Professional Programs

- › Four new Health Professional Programs reached the midpoint of their five-year implementation, with Year 3 of the rollout completed across Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Dietetics and Clinical Exercise Physiology.
 - › Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Medicine / Master of Pharmacy
 - › Bachelor of Exercise Science / Master of Physiotherapy and Exercise
 - › Physiology Bachelor of Nutrition / Master of Dietetics & Food Innovation
 - › Bachelor of Applied Exercise Science / Master of Clinical Exercise Physiology

Graduate Outcomes & Demand

- › UNSW BMed/MD was the most popular program for school leavers in NSW for the 7th year in a row.
- › Graduate employment rates remained strong, with 93 per cent of postgraduate and 87 per cent of undergraduate completers securing full-time employment.

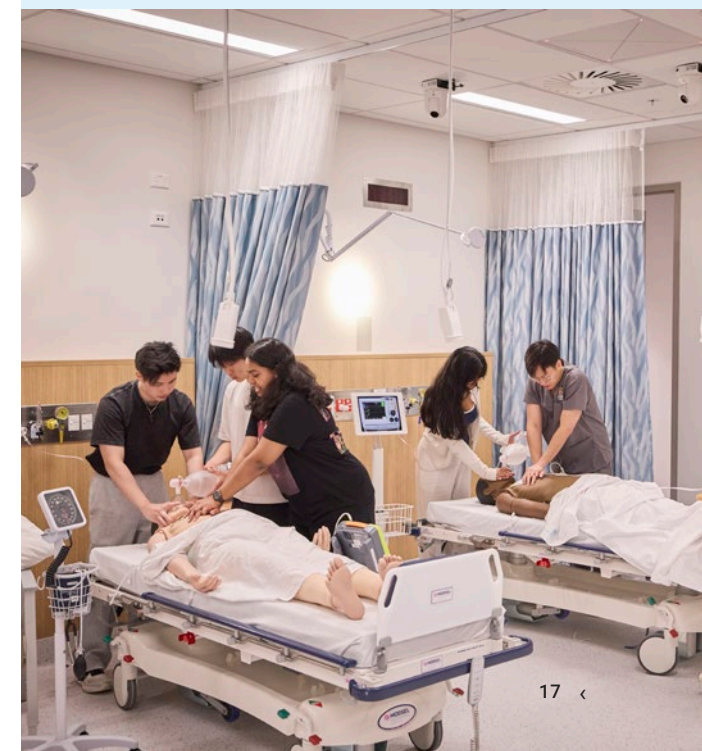
Equity & Access

- › 448 Gateway Equity Students enrolled across the faculty in 2025, reflecting UNSW Medicine & Health's commitment to widening access and participation in health education.
- › For the first time, all incoming medical students completed the Indigenous 'Pre-Program Entry Into Medical Program' — designed to support the transition and success of First Nations students entering the Medical Program.



∧ Med Design GP Team

∨ Education Skills and Simulation Centre



Strategy

Health 25 Wrap-Up

People & Culture

- › Over five years, substantial progress was made in strengthening capability, inclusion and organisational culture across the faculty.
- › Structured professional and personal development pathways were designed and aligned to faculty needs.
- › Dedicated training funds were established.
- › Indigenous leadership and voice were structurally embedded, positioning the faculty as a sector leader in culturally informed governance and practice.
- › A stronger foundation for psychological safety and inclusive and respectful workplaces was created.
- › Collaboration, flexibility and readiness for innovation were improved across the faculty through technology and training.

Education

- › Health 25 commenced a comprehensive modernisation of the faculty's education model, strengthening both quality and student experience – work that will continue under the new 10-year strategy.
- › The faculty was positioned for program diversification and a future-aligned health workforce through the introduction of four new health professional programs and approval to develop a new nursing program.
- › A complete redesign of the BMed/MD flagship program commenced, with implementation beginning in 2027.
- › Teaching delivery shifted from face-to-face lectures to brief interactive online modules supported by small group masterclasses across the School of Biomedical Sciences and School of Population Health.
- › Greater equity in access and success was achieved for First Nations students and those from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- › A community of elite educators was built, strengthening teaching capability across clinical and campus settings.
- › Student wellbeing, engagement and belonging were systematically prioritised across all faculty programs.

Research

- › Research strengths were communicated more effectively, improving discoverability across the faculty.
- › A coherent community of health services researchers was developed.
- › The International Centre for Future Health Systems (ICFHS) and Australian Research Centre for Cancer Survivorship (ARCCS) was established.
- › Mentorship and targeted support for emerging research leaders were invested in across the faculty.
- › Ignite Your Impact was launched to build skills in advocacy, translation and innovation.
- › Research support structures were improved and expanded.
- › A Clinical Research Unit was established through precinct and partner collaboration.
- › An AI Working Group and faculty-wide AI capability development plan were created.

Partnerships

- › A toolkit for co-design in research and teaching was developed, aligned to community priorities and emerging health challenges.
- › Key partnerships, including Local Health Districts, were mapped and reviewed.
- › Governance structures were aligned across the faculty, schools and health precincts.
- › Partnerships matured to support precinct integration and industry collaboration.

Better, Equitable Health for All strategy

The faculty developed its new 10-year strategy, *Better, Equitable Health for All*, through broad consultation.

- › All staff were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft strategy.
- › Six consultation events were held for leaders.
- › An all-staff survey was conducted.
- › Eight all-staff online consultation workshops were delivered.
- › 450 staff provided feedback on the strategy.

‹ A speaker at the M&H Consumer Engagement Event



Research

- › Professor Michelle Farrar co-led an international clinical trial demonstrating that treating babies with spinal muscular atrophy — a rare genetic condition causing progressive muscle weakness that is often fatal before age two — before symptoms appear dramatically improves outcomes, with 21 of 26 trial participants walking independently at two years of age.
- › MedConnect: *Endometriosis: Behind the Pain* was held to a sold-out, in-person audience and drew 787,247 online views. The panel examined diagnostic gaps, fertility challenges and systemic underfunding in women's health — and spotlighted the world-first Ainsworth Endometriosis Research Institute at UNSW.
- › Medicine & Health carried out research that shows bushfire smoke damages the eye's surface and triggers inflammation - findings that could shape protective treatments for future fire seasons. The discovery emerged from research conducted by Dr Suki Jaiswal, involving recreating Black Summer smoke conditions to study short-term ocular exposure.
- › With ovarian cancer diagnoses projected to rise 55 per cent by 2050 and no reliable early detection test yet available, Professor Caroline Ford and Dr Kristina Warton's team are developing a blood test to detect the disease in its earliest — and most treatable — stages. · The Camilla and Marc Ovaries. Talk About Them. campaign has backed the research since 2019, with 100 percent of funds from its latest limited-edition collection directed to the work.
- › CHeBA Co-Director Professor Henry Brodaty called for urgent national investment in brain health at the National Press Club — elevating dementia prevention to the national policy agenda.

▼ CHeBA Co-Director Professor Henry Brodaty

Research funding

- › SoCM: A \$1.99 million MRFF award to Dr Shannon Pike addressed a stark gap: one in five Australian children start school without foundational skills — a rate even higher in rural areas where paediatric wait times stretch two years.
- › Kirby: A \$3 million NHMRC award funded RAPID 2.0 — a Kirby Institute-led initiative to scale point-of-care infectious disease testing across 900 sites in Australia and 14 Asia-Pacific countries. For half the world's population, testing remains out of reach without centralised labs. RAPID 2.0 is built to change that.
- › MRI: A \$3 million NHMRC grant backed The George Institute's push to replace the world's sodium salt supply with a potassium-enriched alternative — proven to lower blood pressure and prevent strokes and heart attacks at scale. A major trial showed 92 per cent of participants still using the substitute after five years, demonstrating the switch is practical globally.

Research Awards

- › Four Medicine & Health researchers — Scientia Professor Valsamma Eapen, Professor Alta Schutte, Scientia Professor Julian Trollor and Conjoint Professor David Ziegler — were elected Fellows of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences. The four were recognised for research spanning paediatric oncology, intellectual disability health, youth mental health and cardiovascular disease.
- › Professor Minoti Apte was awarded the International Herbert Falk Award at Symposium 242 in Berlin, recognised for her leading research into pancreatic injury.
- › Kirby Institute's Dr Yumi Sheehan was named a finalist in the AAMRI Rising Star Awards for designing a single-visit hepatitis C testing and treatment model in prisons — research that directly shaped national and international best practice guidelines.

Research Innovation

- › Dr Riccardo Cazzoli and Associate Professor Orazio Vittorio cracked a decades-old problem in neuroscience by delivering drugs across the blood-brain barrier by disguising them as vesicles the brain naturally absorbs. In its first trial, the technology slowed aggressive paediatric brain tumour growth by 50 per cent.

Research Awards winners



Professor
Alta Schutte



Conjoint Professor
David Ziegler



Scientia Professor
Julian Trollor



Scientia Professor
Valsamma Eapen



Professor
Minoti Apte



Dr Yumi Sheehan

Global Engagement

Global Engagement Leadership

- › Scientia Professor Rebecca Ivers was appointed as Medicine & Health's inaugural Deputy Dean Global Engagement and External Education, establishing dedicated senior leadership to drive the faculty's global strategy and partnerships.
- › An internationally recognised global health leader, Professor Ivers brings extensive experience as former Head of the School of Population Health and Honorary Professional Fellow at The George Institute for Global Health.
- › She led a major global research program focused on the prevention and management of injury, with impact spanning multiple countries and health systems.
- › Her work is grounded in equity, implementation science, sustainability and capacity development – strengthening health outcomes globally while building enduring international partnerships.

▽ Queen Nanasipau'u of Tonga visited through a Kirby Institute-led collaboration

Expanding Global Engagement

- › Medicine & Health undertook 120 international engagements in 2025, advancing strategic partnerships across research, education and global health.
- › Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u of Tonga visited through a Kirby Institute-led collaboration to eliminate cervical cancer across Pacific nations.
- › Tokyo's UTOPIA Centre joined a Medicine & Health symposium on the frontiers of infectious diseases, deepening Asia-Pacific research engagement.
- › Senior delegations from Thailand's Mahidol University and Australia's Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Caitlin Wilson, engaged in high-level roundtables with faculty leadership.
- › Faculty leadership undertook strategic visits to KU Leuven in Belgium and Imperial College London to strengthen institutional partnerships and expand education and research collaboration.

Lifelong Learning

- › Two new short courses were developed in 2025
- › AI in Medicine - positions Medicine & Health to deliver digital health capability training in the future.
- › Health Leadership and Management - positioning Medicine & Health to deliver targeted workforce capability development. This short course will commence in 2026.
- › M&H short courses enrolled 209 learners in 2025 and expanded internationally through a formal partnership with the Saudi Society of Optometry.



△ Scientia Professor Rebecca Ivers

▽ Fiji Vital Statistics Workshop



Schools

School of Biomedical Sciences

- › School of Biomedical Science Associate Professor David Jacques and colleagues published world-first molecular insight into HTLV-1 — an untreatable HIV-related virus causing leukemia and paralysis that devastates First Nations communities in Central Australia — identifying a structural vulnerability that opens the pathway to the first targeted antiviral treatment, published in Nature Communications.
- › Associate Professor Shafagh Waters is leading the world's first clinical trial using a patient's own cells to repair damaged airways — offering new hope for people living with chronic airway diseases such as cystic fibrosis and sinusitis.
- › In another major milestone, Associate Professor Waters also secured \$4.5 million in NSW Government funding to establish NAT-Net. This brought together researchers, industry, regulators and policymakers to drive Australia's transition to ethical, human-relevant alternatives to animal testing in drug development.
- › SBMS pathology academics shaped how every pathologist is trained across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand — authoring the first unified national pathology curriculum, adopted by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.
- › Professor Margaret Morris celebrated 20 years of distinguished service at SBMS. Professor Morris is a world-leading expert in obesity neuroscience whose research has fundamentally reshaped our understanding of how parental diet determines the metabolic health of future generations, with landmark findings published in Nature.
- › SBMS researchers collaborated with over 450 institutions across more than 50 countries, reflecting the school's deep integration into the global biomedical science community.

School of Clinical Medicine

- › Research led by Professor Jerry Greenfield improved care for people with type 1 diabetes by showing for the first time that tirzepatide, previously used in type 2 diabetes and obesity, can reduce their body weight and the amount of insulin they need to take, while also ruling out ineffective approaches. The landmark research was published in Diabetes Care and Nature Communications.
- › Associate Professor Nusrat Homaira and her team, in collaboration with Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, local health partners and Asthma Australia, implemented and evaluated a virtually enabled asthma care model for children in rural NSW. Over 12 months, the model cut emergency visits by up to 70 per cent, hospital admissions by 81 per cent and healthcare costs by 69 per cent, improving outcomes while easing pressure on the health system.
- › Health Translation Hub Simulation Centre launched on Kensington Campus, delivering state of the art simulation environments, including critical care and ward settings, as a shared resource across the faculty.
- › Our Rural Clinical Campuses marked 25 years of UNSW Medicine & Health's rural presence, with milestone celebrations held at Wagga Wagga and Albury, including alumni of the program.
- › New Wagga Wagga Biomedical Sciences Centre opened adjacent to Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, providing a purpose-built four-storey facility for medical science, anatomy, and clinical skills teaching.
- › SoCM assumed governance of the UNSW MD program, with Associate Professor Sean Kennedy appointed as Program Director to lead its management going forward.
- › The school's researchers held more than \$97 million in grants in 2025, including \$65 million in Category 1 funding, with academics publishing over 4,080 journal articles and 42 book chapters.
- › Conjoint Professor Mark Brown AM conferred a Doctor of Health Care, honoris causa, the University's highest honour, in recognition of his service to medical research, education, and community healthcare.



Our Rural Clinical Campuses
^ marked 25 years of UNSW Medicine
& Health's rural presence

SBMS Team



Associate Professor
David Jacques



Associate Professor
Shafagh Waters



Professor
Margaret Morris



Schools

School of Health Sciences

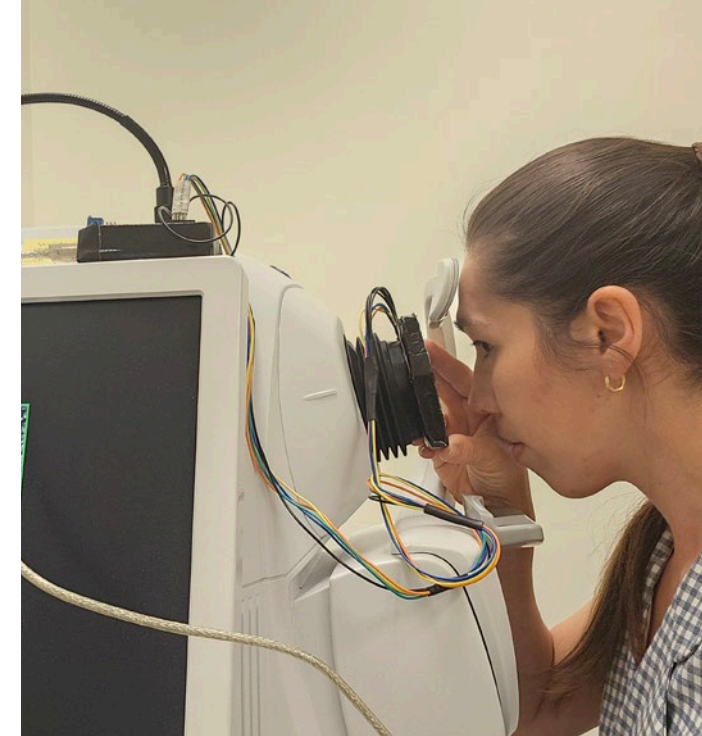
- › The School of Health Sciences reached full research leadership capacity across all four disciplines — a first in the school's history.
- › All staff who applied in UNSW's academic promotion round were successful — a 100 per cent success rate across every level of seniority.
- › 22 new courses welcomed approximately 320 new students, with thriving student societies complementing a dynamic learning community across the school.
- › 16 students and staff participated in an international placement program in the Philippines under the DFAT Colombo Mobility Plan, strengthening Indo-Pacific partnerships through health education and cultural exchange.
- › Five new purpose-built teaching spaces were delivered, including clinical skills facilities in Wallace Wurth, the Morven Brown Teaching Gym, and dedicated Motor Control, Exercise Science and Exercise Physiology, and Biomechanics laboratories at AGSM.

School of Optometry & Vision Science

- › One in seven Australians over 50 have some form of macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in older Australians, yet many remained unaware. School of Optometry and Vision Science researcher Dr Lisa Nivison-Smith developed methods to predict a person's specific vision decline by analysing thousands of retinal images to detect early changes not typically measured, advancing personalised care that could hold off blindness before it starts.
- › Development planning was completed for the new Eye Health Clinic at the Health Translation Hub, with patient consultations for stable glaucoma patients commencing January 2026.
- › Six new state-of-the-art patient consulting rooms were unveiled at the UNSW Optometry Clinic, modernising the school's core clinical teaching and patient care environment.
- › Professor Isabelle Jalbert and Emeritus Professor Stephen Dain received prestigious American Academy of Optometry Foundation awards — recognised respectively for excellence in teaching and advanced education, and for outstanding contributions to public health and environmental vision.
- › A new partnership was established with the Saudi Society of Optometry for the School's short courses, extending its international reach in executive education.

School of Population Health

- › Professor James Wood was appointed Head of School of Population Health, following Professor Rebecca Ivers' appointment as Medicine & Health's first Deputy Dean, Global Engagement and External Education.
- › The School of Population Health launched Australia's first student public health advocacy program, the Advocacy Lab — building student capacity to influence policy and drive change on urgent public health issues.
- › The Advocacy Lab delivered its first Federal Government submission, contributing to the national inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs.
- › The School of Population Health relocated to the Health Translation Hub, embedding researchers alongside clinicians and industry partners in one of the faculty's most significant new collaborative spaces.
- › The School of Population Health claimed winner and finalist honours at the BYO Innovation Challenge — a faculty-wide health innovation competition. Joseph Zhu taking top prize for Everywhere Health, and Dr Jeffery Chan recognised as a finalist for his Learning Health and Implementation Platform.
- › Anne Hogden and Patricia Cullen were promoted to Associate Professor, adding to a year of sustained academic advancement across the school.
- › Four staff reached Senior Lecturer — Blessing Akombi-Inyang, Jane Hwang, Paul Simpson and Luna Xu.



Research Centres

Australian Research Centre for Cancer Survivorship

- › UNSW Medicine & Health opened the Australian Research Centre for Cancer Survivorship – Australia's first dedicated cancer survivorship research centre, established through a \$40 million joint investment with Cancer Council NSW.
- › Professor Bogda Koczwara AM was appointed the centre's inaugural director – an internationally recognised medical oncologist and founder of one of Australia's first dedicated cancer survivorship programs, bringing global leadership to Australia's first centre of its kind.
- › Over 40 cancer survivors participated in the centre's inaugural Research Priority Workshop, embedding lived experience at the heart of the survivorship research agenda from day one.
- › International research partnerships were established in the centre's first year with leading institutions across Canada, France, Denmark and New Zealand, positioning the Centre as a global collaborator in cancer survivorship from inception.
- › The centre was featured in UNSW's 100 Innovations and Ideas that Will Change the World and represented at the UNSW Parliamentary Showcase – two significant markers of its national visibility in its first year.

✓ Professor Bogda Koczwara AM

Centre for Big Data Research in Health

- › The Centre for Big Data Research in Health marked its 10th anniversary in 2025 – becoming a nationally and internationally recognised leader in health data science, shaping policy and practice across reproductive health, cardiovascular disease, COVID-19 modelling, and mental health.
- › The Centre appointed as the NSW lead institution of the Australian Health Data Evidence Network (AHDEN) – a \$9.5 million national initiative to harmonise hospital electronic medical record data across Australia.
- › Research led by Professor Louisa Jorm, with Nicholas I-Hsien Kuo and Professor Blanca Gallego Luxan, developed the first cardiovascular disease risk prediction calculator built from large-scale Australian general practice data. The breakthrough was published in BMJ Heart and delivers a more accurate, locally calibrated tool for Australian patients than overseas-derived models.
- › New NHMRC Ideas Grant awarded to investigate causal links between infectious diseases and dementia, led by Dr Heidi Welberry, using advanced analytical approaches applied to large-scale population data.
- › \$1 million MRFF grant secured to investigate causes of pregnancy loss in assisted reproductive technology, led by Dr Wentao Li, with the aim of improving predictive models and clinical outcomes for ART patients.

✓ The Centre for Big Data Research in Health

Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing

- › The Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing's Maintain Your Brain trial, led by Scientia Professor Henry Brodaty, was the largest internet-based study conducted to prevent cognitive decline and published landmark findings in Nature Medicine, demonstrating that a personalised online lifestyle intervention significantly improved cognition in over 6,000 older Australians.
- › Professor Perminder Sachdev was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Australian Dementia Research Forum – recognising a 35-year career, over 1,000 peer-reviewed publications, and a global h-index of 148 that has fundamentally advanced the understanding and prevention of dementia worldwide.
- › Professor Henry Brodaty, Co-Director of CHeBA, made an address to the National Press Club with a stark case: over 400,000 Australians live with dementia, numbers expected to double by 2050 at a cost of \$3.7 billion annually to the healthcare system. CHeBA's Maintain Your Brain trial demonstrated that preventative, lifestyle-based interventions can improve cognitive outcomes – making the case that dementia is not inevitable and investment in brain health is an investment in national productivity.
- › Dr Suraj Samtani, CHeBA Postdoctoral Research Fellow, served as the scientific guide throughout Hollywood actor Chris Hemsworth's documentary A Road Trip to Remember – bringing CHeBA's dementia research to a global audience of millions.

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Professor Perminder Sachdev



Dr Heidi Welberry



Dr Suraj Samtani



Research Centres

Centre for Molecular Oncology

- › Centre for Molecular Oncology concluded Australia's largest cancer and genomics initiative, ProSPeCT 1.0 – delivering more than \$200m in foreign investment, over 1,540 jobs, and treatment recommendations to 3 in 4 adult patients who would otherwise have had none.
- › A \$30M funding commitment extended CMO's precision oncology platform, ProSPeCT 2.0, into 2026 – ensuring continuity for a program that connected Australians with incurable cancer to matched therapies every 15 minutes.
- › CMO's Australian Precision Oncology Symposium drew 376 attendees and 23 speakers under the theme The Coming of Age of Precision Oncology – marking the moment the field shifted from theoretical promise to clinical reality.

✓ CMO's Australian Precision Oncology Symposium

International Centre for Future Health Systems

- › Two of Australia's most distinguished health leaders, Professor Michael Kidd AO and Professor Patricia Davidson, were appointed Co-Directors of the International Centre for Future Health Systems.
- › Professor Michael Kidd was also appointed Australia's Chief Medical Officer – the first General Practitioner to hold the nation's most senior medical advisory role in its 42-year history. He was also appointed co-chair of the Lancet Global Commission on Transforming Primary Health Care in the Post-COVID-19 Era.
- › Professor Patricia Davidson received the American Academy of Nursing's President's Award – one of the most prestigious honours in global health leadership.
- › ICFHS hosted the Community Health Navigator Forum, opened by the NSW Secretary for Health, brought together over 150 researchers and health innovators nationally, reaching consensus on workforce development, accredited training and policy advocacy for an emerging health workforce.
- › The Ian Webster Oration marked its 20th anniversary in 2025, celebrating two decades of bold thinking on primary health care equity and universal access – a platform that has shaped health research, policy and practice in Australia.



National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health

- › The Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health gathered over 600 delegates at its national conference – establishing itself as the leading national forum for collaboration and innovation in intellectual disability health.
- › The centre launched its inaugural Innovation Seed Funding Grant to support projects that improve healthcare for people with intellectual disability, with five grant recipients now well underway.
- › The Centre's flagship podcast series Excellence in Practice: Voices for Better Care launched, rapidly building a broad audience across major platforms – shifting attitudes and inspiring action across the health sector.
- › Read our [2024–25 Annual Report](#)



Research Centres

National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre

- › NDARC's Dr Thomas Santo Jr led research that revealed NSW's opioid agonist treatment program may have averted 338 suicides between 2001 and 2020, landmark evidence of the program's life-saving impact on people with opioid use disorder.
- › Scientia Professor Louisa Degenhardt was appointed by the World Health Organization to lead 10 systematic reviews informing the update of global guidelines on opioid dependence treatment and overdose prevention – placing NDARC at the centre of global drug policy reform.
- › Professor Michael Farrell was awarded the Senior Scientist Award at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs Conference, recognising his outstanding long-term contribution to substance use research.
- › A \$2.3 million NHMRC grant was awarded to Scientia Professor Louisa Degenhardt AC to lead a major research program addressing the health and social challenges faced by people leaving prison.
- › A \$1.99 million Medical Research Future Fund grant was secured by Associate Professor Amy Peacock to investigate alcohol misuse among young Australians.
- › Professor Don Weatherburn led research that explored NSW's court diversion program, which directs people with drug offences into voluntary treatment instead of prosecution, and found participants were significantly less likely to reoffend or receive a prison sentence, demonstrating the effectiveness of treatment based justice approaches.
- › Professor Rebecca McKetin received the Mental Health Australia General Clinical Trials Network (MAGNET) Trial of the Year award for the Tina Trial – a multi-site clinical trial investigating mirtazapine for methamphetamine use.
- › The NDARC Webinar Series delivered 32 sessions attracting 9,030 registrations across the alcohol and other drug research and practice community.
- › NDARC relocated to the Health Translation Hub, deepening collaboration with clinicians, researchers and partners across UNSW and beyond.
- › Read our [2025 Annual Report](#)

✓ 2025 NDARC symposium

The Kirby Institute

- › The Kirby Institute's Point-of-Care Testing Program, led by Professor Rebecca Guy, was recognised with the Community Champion Award at the Shaping Australia Awards – for reducing the spread of sexually transmitted infections and COVID-19 across more than 100 remote communities and saving Australia's healthcare system up to \$1.8 billion.
- › The Kirby Institute's global reputation in infectious disease epidemiology was called upon by the World Health Organization, with epidemiologists Justine Marshall and Jonathan King deployed to Fiji to lead HIV outbreak surveillance and build lasting in-country response capacity.
- › Kirby Institute researchers co-authored a landmark study published in Cell, finding that receiving a booster vaccine in the same arm as the original dose generates a faster and more effective immune response – with significant implications for future vaccination strategies globally.
- › Kirby Institute PhD candidate Tiana Wang was recognised for her world-first research developing an RNA-based treatment for HTLV-1 – a devastating virus affecting up to 40 percent of people in some Central Australian communities.
- › Tiana also won UNSW's 3 Minute Thesis competition and advanced to the Asia-Pacific and global finals.

Affiliated Medical Research Institutes

Medicine & Health is proud to be affiliated with seven world-class medical research institutes that work alongside the faculty to drive breakthroughs across some of the most pressing health challenges of our time. Each institute publishes its own annual report, linked below.

- › **Black Dog Institute**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **Children's Cancer Institute**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **Garvan Institute of Medical Research**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **The George Institute for Global Health**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **Ingham Institute**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **Neuroscience Research Australia**
[Latest annual report](#)
- › **Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute**
[Latest annual report](#)

