



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

2025-2030

Strategic Plan

Robinson Research Institute



Contents

Director's Introduction / 3

Executive Summary / 4

The Plan / 7

1. About us / 7
2. Inflexion is upon us / 8
3. At the heart of the Institute / 9
4. Our position / 10
5. Five-year road map / 11
6. Positioning and identity / 12
7. Our structure / 14
8. Enablers / 16
9. Collaborators, benchmarks, and competitors / 18
10. Priority strategic challenges / 19
11. Governance and organisation / 20
12. Institute membership / 23
13. Strategic alignment with the University of Adelaide and performance indicators / 24
14. Risk management / 26
15. Implementation plan / 27

Abbreviations

AI	artificial intelligence
AIML	Australian Institute of Machine Learning
CALHN	Central Adelaide Local Health Network
EI	Environment Institute
EMCR	early- and mid-career researcher
IP	intellectual property
IPAS	Institute for Photonics and Sensing
ML	machine learning
NALHN	Northern Adelaide Local Health Network
PCOS	Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
RRI	Robinson Research Institute
SA	South Australia
SAHMRI	South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute
SAiGENCI	South Australian immunoGENomics Cancer Institute
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
WCHN	Women's and Children's Health Network

Recognition

We are grateful for the involvement of members, EMCRs, students, and stakeholders in contributing to our Strategic Plan.

Director's Introduction

At the Robinson Research Institute (RRI), University of Adelaide, our mission has always been to advance human reproduction, improve pregnancy outcomes, and foster early childhood health. With this strategic plan, we take a bold step forward – embracing a vision that positions RRI as a global leader in reproductive medicine, obstetrics, neonatology, and paediatrics.

The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan provides a roadmap as to how we approach challenges and opportunities in fertility, maternal health, and early childhood wellbeing. We emphasise the importance of innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to address some of the most pressing reproductive health issues facing Australia, and the world. To achieve our objectives, we must foster research excellence and collaboration between scientists, clinicians, industry, government, and community partners.

Central to this vision are *Accelerator Programmes*; adaptable initiatives that leverage our research strengths to promote rapid translation of key findings to targeted areas of unmet and emerging need. These programmes are ambitious; their success measured by delivering impact that leads to improved maternal and child health.

The strategic plan reflects our agility and responsiveness to evolving needs, ensuring that our research initiatives have a lasting, transformative impact across generations. This includes identifying,

nurturing, and supporting the next generation of scientists and clinical researchers dedicated to improving our understanding of reproduction and early life health.

As we embark on this exciting journey, I invite our staff, stakeholders, and broader community to join us in delivering on this ambitious vision. Together, we will create a future where every family has the opportunity for healthier beginnings and brighter outcomes.



Professor David MacIntyre
Director, Robinson Research Institute
The University of Adelaide

Executive Summary

The Robinson Research Institute (RRI) Strategic Plan 2025-2030 outlines the Institute's vision for advancing its mission, leveraging interdisciplinary research, cutting-edge technology, and global collaboration to address critical challenges in reproductive medicine, and maternal and child health.

Vision and mission

RRI aspires to achieve life-time health for all children and families through research excellence. Our mission is to deliver world-class advances in understanding human reproduction, and maternal and child health while translating these discoveries into clinical care, policy, and practice. In doing so we aim to improve health outcomes across generations.

Strategic context

We operate at a pivotal moment marked by:

- Creation of Adelaide University in 2026 through a merger between the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia.
- Rapid technological advances in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), multi-omics, engineering, and biometrics.
- Urgent challenges in reproductive health, including declining fertility

rates, increased incidence of maternal health issues, and suboptimal pregnancy outcomes.

Strategic priorities

The plan focuses on three core areas:

- **Research excellence**
Transitioning to an outcomes-driven framework that integrates foundational science with translational 'Accelerator Programmes' that target major challenges such as environmental impacts on reproduction and developmental disorders.
- **Local and global impact through translation**
Expanding the Institute's reach through community engagement, and industry and government partnerships, with a focus on underserved communities such as Adelaide's northern suburbs, and participation in global research initiatives.
- **Technology integration**
Harnessing advanced technologies such as AI and machine learning (ML) for predictive modelling, precision medicine, and robust data platforms to enhance collaboration and improve operational efficiency.

Key goals

We have three overarching goals:

- Deliver groundbreaking discoveries addressing critical knowledge gaps in reproduction, pregnancy, and early childhood.
- Translate findings into impactful change via clinical practice and health policy.
- Engage communities and health advocates to align our research with societal needs.



Strategic framework

RRI has a refined strategic emphasis.

We seek to:

- Place fertility, reproduction, and healthy outcomes for newborns at the top of Australia's health agenda.
- Achieve comprehensive understanding of how to improve reproductive health and pregnancy outcomes through integration of fundamental science, clinical leadership, and community partnerships.
- Foster systems thinking to develop a new generation of researchers, clinicians, and community leaders focused on the delivery of long-term wellbeing through improved pregnancy health.

The Robinson Research Institute 2025-2030 Strategic Plan recognises the need for flexibility. To allow for refinement as we progress, the Plan is structured across three time horizons: Year 1 – Foundation; Years 2-3 – Accelerate; and Years 3-5 – Scale for Impact.

Central to this are strategic collaborations with the most effective partners for research translation, commercialisation, and implementation. RRI will take a leadership role in initiating bold initiatives, locally, nationally, and internationally, leveraging impactful investment through partnering with private, public, and impact philanthropy to bring solutions to reproductive health challenges to the community.

Delivering on our vision

RRI will adopt a matrix structure combining foundational science disciplines with Accelerator Programmes encompassing interdisciplinary teams focused on translational outcomes.

Accelerator Programmes

The establishment of Accelerator Programmes will drive targeted solutions for unmet needs while fostering collaboration among researchers, clinicians, and community stakeholders. The Accelerator Programmes are designed as a centre of interdisciplinary skills required to address a specific translation challenge. It is expected that these will change over time according to needs and opportunities. Our initial Accelerators are:

- Chronic reproductive diseases – Addressing major health burdens

that impact fertility, for example endometriosis and PCOS.

- Environment and reproduction – Identifying and mitigating disruptors of reproduction and pregnancy, especially the microbiome, climate, and environmental exposures.
- Developmental disorders – Targeting genetic or congenital diseases that benefit from early diagnosis, prevention, and interventions.
- Assisted reproduction – Developing diagnostics and therapeutic modalities that improve outcomes for those seeking fertility treatment.
- Epidemiology and community – Collaborating with the community to better understand health priorities and pathways to impact.

People development

A major emphasis is placed on attracting, developing, and retaining early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). We will achieve this through mentorship programs, career development opportunities, and addressing barriers to career progression.

Collaborations and partnerships

RRI will strengthen local partnerships with key institutions such as South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN), Northern Adelaide Local Health Network

(NALHN), and SA Pathology, while expanding its national and international networks. These collaborations aim to consolidate South Australia as a leader in reproductive medicine.

Enablers

The Institute will leverage South Australia's advanced technology platforms for genomics, microbiome analysis, imaging, AI/ML applications, and clinical translation. A robust business development strategy will enhance commercialisation efforts alongside diversified funding through philanthropy and government grants. The strategy is based on close partnerships with complementing University of Adelaide institutes – Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML), Environment Institute (EI), Institute for Photonics and Sensing (IPAS), and South Australian immunoGENomics Cancer Institute (SAiGENCI).

Performance metrics

A balanced scorecard approach will assess progress across scientific impact, translation outcomes, funding sustainability, public engagement, and ethical standards.

Governance

RRI's governance structure ensures alignment with the University of Adelaide's strategic objectives. The Advisory Board oversees compliance and provides strategic guidance while the Executive Team drives implementation.



Strategic Plan 2025–2030

Mission

Deliver world-class advances in human reproduction, and maternal and child health, to inform clinical care, policy, and practice.

Vision

Life-time health for all children and families, through research excellence.



Main strategies

- Integrated research structure
- Enhanced clinical-research-community relationships
- EMCR development
- Dynamic cohort asset
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Leveraging technology platforms



Objectives

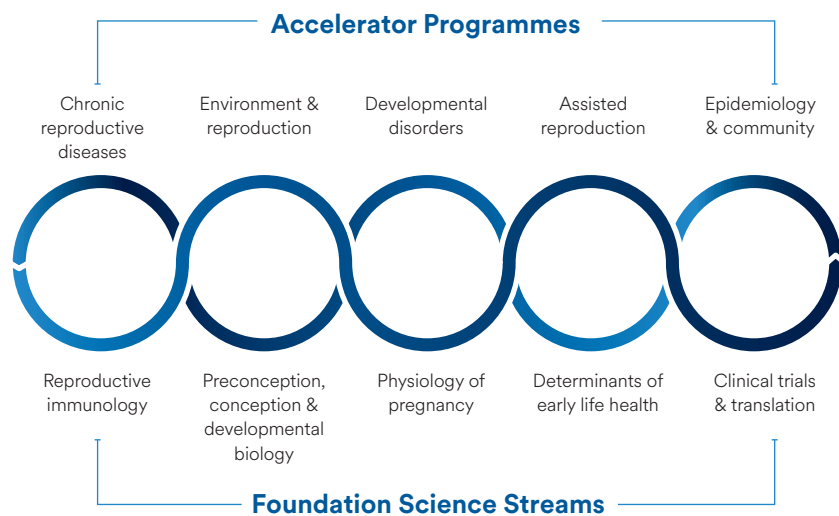
- Deliver world-class research
- Translate research into impactful tools and interventions
- Foster community engagement
- Build research capacity
- Leverage advanced technologies
- Expand local and global reach
- Ensure sustainability



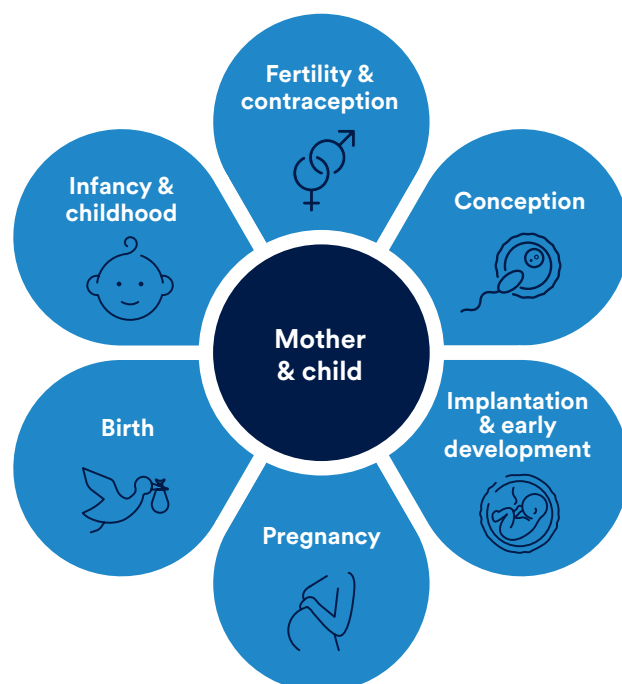
Our focus

- Integrated clinical translation
- Enhanced community engagement
- Accelerator Programmes
- Systems thinking
- Strategic collaborations
- Talent development
- Impact investment

Our research structure



Our science domain



The Plan

1. About us

Who we are

Building on more than 60 years of pioneering research at the University of Adelaide, Robinson Research Institute generates new discoveries to advance the health of women and children across generations and global communities.

Our Institute is named after Professor Jeffrey Robinson CBE, BSc, MB BCh BAO, FRANZCOG, FRCOG (1941-2022), whose research examined the control of fetal and placental growth and development. Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Adelaide from 1986, and Head of Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology until 2006, Professor Robinson was integral in developing and promoting the University of Adelaide's outstanding reputation for excellence in research in obstetrics, gynaecology, and reproductive medicine and biology.

What we do

Robinson Research Institute (RRI) is dedicated to improving the health of parents and babies thereby promoting life-long health. Our interdisciplinary research teams investigate how pre-conception, pregnancy, and early life events impact health, disease susceptibility, and resilience.

Our aspiration is to solve established and emerging challenges in human reproduction, and to develop new ways to prevent, treat, and cure childhood diseases. This includes effective interventions to improve fertility, pregnancy outcomes and healthy child development. We believe that a better understanding of maternal health is needed to achieve the best possible outcomes from pregnancy.

What sets us apart

We will uniquely focus on the critical preconception period and early stages of development, together with maternal health. We consider the health,

environment, and social circumstances of both parents. We place emphasis on a healthy pregnancy as being a major determinant of life-long health.

We apply a systems approach to solve problems – recognising the complexity of biology, the uniqueness of human pregnancy, the impact of the physical and social environment on development, and the need to work with large high-dimensionality data sets using multi-omics, biometric, and artificial intelligence approaches.

Strength through partnerships

Institute members collaborate across biomedical, clinical, physical, chemical, social, and epidemiological sciences, acknowledging the importance of

multidisciplinary solutions to health challenges. We work with community, non-profit, government, health practitioners, and industry partners to make a positive impact on the health of the newborn, an impact that continues to benefit future generations.

Our impact is manifested in several ways

Our discoveries are wide-ranging – from uncovering fundamental biology to developing new therapies and medical devices to improving clinical practice guidelines. We provide evidence and expert advice for health policymakers and economists, and we engage in reproduction health education through a variety of media.



2. Inflexion is upon us

We are poised to make a transformative impact on fertility, and maternal and infant health. Our strategic plan embraces ambition, scale, and collaboration to address the most pressing challenges in human reproduction, pregnancy, and child health.

A new research landscape

The research landscape evolves rapidly, driven by technology and a growing need for data-driven, interdisciplinary, and systems approaches. Generative AI, biometric and multi-omics technologies are seeing unprecedented growth, demanding that we think bigger and bolder in our research endeavours. To stay at the forefront of research, we will integrate emerging technologies into our work, utilising established strengths in AI and machine learning for data analysis and predictive modelling as well as partnering to exploit new possibilities in sensing and imaging.

Leveraging our strengths

RRI's unique position at the intersection of clinical expertise, biological research, and translational partnerships provides us with a distinct advantage. By linking our strong clinician researchers with cutting-edge biology and technologies, we aim to publish our groundbreaking findings in impactful journals and accelerate the translation of our discoveries into practice.

Expanding our reach

While the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) remains a cornerstone of our clinical translation, our vision extends far beyond. We will engage with communities before they reach the hospital, particularly in underserved areas, and will participate in global research initiatives seeking new advances that will benefit the people of Australia. We will also emphasise close engagement with the Lyell McEwin Hospital at the centre of South Australia's population growth in Adelaide's northern suburbs, and SAHMRI (South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute) as a valued partner especially with respect to clinical development and Indigenous people's health.

Ambitious projects for impact

To make a significant impact, we must pursue large-scale, ambitious projects. We will foster these through RRI funding opportunities that are strategically mapped to our Accelerator Programmes, bringing together RRI and partner researchers to address unmet needs.

We are driven by big challenges such as improving fertility, reducing preterm birth rates, developing innovative technologies for maternal and fetal health monitoring, creating AI-driven predictive models for high-risk pregnancies, and establishing a global network of research sites to conduct large-scale maternal, neonatal, and paediatric clinical trials.

From surviving to thriving

Our ambition is not just to help mothers and babies survive, but ensure they thrive. This means building on our focus to link early development with long-term health outcomes, developing interventions that promote optimal development from conception through early childhood. While our central focus is characterised by a successful pregnancy, we will embrace maternal and paternal health as critical contributors to a healthy baby.

By thinking big, embracing global collaboration, and leveraging our unique strengths, RRI is ready to lead the charge in transforming fertility and maternal and child health research. Our Strategic Plan sets the stage for groundbreaking discoveries, impactful interventions, and a future where every mother and child can thrive.





3. At the heart of the Institute

Mission

Deliver world-class advances in human reproduction, and maternal and child health, to inform clinical care, policy, and practice across generations and global communities.

Vision

Life-time health for all children and families, through research excellence.

People are our biggest asset. Enhancing excellence through researcher advancement and through collaborations is a priority for the Institute.

We bring together researchers from different disciplines to develop new platform technologies. By building sustainable critical mass in research capacity and capability in reproductive medicine, obstetrics, gynaecology, paediatrics, immunology, genetics, epidemiology, and public health we provide support and enrich experiences for researchers and students.

Our work emphasises interdisciplinary collaboration across biomedical, clinical, social, and environmental

sciences, and we partner with healthcare providers, policymakers, and community organisations to translate research into real-world solutions.

We are dedicated to creating effective interventions, improving fertility and pregnancy outcomes, and addressing childhood diseases, with the goal of enhancing lifelong health.

Our guiding principles

We have six guiding principles that underpin implementation of our strategy:

- **Signature**

We are driven by curiosity and ambition in our search for discoveries with impact.

- **Excellence**

Our research must be of the highest quality and impact.

- **Diversity**

We embrace diversity of background, thinking, discipline and gender.

- **High performance**

Our strategic imperatives are driven by a pipeline of translational opportunities.

- **Leadership**

Success comes from leadership, being outward looking, collaborative and engaged with the community.

- **Culture**

We nurture and develop tomorrow's research leaders.

4. Our position

We address a clear need – human reproduction is under challenge. In the realm of healthcare, few areas are as crucial as reproductive health and optimal childhood development.

This domain faces significant challenges at both population and individual levels, with far-reaching implications for society and personal wellbeing. Changes in population growth, and the impacts of societal and economic pressures are increasingly recognised as burdens on individuals and families. As a result, healthy reproduction and early development have become existential challenges – challenges RRI is addressing.

Declining fertility rates

Human reproduction faces significant challenges on local and global scales that impact both population dynamics and individual wellbeing. Australia's fertility rate has fallen below the rate necessary for population maintenance. This decline is compounded by various factors affecting fertility and increasing health risks during pregnancy and childbirth.

Conception difficulties

Fertility challenges are becoming more prevalent, with 16% of couples struggling to conceive and sperm quality and quantity showing a concerning downward trend. As a result, assisted reproduction methods now account for 6% of births. The demographics of motherhood are also shifting, with the median age at first birth rising to 32 years.

Maternal health issues increase

Approximately 50% of mothers are above healthy weight with 23% classified as obese. Gestational diabetes has doubled in the past decade, now affecting 19% of mothers. Substance abuse during pregnancy remains a concern, with 10% of mothers continuing to smoke, 2% reporting alcohol consumption,

and 2–5% of newborns eventually presenting with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Preeclampsia is experienced in 5% of pregnancies. There is increasing evidence that environmental pollution and climate change, pervasive even in remote communities, also negatively impact maternal health.

Pregnancy outcomes

Pregnancies often face serious risks and complications. Miscarriage affects about 15% of pregnancies, while stillbirth occurs in 1 in 130 births. Preterm delivery impacts 10% of pregnancies, often leading to short- and long-term consequences. Additionally, 18% of children experience developmental disorders, predominantly, cardiovascular, neural, and urinary, and 3% are born with congenital anomalies.

Women face additional burdens

Further burdens on women's reproductive health include chronic conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and endometriosis, both of which can cause infertility.

Health in early life

Early life health sets the stage for longer-term wellbeing. Exposures to endogenous and exogenous factors in utero and after delivery shape the development of the infant's immune system, endocrine and metabolic activity, and contribute to the development of allergy, autoimmune disorders, neurological issues, and obesity. The microbiome is now recognised as a key mediator of these interrelationships.

Addressing these issues is essential to safeguard the future of fertility, and to support optimal pregnancy and child development. The complex challenges facing reproductive health emphasise the need for a multifaceted, 'systems' approach combining medical advancements, public health initiatives, and increased awareness to ensure healthier outcomes for individuals and populations alike.

The Robinson Research Institute's situation

RRI has a long history of science, clinical, and commercial achievements. This informed a thorough review to learn from the past and craft a plan exploiting the opportunities presented by the stark reality of the challenges facing global reproductive health.

Through individual discussions and a workshop, all RRI leaders and EMCR representatives had the opportunity to review the current situation for RRI. Table 1 highlights their key descriptors that underpin this new Strategic Plan.

Table 1. RRI situation as per stakeholder SWOT analysis.

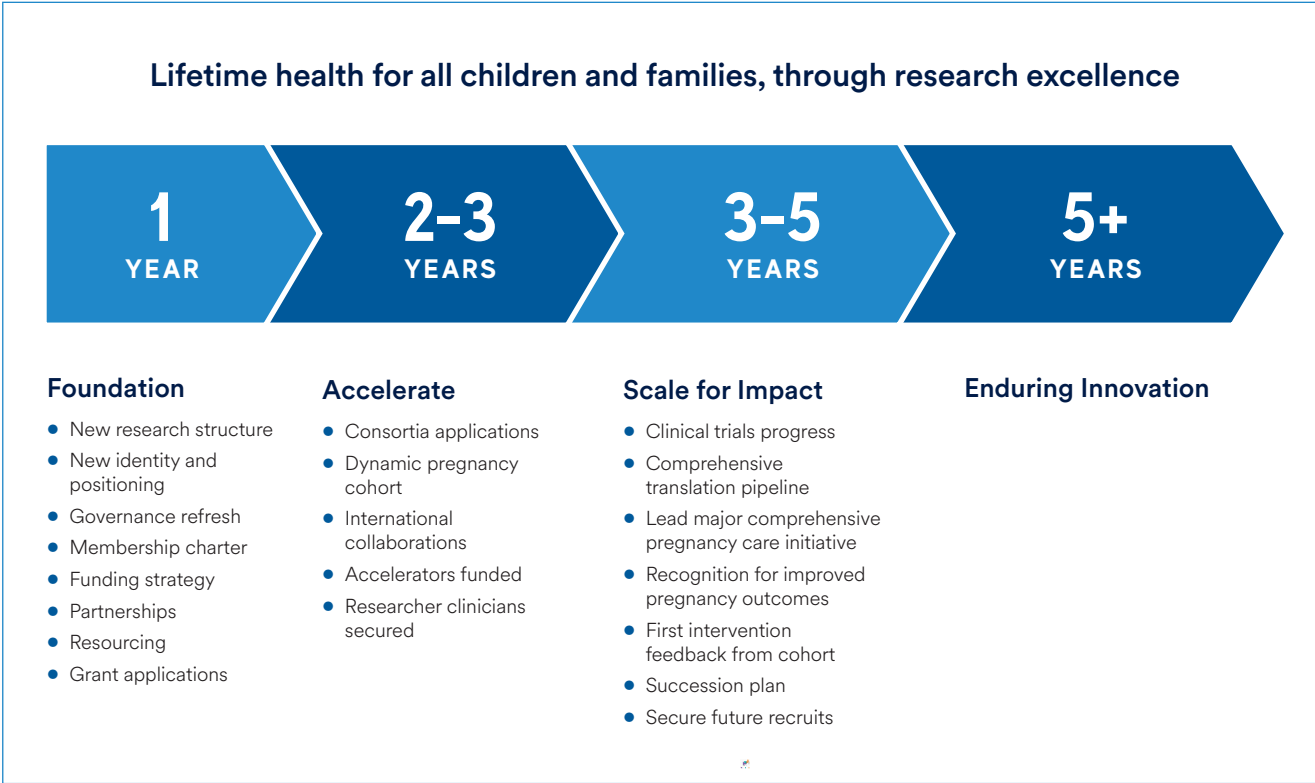
What differentiates us (strengths)?	Improvements needed (weaknesses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific excellence Diverse and balanced team Interdisciplinary approach Robust foundation Valuable assets and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity and visibility Too broad research portfolio External relations and advocacy Limited resources and discretionary funding Talent management
A strong future (opportunities)	Challenges ahead (threats)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance marketing and communication Strengthen clinician-scientist connections Cultivate talent Diversify funding sources Develop specialised research propositions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding landscape Talent attraction and retention Visibility and marketing Structural and relationship challenges Translation and regulatory environment

5. Five-year road map

The RRI Strategic Plan is based on three horizons of evolution. It provides a new organisation structure and funding plan that is flexible and adaptive, all the while keeping focus on our mission and vision. The plan sees us move away from the traditional tendencies of a

medical research institute being a sum of individual efforts, toward a focused, teams-driven organisation. The plan aims to deliver excellence in all key disciplines, form effective partnerships, and address talent recruitment, development, and retention to secure sustainability.

Our timeline presents the planning horizons and the principle focus of activities to realise entry to the next stage. There will be many parallel activities, each progressing with varying degrees of certainty.



6. Positioning and identity

This Strategic Plan aims to focus RRI, emphasising our core mission while clarifying our objectives for the South Australian community and beyond.

Focus and approach

As an outcomes-driven organisation, RRI will focus on reproduction – specifically mothers, healthy pregnancies, and newborn babies.

Our approach is through adoption of:

- **Accelerator Programmes**
Organising our researchers and clinicians into larger focused teams to deliver tangible translation results.
- **Community impact**
Catalysing outcomes that are directly informed by and benefit the community.

Positioning framework

Through our curiosity and vision, RRI is an innovator in reproductive medicine and pregnancy health. We are a catalyst for creating partnerships and fostering strong alliances to master the early determinants of health. We seek to empower our researchers, clinicians, and community to achieve a meaningful impact on reproduction and maternal health. We will inspire our EMCRs to become the next generation of thought leaders equipped to guide us through future existential threats to reproduction. We aspire to a comprehensive approach to pregnancy health.

Positioning strategy

RRI will establish itself as a world-class research organisation dedicated to solving reproductive health problems. Key aspects of our positioning include:

- **Accessibility and responsiveness**
Ensuring our research is relevant and applicable.
- **Partnership with the SA Government**
Facilitating the translation of innovations for state-wide benefits and beyond.
- **Systems approach**
Striving to understand and modulate the critical factors that define a healthy pregnancy.

Our positioning will evolve as we build on our scientific foundation, engage further with clinical practice, and collaborate with partners and the community.

The RRI identity

To our purpose, we will work towards defining our identity:

- Our established logo symbolises our core mission – a healthy pregnancy as key to the future.
- Focused communication emphasising our unique dedication to reproductive and early-life health.
- Interdisciplinary approaches to better understand factors impacting pregnancy and thus, later life health.

Organisational presence

RRI will maintain a tangible presence as:

- An agile organisation responsive to new opportunities and collaborations.
- A University institute that undertakes research of international impact and excellence, leveraging interdisciplinary expertise to address major challenges in reproduction and healthy pregnancies.

Our positioning will enable RRI to effectively communicate its purpose, showcase its achievements, and strengthen its role as a leader in reproductive health research and innovation.





7. Our structure

The structure of RRI is designed to place emphasis on delivering impact from a strategic research portfolio while being aligned with the University's objectives and maximising the potential synergies with faculties and other institutes within the University.

Our research portfolio is based on Accelerator Programmes for major clinical translation initiatives, underpinned by excellent foundation science that informs the biology and external influences impacting on the newborn and mother's journey from conception, through pregnancy to the early days, months and years after birth.

Other key elements of our structure are:

- Clear roles and responsibilities to ensure focus on delivering according to plans and priorities.
- Governance that provides for effective and nimble response to needs.
- Integration between research and clinic through prioritising translation focus.
- Recognition of EMCRs through greater engagement, participation and professional development.

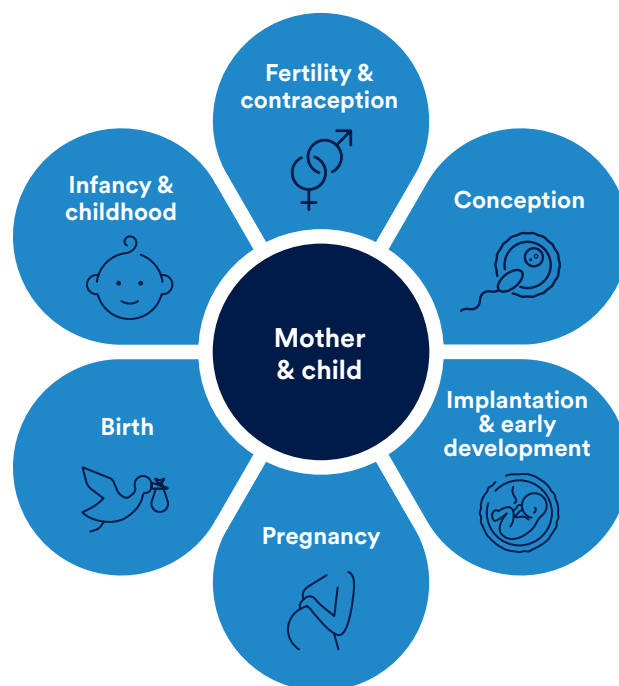


Figure 1. RRI's science domain

Research structure evolution

Our research structure is transitioning to outcomes-directed research, grounded in excellence across key disciplines that encompass the biology of reproduction and healthy pregnancy. This foundation science will follow the biological processes from pre-conception to birth and beyond, specialising in areas such as genetics, immunology, microbiology, physiology, obstetrics, and gynaecology.

While recognising the importance of both parents and the environment, our strategy emphasises the mother and pregnancy.

Enhancing impact

To increase the impact of our fundamental, discovery research, we will:

- Encourage interdisciplinary teams to transform discoveries into inventions and innovations.
- Facilitate clinical and community partnerships.
- Embrace technology convergence, to address 'big' questions with precision.
- Establish Accelerator Programmes to focus on key challenges, applying our expertise alongside collaborators to expedite translation and impact.



Matrix organisation

We will adopt a matrix organisation to reflect our two-dimensional approach to research: Foundation Science Streams and Accelerator Programmes that focus on implementation and impact.

Our new structure places emphasis on translation and implementation in areas where RRI has a major opportunity to deliver impact. This structure will also provide career development opportunities for our early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs).

Accelerator Programmes

Accelerator Programmes are designed to drive translational impact through a combined interdisciplinary effort, bringing together our best clinical and scientific minds to tackle imminent needs. These Programmes will reflect current strengths within RRI, and will map to unmet needs and priorities identified in national policy documents and through community engagement activities.

In its first iteration, our Accelerator Programmes will focus on:

- Chronic reproductive conditions (e.g. PCOS and endometriosis) –

Addressing major burdens faced by women that impact fertility.

- Environment and reproduction – Addressing physical and organic environmental disruptors of reproduction and pregnancy, especially the microbiome, climate and environmental exposures.
- Developmental disorders – Targeting genetic or congenital diseases that benefit from early diagnosis, prevention, and intervention.
- Assisted reproduction – Developing diagnostics and procedures that improve outcomes for those seeking fertility treatment.
- Epidemiology and community – Collaborating with the community to better understand metrics, burdens, and impact.

Each Accelerator Programme will have two co-leads, responsible for coordinating resources, expertise, and partners to address major challenges. RRI members will likely contribute to more than one of the Accelerator Programmes.

The creation of Accelerator Programmes provides a more focused

investment proposition for RRI resources, government, not-for-profit, private, and philanthropic funders. Importantly, this structure provides new opportunities for attracting and developing our next generation of research and clinical leaders.

The focus of each Accelerator Programme may evolve over time, with new ones potentially added. They will serve as contact points for major collaborations and consortia, each with its own funding proposition to attract impact investors and philanthropists. This structure will facilitate clearer communication of research benefits to the community.

Indigenous people's health

The specific needs of First Nations People will be considered for each project and program as part of assessing community needs and priorities. Through existing partnerships, particularly SAHMRI, WCHN, and NALHN, we will work with Indigenous communities and health leaders to address recognised disparity in reproductive health outcomes.

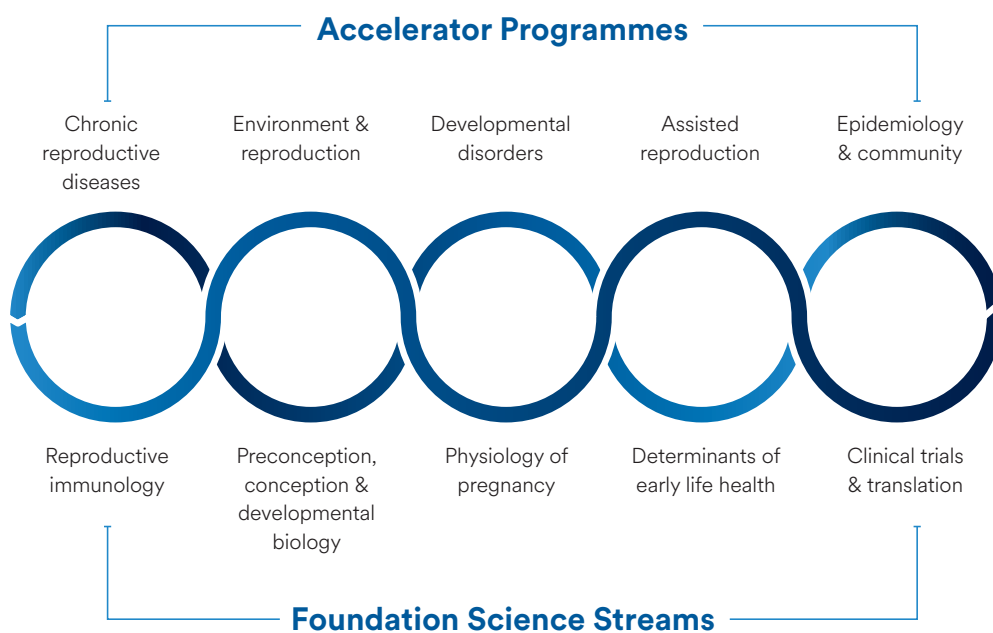


Figure 2. RRI's research structure

8. Enablers

We need to leverage South Australia's cutting-edge technology platforms to accelerate RRI's research and enhance collaboration, ultimately leading to breakthrough discoveries and impact.

Technology platforms

RRI sits in the technology-rich ecosystem of Adelaide BioMed City. We have access to both our own technology platforms specific to reproductive medicine, pregnancy, immunology, and genetics, as well as the broad range of technologies established by the University of Adelaide.

Whenever possible, partnering priority will be placed on South Australian organisations and especially WCHN, SAHMRI, SA Pathology, and the University of Adelaide institutes AIML, IPAS, EI and SAiGENCI. The WCHN and SAHMRI will play an important role in clinical translation including clinical trial design and execution, and biostatistics. AIML provides deep expertise in AI and ML. IPAS is a key partner in the world of sensing, detecting and monitoring with particular emphasis on imaging and sensing technologies for fertilisation, embryo development and assessment of pregnancies. Combined, we will be able to establish strong platforms in microbiome analysis and spatial biology. Partnering with EI provides us with expertise in environment variables and climate change, and community-based intervention. We will partner with SAiGENCI and SA Pathology for collaborations in genomics and epigenomics.

Because our prime focus is on research that has impact, we will work with our technology platform partners to ensure that the requirements of reproducible science, cutting edge methodology, translation partners, proprietary rights and privacy of patient and community data are satisfied.

Key objectives

To leverage the technology platforms the following strategies and initiatives will be partnered.

Ensure research infrastructure is current and linked:

- Deploy state-of-the-art information management systems to streamline sample tracking, data collection, and experiment management.
- Integrate information management between platforms for seamless data flow and improved efficiency.

Enhance data management and analytics:

- Create centralised repositories to consolidate research data from various sources.
- Implement data standardisation protocols to ensure consistency and interoperability across different research projects.
- Integrate AI and ML algorithms for advanced data analysis, pattern recognition, and predictive modelling.

Improve collaboration and communication:

- Deploy a comprehensive project management platform tailored for RRI research teams.
- Utilise standard tools for real-time communication and file sharing among team members.
- Create a centralised repository for research protocols, publications, and best practices.
- Implement a system for version control and collaborative editing of research documents.

Ensure data security and compliance:

- Deploy robust access controls and encryption protocols to protect sensitive research data.
- Conduct regular security audits and penetration testing to identify and address vulnerabilities.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures to comply with laboratory notebook, research records, and data protection regulations.

- Provide training to staff and students on data protection and privacy best practices.

Business development and commercialisation

A robust business development strategy is crucial for medical research institutes to advance their scientific discoveries, secure funding, and ultimately improve health outcomes. RRI has a successful track record of commercialisation and will work closely with the University of Adelaide's Innovation and Commercialisation Services team to realise the potential of our discoveries and ideas. The key aspects of our business development plan include their input and ideas from RRI members and students.

The plan addresses key areas for improvement and provides actionable strategies to foster a culture of innovation and commercial success. The plan emphasises the importance of identifying and supporting researchers willing to engage in commercialisation, particularly early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). We have a comprehensive plan for enhancing business development and commercialisation at RRI including the following.

Key tactics:

- Leverage University of Adelaide support for business, commercialisation, and IP development.
- Build researcher capability through training, skills development, and internships.
- Establish a research culture that engages with translation and commercial partners.
- Implement standard IP practice for researchers to develop intellectual property strategies when applying for and commencing grants.
- Enhance support systems for researchers pursuing commercialisation opportunities.
- Leverage external support and partnerships, connecting researchers with translation and commercial opportunities.

- Education and training to meet researcher needs through comprehensive programs.
- Develop incentives and funding for proof of concept studies, industry PhD scholarships and identify Commercialisation Champions.
- Ensure Intellectual Property and Commercialisation policies protect the University, incentivise researchers and students, and facilitate industry engagement.
- Develop links with external advisors and consultants and establish an RRI Commercialisation Advisory Committee with external expertise.
- Implement agile Project Management principles including iterative development cycles, regular feedback loops with potential customers and industry partners and encourage rapid prototyping and 'fail fast' approaches.
- Increase market awareness and intelligence among researchers and students.
- Create diverse, cross-functional teams to enhance adaptability and encourage collaboration between different research groups and disciplines.

Implementation of these strategies aims to position RRI as a leader in research commercialisation, fostering innovation, and creating impactful partnerships to enhance the University's reputation.

Fundraising and philanthropy

RRI will diversify beyond its traditional competitive funding base to realise its potential and fulfill its mission.

Fundraising and philanthropy are crucial for RRI to advance our mission and drive scientific breakthroughs. A well-structured approach to these activities will significantly strengthen our ability to conduct groundbreaking research and develop innovative treatments. Part of the approach must also include a well thought out and consistent positioning, messaging, and branding across all communication channels available. To achieve this RRI will partner with the University of Adelaide's External

Engagement Division and specifically their Fundraising, Philanthropy, Alumni, Media, and Corporate Relations teams.

The basic approach to be developed with our partners will address the following elements cognisant that the rationale for the RRI Accelerator Programmes provides a basis for targeted messaging and donor resonance.

Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy:

- Creating a holistic fundraising strategy that embraces various approaches that can be based on the entire Institute or specific messages from the Accelerator Programmes.

Annual giving campaigns:

- Major Gifts Program.
- Grateful Consumer Programs.
- Corporate Partnerships.

Leverage venture and impact philanthropy:

- Risk tolerance for high-risk, high-reward projects.
- Translational focus.
- Measurable outcomes.

Foster collaboration and data sharing:

- Encourage a culture of collaboration to maximise the chance of philanthropic support.
- Multi-institutional teams.

- Open data initiatives.
- Consumer engagement.

Tell compelling stories:

- Human-centered narratives.
- Clear value proposition.
- Transparency and value for money.

Streamline the giving process:

- Diverse giving options.
- Rapid response.
- Stewardship program.

Leverage philanthropic support for grant competitiveness:

- Pilot studies.
- Funding proof of concept, 'killer experiments', prototyping.

Collaborative industry engagement:

- Solving specific end-user problems (e.g. contract research).
- Providing access to cutting-edge technology.
- Developing proof of concept materials and prototypes.

By implementing these strategies, RRI will create a robust fundraising and philanthropy program that not only secures necessary funding but also fosters innovation, collaboration, and ultimately, advances in medical science.





9. Collaborators, benchmarks, and competitors

Enhancing organisational understanding

We strive to gain a comprehensive understanding of our research impact, focusing on how we compare to other research organisations and their engagement with industry and community partners. This approach allows us to measure performance beyond the traditional metrics of grant success and publications.

Fostering collaborations

We will strengthen collaborations with key local organisations that share our vision and are excited by synergies from collaboration. These include the WCHN, SAHMRI, SA Pathology, CALHN and other major health networks – SALHN, NALHN, and the country health networks. Further, we will leverage the expertise of our sister University institutes IPAS, EI, AIML, and SAiGENCI. These partnerships will position us to establish South Australia as a leader in reproductive medicine and the determinants of early development. Importantly, through

these collaborations we will be able to lead a more comprehensive approach to pregnancy care bringing together a powerful interdisciplinary approach in partnership with the community and those responsible for delivery of care.

National and international networks

Building on our existing strong network of national and international collaborators, we will refine our focus through the Accelerator Programmes. This approach will enable us to assume a leadership role in major collaborative initiatives and consortia addressing issues critical to our mission.

Benchmarking for improvement

Benchmarking is a quality tool used to identify, evaluate and improve areas, systems or processes for improvements by comparing institutional practices to sector good practice.

We will undertake ongoing benchmarking against relevant national and international organisations – against research

outputs and operations – to improve performance and outcomes.

Through identifying suitable partners, this effort also aims to a) develop reciprocal career options for early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs), and b) expand potential for translation and commercialisation.

Competitive landscape analysis

To stay at the forefront of our field, we will monitor the competitive landscape. This broader view will help us understand emerging needs, trends, technologies, standards, and solutions. Our analysis will extend beyond peer-reviewed literature to include not-for-profit organisations, commercial entities, government policies and intellectual property assets.

This comprehensive approach will ensure we remain informed and competitive in fertility, reproductive medicine, parental health, and newborn outcomes, particularly with respect to return on investment. Our agility in operations will enable us to direct resources in a prioritised fashion.

10. Priority strategic challenges

Our members have identified three strategic challenges to be addressed through an integrative approach that will expand to an interdisciplinary understanding of the impact of major potential disruptors of reproductive health such as climate change, advancing parental age, obesity and metabolic management, microorganisms, and polluting microparticles and chemicals.

Challenge 1: Strengthening the Clinical-Research-Community relationship triangle

As depicted in Figure 3, translation of insights and discoveries demands effectively connecting clinical practice, research, and community engagement. Five key areas of focus will strengthen critical relationships:

- Bridging the gap between research and clinical practice through organic connections, supporting recruitment of clinical academics and improved communication.
- Enhancing community engagement through communication and engagement programs, with formalised consumer voices to inform research and implementation.
- Facilitating partnerships with our clinical service organisations.
- Improving research collaboration through shared goals, training and interdisciplinary interactions.
- Leveraging opportunities identified together with our key partners including the WCHN, SAHMRI, and SA Pathology.

By addressing these areas, RRI will create a more integrated approach to research, clinical practice, and community engagement, ultimately leading to better implementation, health outcomes, and more impactful research.

Challenge 2: EMCR attraction and development

RRI will secure a stronger future through attracting, developing and retaining early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). In a program designed by our EMCRs, key elements include:

- Strengthened efforts to communicate, inform and attract our future young researchers.
- Training in grant proposals and project pitches including value propositions to engage clinicians and community in research.
- Career development through mentoring, placements, and collaboration skills.
- Retention through addressing barriers to career progression by providing better support, opportunities, and profiles.

By focusing on these areas, RRI can strengthen the research training and create a more supportive environment for EMCRs, fostering their growth and ensuring a strong pipeline of talent.

Our EMCRs will receive rigorous scientific training with access to cutting-edge equipment and facilities as well as academic feedback and scientific discourse through RRI events.

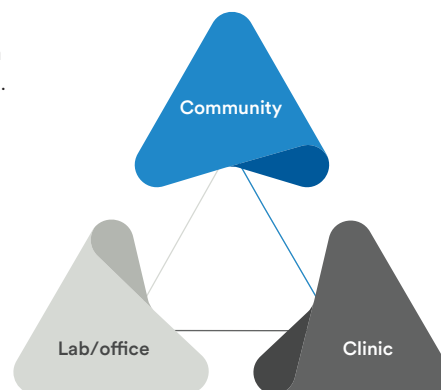


Figure 3. The Clinical - Research - Community triangle

Challenge 3: Establishing a dynamic cohort asset

RRI has an opportunity to create a significant community impact by establishing a Dynamic Cohort asset. Not be just another 'single use' cohort but rather an ongoing dynamic cohort that allows for discovering, monitoring, and investigating links between external factors and pregnancy outcomes. This project would involve:

- Partnering with SA Health and other holders of health data.
- Tracking a cohort of pregnancies and births over time including data on parents and siblings.
- Gathering systems knowledge on the cohort including host genomic and phenomic data, microbiome data, and other key parameters that can be linked with electronic medical records, pathology, and other biological data.
- Engaging strongly with the community for research priorities, approvals, and education.

This ground-breaking project will leverage RRI's past success in large cohort studies and SA's strengths in data, electronic medical records, and biobanks, and benefits from SA's low population mobility and centralised pathology services.

We aim to create a community-supported testbed that will enable us to better understand the drivers of pregnancy outcomes and determinants of development and future health. The dynamic cohort will be an important asset for us to understand the impact of disruptors of reproduction and healthy pregnancy, ranging from climate change to GLP-1 inhibitors and obesity to microparticles.

11. Governance and organisation

RRI is an institute of the University of Adelaide. It is constituted to advance the University's strategic research priorities and interests through collaborative research excellence, critical mass, and leadership to make an impact in reproductive medicine, pregnancy, and maternal-child health.

Guided by the *University Research Institutes and Centres Policy*, RRI engages collaboratively with the University's Faculties and Schools to deliver integrated multidisciplinary research and training.

How are we governed?

RRI's skills-based Advisory Board provides strategic guidance and informed decision-making, drawing on the expertise of its diverse members. Led by an independent Chair, the Board includes both internal and external members, ensuring a broad perspective that enhances its advisory role.

Activities of the Board include oversight of strategic priority setting in alignment with external and University strategies, reviewing the operational and financial performance of the Institute, providing insights into best practice, and advising the Institute Director.

The RRI Director has strategic and operational responsibility for the Institute and is accountable to the University.

The RRI Director is supported by: the Deputy Director, Clinical Research; the RRI Executive Team; research leadership, comprising Accelerator Programme and Foundation Science Stream leads; and the RRI Early- and Mid-Career Researchers Council, to assist in delivery of the Strategic Plan as agreed with the Advisory Board.

Chain of belonging

A chain of belonging provides a strong foundation for delivering our Strategic Plan. A logical connection between the University, RRI Advisory Board and RRI Executive Team links to the vision, mission and purpose of RRI and ensures alignment with the University's objectives.

This is underpinned by a Charter of Membership where the relationship, benefits and expectations of researchers, clinicians, and EMCRs are aligned.

How are we organised?

RRI's operating structure has five key components:

- RRI Executive Team, responsible for implementing the business and operating plans of the Institute.
- RRI EMCR Council, providing input, perspectives, and advice to the RRI Executive Team and RRI Director.
- A matrix for research leadership, where the Foundation Science Streams support the Accelerator Programmes.
- A future Scientific Advisory Group.
- A future Community Reference Group.

The RRI Executive Team's role is to oversee the Institute's activities and overall performance to ensure it achieves its objectives. Members of the RRI Executive Team, individually and as a committee, support the Director to lead, direct, coordinate, and control the operations and performance of the Institute. The Executive Team will convene regularly to fulfil its responsibilities and to share information on significant current or emerging issues.

The RRI Executive Team is small, with a balance of relevant skills, influence, and responsibility. Chaired by the Director, it comprises: RRI Deputy Director, Clinical Research for clinical partner background and deputising in the Director's absence; RRI Institute Manager for operational, administrative, and planning perspectives; four senior research leaders; and the elected representative of EMCR Council.

The Early- and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCR) Council facilitates engagement by EMCRs and HDR students across RRI to support leadership and coordination of the Institute's strategic plan and research structure, as well as driving programs for career development.

The research portfolio is managed by the Research Leadership–Co-Leads of the

Accelerator Programmes and Foundation Science Streams through a matrix design that requires strong foundation science.

It is envisaged that in the Plan's second 'Accelerate' phase a Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) will be established. SAG will provide recommendations with respect to science trends and strategies, new technologies, and scientific excellence and research integrity. This will be joined by a Community Reference Group, which will provide advice with respect to priorities, specifications, and engagement, building on existing initiatives established by our partners to avoid duplication.

How are we supported?

Key professional support services will be provided by the Institute and University at a level to be agreed that will define the resources and responsiveness of services provided. Such agreement is essential if RRI is to perform as a centre of excellence – excellent science must be supported by competitive and responsive professional services. Examples of such services are:

- Grant application and management
- Consortia agreements
- Legal negotiations and agreements
- Business development and commercialisation
- Promotion, fund raising and philanthropy.

RRI's technology platforms will be managed on a case-by-case basis in partnership with the University.

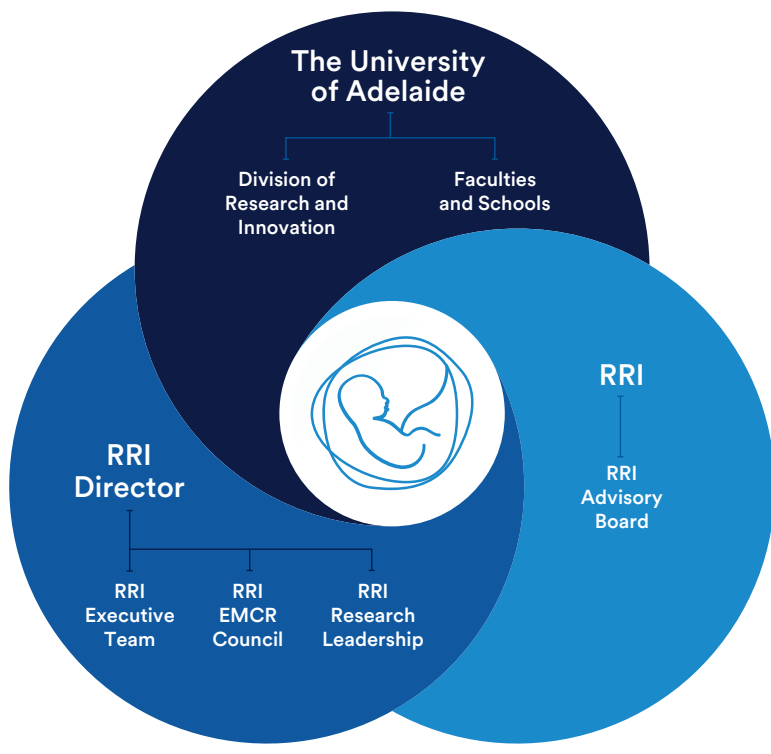


Figure 4. RRI governance structure

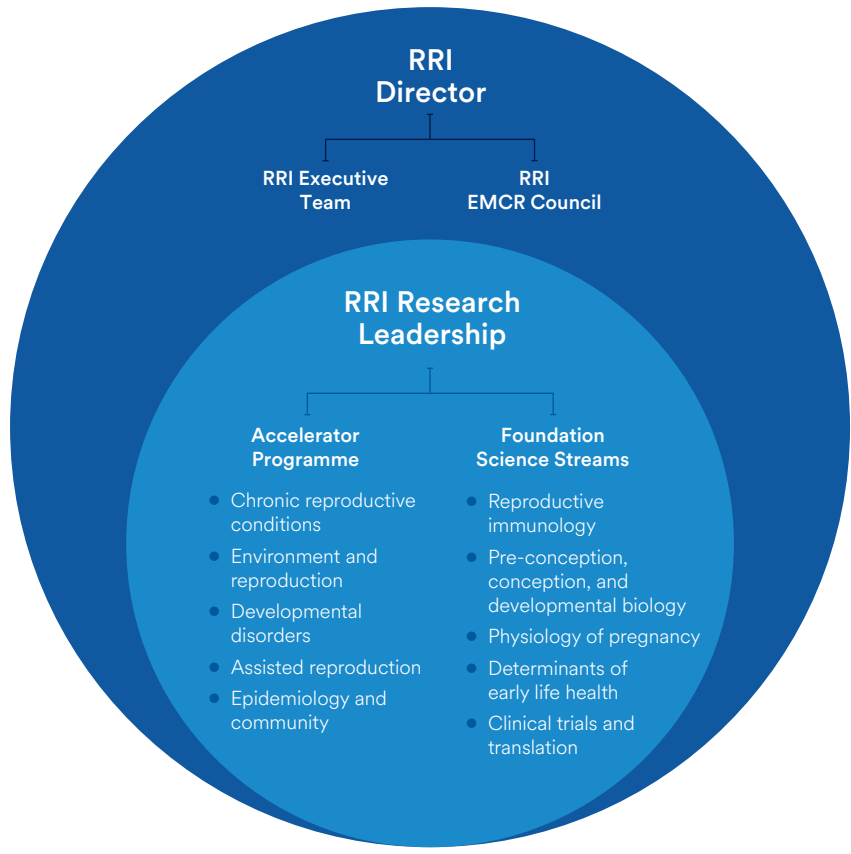
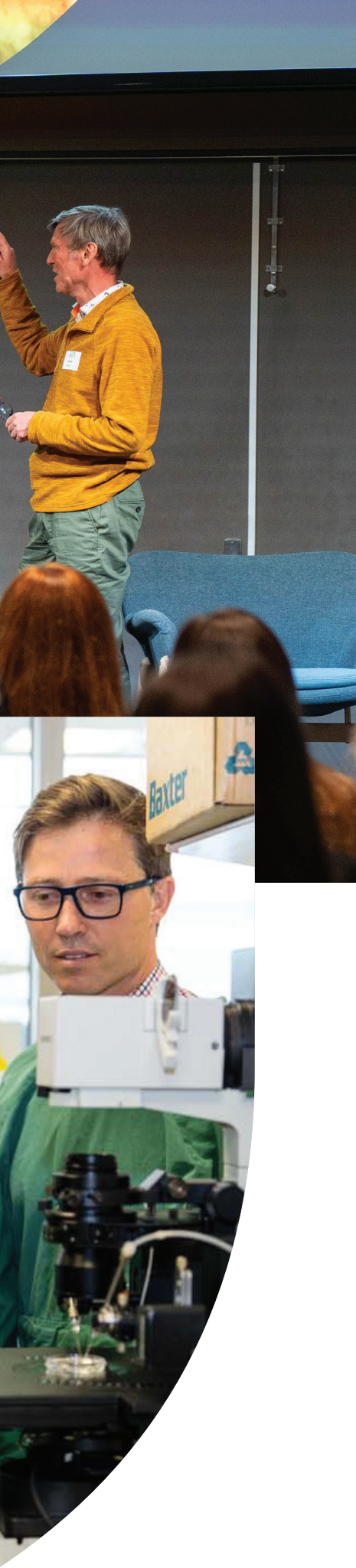


Figure 5. RRI operating structure





12. Institute membership

RRI depends on a dedicated and engaged membership with a dynamic environment of active collaborations, driving impactful research that harnesses its strengths to tackle significant reproductive health challenges.

Membership framework

RRI membership is open to colleagues from any academic or clinical background, provided their interests align with a shared commitment to RRI's impactful research portfolio, and contribute to the objectives of our Accelerator Programmes and Foundation Science Streams.

There are three categories of membership:

Full Members are active University of Adelaide researchers whose primary research aligns closely with RRI's strategic mission and research agenda. It includes academic staff, academic status holders, early- and mid-career researchers, and HDR students whose work is central to the Institute's focus.

Associate Members are researchers (internal or external) whose work intersects with RRI's focus but who do not meet the criteria for Full Membership. It includes academic staff, research support personnel, and HDR students who engage in specific RRI-led projects, co-authorship of papers, or shared HDR supervision.

Affiliate Members are external researchers, collaborators or professionals whose primary research is not tied to RRI but aligns with the Institute's research agenda and mission, and who can support its broader goals. It includes honorary or adjunct appointments, emeritus faculty, industry partners, and collaborators from other academic institutions or sectors.

Charter of Membership

A new Charter of Membership will outline mutual expectations, commitments and benefits between RRI and its members. Membership requires a genuine commitment to RRI's goals, purpose, and objectives, ensuring alignment with RRI's vision. Adherence to the Charter is a prerequisite for membership and eligibility for RRI support.

Membership Policy

The RRI Membership Policy will provide guidance for the levels of membership and will define the application process, membership terms, member benefits and expectations, and maintenance of the Membership database.

13. Strategic alignment with the University of Adelaide and performance indicators

The RRI Strategic Plan has been developed to be congruent with the University of Adelaide's revised strategy in anticipation of the creation of Adelaide University.

RRI's priorities are aligned with the key reference documents:

- Draft Adelaide University Personal and Societal Health Research Strategy 2026 – 2034
- University of Adelaide Research Institutes and Centres Procedures 20241002/ F.2022/8052
- Future Making: Preparing for a new era of history making - Strategic Plan update 2024-2025
- FAME Strategies.

With reference to Future Making, the RRI Strategic Plan builds on the vision to be known as a thought leader and catalyst for innovation and knowledge creation. RRI plans to develop a world-leading position in reproductive medicine and healthy pregnancy that can have an impact locally and globally. This involves leveraging university research to create lasting collaborations driven by interdisciplinary synergies. Translation, working with the community and industry, and impact are drivers of RRI's plan. The benefit to the University will be enhanced reputation for significant contributions to health outcomes, improved international rankings, and additional revenue.

RRI is committed to the values expected by the University – integrity, respect, collegiality, excellence, discovery. The new Strategic Plan focuses on building a stronger culture by enhancing our leadership capabilities and integrity across all levels of our organisation, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among our members and students. The principles of the FAME Strategy – excellence, equity, collaboration, differentiation, convergence, talent – are central to our Plan.

The RRI Strategic Plan is integrative, using interdisciplinary and systems approaches to solve big societal health problems. The thinking and ambitions

are therefore driven by big data and technology convergence. Our planned Accelerator Programmes are similar in intention to the University's proposed Grand Challenges leveraging existing research strengths and critical mass, such in reproduction and pregnancy health, to address the serious problem of the future of fertility and healthy reproduction

Our plan anticipates strengthening our already strong collaborations with the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML) and the Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing (IPAS). This can happen at institute and individual researcher level. We also see many potential synergies working with the Environmental Institute (EI), as well as South Australian Immunogenomics Cancer Institute (SAiGENCI) with respect to interface with SA Health, SA Pathology, and the LHNs, as well as systems biology and convergent technologies.

Importantly, RRI as a world-class research and translation institute, will provide the University of Adelaide with enhanced:

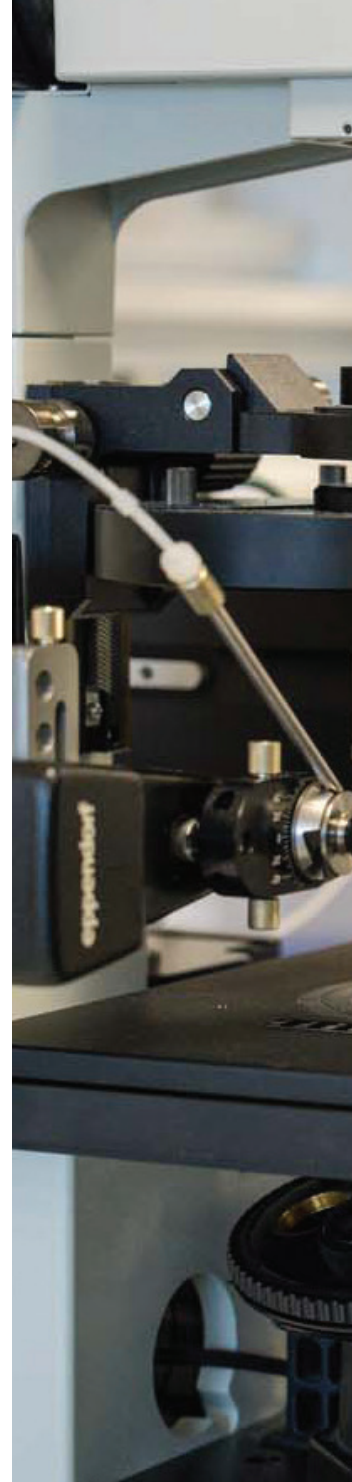
- Global connectivity, network synergies and recognition
- Talent attraction and retention
- Future-shaping research and status
- 21st-century education opportunities linked to one of the greatest challenges for humanity
- Community engagement through discussion and partnering for impact
- Equally valuing discovery, translation, clinical and community/population inputs
- A systems approach to solving deep healthcare challenges.

Performance assessment and metrics

To guide and confirm our progress, we will implement a performance management system based on a balanced scorecard approach to reflect our journey. The balanced scorecard will be used as a reference point for performance,

individual and collective, productivity, and value for money. This scorecard will reflect our unique mission and strategic commitment for the next five years. In developing this scorecard, we will incorporate the following perspectives:

- Metrics important for the University to demonstrate education, research, and translation excellence.
- Measures to assess our relationships internally, and with partners and stakeholders.





- Quantitative descriptions and stories demonstrating impact, locally, and more broadly.

The associated Implementation Plan will prioritise items included in the following scorecard performance areas:

- Scientific impact
- Translation and innovation
- Economic and societal impact
- Funding and resource management

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Learning and capacity building
- Public engagement and awareness
- Quality and ethics.

Key issues for implementation

The Implementation Plan will ensure that the approach to a balanced scorecard considers:

- Alignment with strategic objectives

- Incorporation of stakeholder insights
- Balance between quantitative and qualitative metrics
- Ensuring adaptability
- Integrating with existing systems
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement
- Regular review and reporting.

14. Risk management

Risk management is a fundamental mechanism to enable the Institute to achieve its objectives and deliver outcomes because RRI operates in a dynamic environment that causes uncertainties.

At the University of Adelaide, risk management is a shared responsibility across the governance committees, executive managers, local areas, and staff. RRI manages risk as set out in the University's Risk Management Framework.

Specific risks

As for other medical research institutes the main practical risks that RRI could face are:

- Research – scientific integrity and research misconduct, poor study design and execution, conflict of interest and bias in industry-sponsored research, and publication ethics.
- IP and disclosure – lack of capture of IP and early disclosure.
- Communication – reputational damage through individual comment linked to RRI, including public comment that breaches of confidentiality obligations and misuse of professional opinion.
- Animal rights activism – experimentation on animals will be kept to a minimum in accordance with Animal Research Ethics Committee regulations.
- Data – data security, access, and storage will be managed in accordance with University requirements.

- Strategic business risks – including increasing competition from other research organisations, failure to adapt to technological advancements in methodologies, inability to secure strategic partnerships and collaborations, and lack of diversity of income streams.

Research risk management

The University of Adelaide has a robust system in place for overseeing research activities and ensuring compliance with ethical and scientific standards.

All research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Adelaide's rules, regulations, and guidelines, which are set out in the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy. The Office of Research Ethics, Compliance, and Integrity (ORECI) provides resources, advice, and assistance to University personnel regarding their ethics and research compliance obligations.

All research will be conducted according to NHMRC guidelines and specifically:

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

This commitment will ensure that research conducted by RRI, whether publicly or privately funded, will be at the highest standard of quality and integrity.

Risk management governance and accountability

The RRI Director is responsible for the Institute's risk management and compliance, with the Institute Manager supporting oversight and accountability for compliance with operational standards set by the University of Adelaide.

The RRI Advisory Board has Risk Management as a standing agenda item with risk assessments considered before starting collaborative research projects. The RRI Executive Team will regularly review and update the risk assessment process as new risks may emerge.



15. Implementation plan

The Strategic Plan is supported by a comprehensive Implementation Plan that will guide initial implementation and prioritise activities over the next five years.

As RRI expands and develops new initiatives in collaboration with partners and the community, the operation will adapt accordingly. The RRI Executive Team will establish priorities, allocate resources, and set timelines for implementing the numerous improvement strategies and actions identified through consultations with research leaders, clinicians, and EMCRs. This includes evolution of the culture to support a more outwardly focused, ambitious, and entrepreneurial approach. A key role for RRI's Executive Team is to empower members to actively participate in bold initiatives and partnerships through the Accelerator Programmes and beyond the academic realm.

Preparing for uncertainty

Whilst planning is key to successful operations, we can't always predict the challenges that we will face. A crucial aspect of this Plan involves preparing for unforeseen challenges and opportunities. This includes:

- Taking a leadership role in proposals involving consortia
- Engaging in cross-jurisdictional initiatives
- Collaborating with industry partners
- Pursuing impact philanthropy.

These endeavours are inherently complex and require flexibility, strong networks, and multiple options ('shots on goal'). This requires having agile and dynamic leadership that can adapt and respond to the ever-changing landscape around us.

Network development

As RRI positions itself at the forefront of major developments in reproductive

medicine and healthy pregnancies, network development becomes critical. This approach involves a systems perspective on networking, recognising that various stakeholders have different yet overlapping networks, both professional and private.

Key stakeholder networks include:

- Research leaders
- EMCRs and students

- Clinicians
- Professional services
- Patients and community
- Industry
- Philanthropy.

By fostering these diverse networks, RRI aims to create a robust ecosystem that supports its strategic objectives and enhances its ability to drive innovation and impact in the field of reproductive health.



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Kaurna acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people, the original custodians of the Adelaide Plains and the land on which the University of Adelaide's campuses at North Terrace, Waite, and Roseworthy are built. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs. The University continues to develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with all Indigenous peoples in Australia, and with other Indigenous peoples throughout the world.