

RACGP Research Strategy

2025–2029



RACGP
Royal Australian College
of General Practitioners



RACGP Research Strategy – 2025–2029

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.



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Strategy on a page

The *RACGP Research Strategy 2025–2029* outlines a comprehensive plan for fostering high-quality general practice research in Australia.

Aim

To build a supportive environment and infrastructure for ethical and high-quality general practice research and translation – enhancing education, policy and practice, and strengthening the profession.

Context

High-quality research in general practice is critical for effective education, policy, and healthcare delivery in Australia. However, general practice research is underfunded and under-resourced compared to other specialties.

Role of RACGP

The RACGP will take a leadership role by working closely with our stakeholders to progress general practice research. We will do this by strengthening research and research culture, and using findings to inform RACGP advocacy, policy, guidelines, education, resources and programs. We will also support the translation of research findings into actionable practice.

Strategic alignment

In line with the RACGP Strategy 2025–2029,¹ the overarching goal is to ‘ensure a strong general practice profession that keeps Australia healthy.’ It aligns with the priority to cultivate and lead a culture of research in general practice, with the result that members will value the growth in research that is relevant and directly translates back to innovation in general practice.

Core goals

- **Research** – General practice research output is increased
- **Translation** – Research is translated into practice within RACGP and across general practice

Enablers

- **Funding** – Funding is increased for general practice research and translation
- **Culture** – A culture that values and supports research and translation is built and sustained within the RACGP and across the profession
- **Data and Infrastructure** – National infrastructure is developed and maintained to support general practice research and translation
- **Policy setting** – Policy settings are established that enable the growth of general practice research and translation
- **Education and training** – RACGP education and training builds research literacy and translation skills
- **Capacity** – GPs and practices are supported to lead, contribute to and translate general practice research

RACGP support

This strategy also defines the internal supports needed to deliver this work, including RACGP resources, advocacy and research priorities.

Values

The strategy is grounded in nine values that guide our activity and decision-making: person-centredness, ethical research, cultural safety, strategic alignment, GP leadership, collaboration, equitable research and processes, community benefit, and innovation.

Implementation

The RACGP will deliver this strategy in partnership with the RACGP Expert Committee – Research, supported by teams across the organisation. Progress and impact will be reported regularly to the RACGP Board.

Introduction

General practice needs high-quality research to inform education, policy and practice. This is a critical part of building a strong profession that keeps Australia healthy. But general practice research remains limited compared to other specialties. Key barriers include lack of funding, limited infrastructure and insufficient support.

The RACGP has an important role to play in changing this. We're committed to fostering high-quality general practice research and bringing it to life. This strategy sets out how we will work with the general practice community to build the systems, environment and infrastructure to support and translate research.

This strategy supports our Strategic Plan 2025–2029 priority to '*cultivate and lead a culture of research in general practice*'. By 2029, we want our members to value 'the growth in research that is relevant and directly translates back to innovation in general practice,' which will help build a future-ready sector.

The RACGP is well-positioned to lead this work. We can shape the future of general practice, enhance the evidence base, support collaboration, and influence policy and funding decisions. We can nurture the next generation of GP researchers and enable translation of research into practice to benefit the communities we serve.

This strategy is not just for researchers. It is for our members, our staff, the broader general practice and primary healthcare community. It's for general practice academics, research supporters, research participants and clinicians who use their findings in their day-to-day work. It's for our profession and the communities we care for.

To succeed, we all need to work together across the profession to develop opportunities for collaboration, increase high-quality and relevant research and translate evidence into action that improves the health of all Australians.



Background

Role of general practice research

General practice research is diverse. It covers patient care, population health, the healthcare workforce, service delivery, systems, and professional education. This research delivers essential evidence to inform policy and practice.

Research takes place in a range of settings – including general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, rural health services, and education settings. It must consider the varied context in which general practice operates across Australia.

There is a wide range of research priorities in general practice.² However, the field has less research capacity and output than other specialties due to longstanding substantial challenges. These include:^{3–4}

- limited funding to support general practice research and translation
- limited pathways for general practitioner (GP) academics
- restricted access to high-quality data held in general practice
- limited support and infrastructure to enable GPs and practices to engage in research.

Every year, 22 million Australians see a GP for essential health care,⁵ making GPs the most accessed health professionals in the country. GPs provide person-focussed care managing physical and mental health, acute and chronic conditions, and preventive health – all shaped by the social determinants of health.⁴

Many important research questions are unique to general practice, where patients often present with early and/or undifferentiated disease and multiple co-morbidities. These patients are frequently excluded from interventional, disease-specific studies conducted in tertiary settings, meaning the findings may not be applicable to general practice.^{3,6–8}

Research that reflects this complexity and uses real-world general practice data is critical. It ensures GPs have access to evidence, tools and guidelines that are relevant to their patients, ultimately benefiting communities.⁴

RACGP commitment to research

The RACGP is committed to supporting general practice research. This commitment is reflected in our purpose, which identifies education, training and research as core activities.

We support the development of rigorous and ethical general practice research and translation across Australia by:

- enabling research and translation for members and for internal and external stakeholders
- building an internal culture, capacity and systems that facilitate evidence-based decision-making and advocacy, contribute to the training of GP clinician-researchers, and support continuous quality improvement across all RACGP activities.

The RACGP has invested in research since its inception. We have had a dedicated research committee since 1958 and established a Foundation to provide funding and support for general practice research.

Across our Advocacy, Policy and Research and Education and Training business units, dedicated team members lead programs that build research capacity, capability and culture with a shared vision to grow research and translation across the profession.

We also invest in internal capability in evaluation and medical education research to support and continually improve our education and training programs. We work in partnership with our general practice academic community, who are key collaborators in this work.

Our Strategic Plan 2025–2029 envisions a ‘future-ready profession’ where general practice drives the innovations that shape a healthy Australia. To achieve this, we’ve set a strategic priority to ‘cultivate and lead a culture of research in general practice’. This Research Strategy sets our direction to achieve this priority and positions us to achieve the stated outcome: that ‘members will value the growth in research that is relevant and directly translates back to innovation in general practice.’

Focus on general practice and general practitioners

At the heart of this strategy are GPs and the communities they serve. Research is already part of every GP’s work – whether that’s providing evidence-based care, leading a quality improvement project, recruiting patients for study, or conducting research themselves.

We acknowledge the competing demands and pressure on GPs, practices and primary healthcare teams. These pressures can make engaging in research challenging. This strategy aims to reduce and remove barriers, and provide better support for GPs and practices to:

- contribute to research priority setting
- participate in research and translation in their practices.

This is essential to generating high-quality, relevant evidence that makes a real-world difference.

GPs play a vital role in ensuring that research in – and about – general practice is planned, implemented and interpreted with an understanding of its complexity, diversity and unique context. GP leadership is a strong underlying principle of the strategy.

General practice research also benefits from multidisciplinary knowledge, experience and innovation emerging from collaboration with other primary healthcare academics, medical researchers and social scientists.

Maximising current opportunities

There are significant opportunities to build general practice research capacity in Australia. This strategy considers the broader national context – including the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) priorities for primary care research and the Australian government’s primary healthcare 10-year plan – both of which call for research and evidence to support policy and investment decisions.

It also reflects our organisational strengths and opportunities. We support and represent over 50,000 members across Australia. We support GPs at every stage of their career – from students and GPs in training, to New Fellows, mid-career and experienced GPs. We help GPs maintain their professional development, deliver world-class healthcare and improve the health and wellbeing of their communities. We are also the leading advocacy voice for general practice.

Because of this, the RACGP is well placed to align the goals of this strategy with the needs of general practice and the activities of the College.



The RACGP has recently released the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural and Health Training Framework*,⁹ reinforcing our commitment to recognising the rights and sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through real action. This strategy creates an opportunity to reflect that commitment in our research activity through tangible actions and measurable outcomes.

This strategy considers the broader stakeholder environment. Collaboration is key in achieving our strategy. We will continue working with GP academics, universities and research institutes, practice-based research networks (PBRNs), primary health networks (PHNs), National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (NACCHO) state affiliates, and other primary health care stakeholders to deliver, access and translate, high-quality evidence.

We will also continue to work with local, national and international experts and stakeholders to advocate for increased support and funding for general practice research in Australia and to ensure our work is grounded in the best evidence available.

Ultimately, this strategy provides a vision for the future. It demonstrates our commitment to building an environment where RACGP, our members, and the general practice community have the research they need to make a difference. Evidence-informed practice is key to a strong general practice profession that keeps Australia healthy. That is why the strategy places an increased focus on 'bringing research to life'.

The strategy

Strategy aim

Our aim is to build a supportive environment, systems, and infrastructure for ethical and high-quality general practice research and translation. This will strengthen education, policy, and practice, and help keep Australia healthy.

Strategy overview

This conceptual model (Figure 1) shows how the elements of our strategy connect and support one another.

In line with our Strategic Plan 2025–2029,¹ the overarching goal for the research strategy is to ‘ensure a strong GP profession that keeps Australia healthy.’

To achieve this, we must support the growth of general practice research and use this research to continuously innovate and improve RACGP advocacy, policy, guidelines, resources, education, programs and decision-making. We must also support the translation of research into general practice and across the broader primary healthcare system.

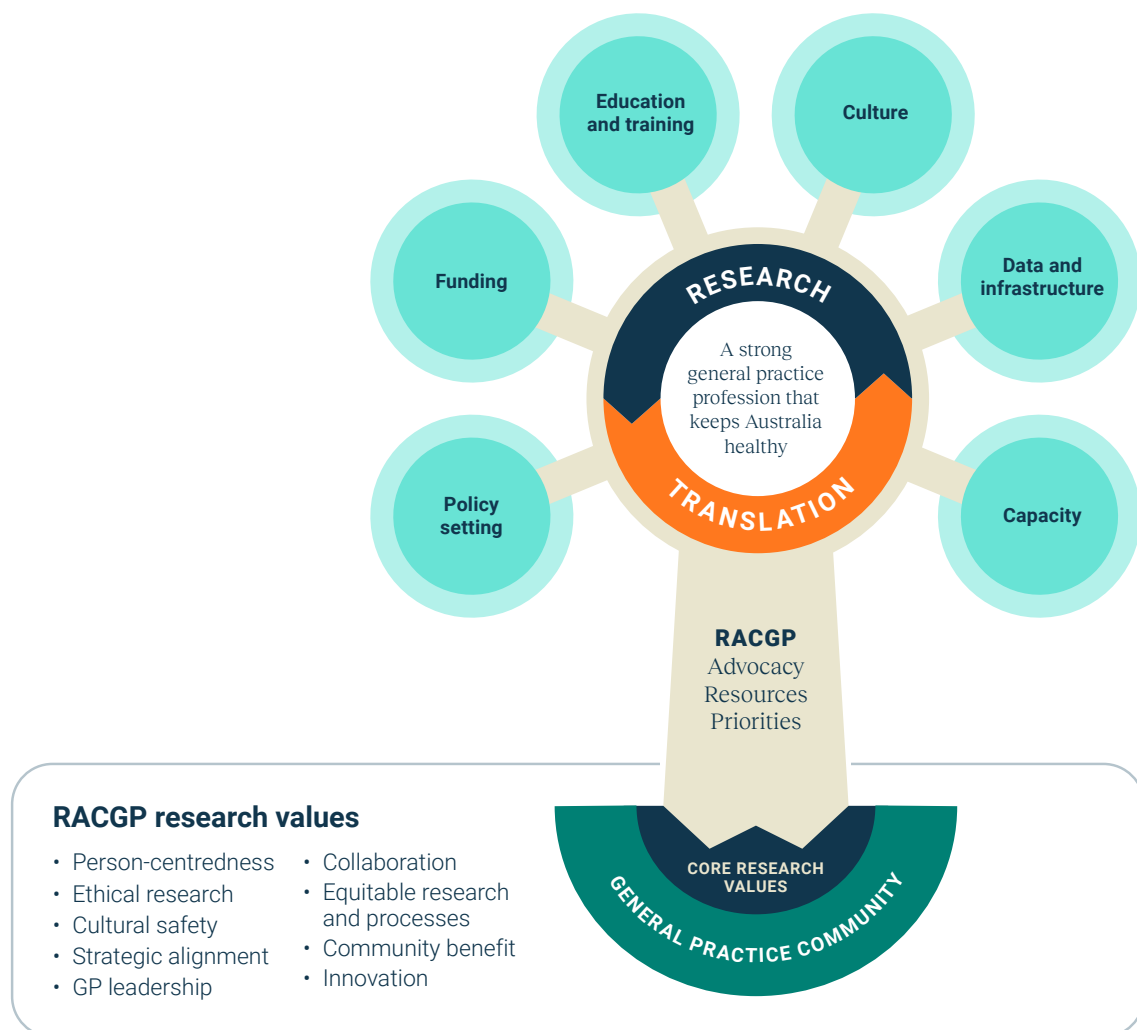


Figure 1. Conceptual model for research strategy

Core goals

The strategy is built on two core goals:

- **Research** – high-quality, relevant general practice research output is increased
- **Translation** – research is translated into practice within RACGP and across Australian general practice

Enablers

To achieve these core goals, we have identified six enablers. Each has a clear objective to guide the RACGP's focus:

- **Funding** – Funding is increased for general practice research and translation
- **Culture** – A culture that values and supports research and translation is built and sustained within the RACGP and across the profession
- **Data and Infrastructure** – National infrastructure is developed and maintained to support general practice research and translation
- **Policy setting** – Policy settings are established that enable the growth of general practice research and translation
- **Education and training** – RACGP education and training builds research literacy and translation skills
- **Capacity** – GPs and practices are supported to lead, contribute to and translate general practice research

RACGP support

We recognise that key supports must be in place within the RACGP to deliver this strategy effectively. This includes internal resources, advocacy and a clear set of research priorities.

Research values

This strategy is grounded in nine core research values. These values guide our activity and decision-making, and build on existing values of the RACGP. They are:

- person-centredness
- ethical research
- cultural safety
- strategic alignment
- GP leadership
- collaboration
- equitable research and processes
- community benefit
- innovation



The general practice community

Finally, this strategy exists to serve the general practice community and ultimately the health and wellbeing of all Australians, by building evidence to improve what we do.

We will engage with the general practice community to ensure research is needs-focused, high quality, and translated into practice.



Strategy goals and priorities

Core goals

Research

Goal	High-quality, relevant general practice research output is increased.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the development and delivery of high-quality, relevant general practice research across Australia• Undertake and collaborate on general practice education and training research and evaluation

Translation

Goal	Research is translated into practice within RACGP and across Australian general practice.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen RACGP systems and processes to support the efficient use of research and data to inform RACGP activity• Use education research and evaluation to continuously improve RACGP education and training• Support research translation initiatives in the general practice community

Enablers

Funding

Goal	Funding is increased for general practice research and translation.
Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for and develop a strategy to increase funding for general practice research and translation

Culture

Goal	A culture that values and supports research and translation is built and sustained within the RACGP and across the profession.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase understanding of the value of research and research opportunities through RACGP advocacy and communications• Increase the value and recognition of Australian general practice research internationally• Build internal RACGP culture and capacity to use evidence-based decision-making and quality improvement based on rigorous evaluation and research• Increase the visibility of research in RACGP events and publications

Data and Infrastructure

Goal National infrastructure is developed and maintained to support general practice research and translation.

- Priorities**
- Increase access to, and use of, high-quality general practice data for research
 - Support and advocate for networks that enable GPs and practices to engage in research and translation
 - Strengthen and coordinate RACGP collaboration and engagement with key general practice research stakeholders

Policy settings

Goal Policy settings are established that enable the growth of general practice research and translation.

- Priority**
- Advocate for state and national policy settings that support and enable the growth of general practice research and translation

Education and training

Goal RACGP education and training builds research literacy and translation skills.

- Priorities**
- Develop and deliver effective programs to improve GP trainee research literacy and participation
 - Improve opportunities for research education, participation and literacy for GP supervisors and medical educators
 - Opportunities for research education and literacy for GPs are improved
 - Promote a culture of academic critique and the use of evidence in general practice training

Capacity

Goal GPs and practices are supported to lead, contribute to and translate general practice research.

- Priorities**
- Provide early-career GP and GP registrar researchers with support and opportunities to develop their research careers
 - Support and promote academic GP career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and rural GPs
 - Support, develop and promote pathways into general practice and academic general practice for medical students and prevocational doctors
 - Continue to build GP capacity to lead research
 - Support GPs and practices to contribute to, support, and use general practice research



● RACGP support

RACGP resources, advocacy and research priorities

Goal RACGP resources, advocacy and research priorities are developed and maintained to focus and support the delivery of this strategy.

- Priorities**
- Strengthen RACGP internal research governance, structure, policy, systems, and processes to better enable delivery of this strategy
 - Monitor and evaluate this strategy
 - Support access to high-quality published evidence to inform research and translation
 - Implement and continuously review advocacy plans focused on funding and support for improving general practice research and translation
 - Embed systems to identify and regularly update research priorities, aligned with current general practice challenges and RACGP strategy and needs
 - Ensure research is inclusive of all Australian population groups

Research strategy values

Extending on the RACGP values of ethics, professionalism, progressive leadership and quality, the research strategy is also underpinned by the following values. These will serve as a compass for our decision-making as the strategy is implemented.

Value	Description
Person-centredness	Research is respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of participants – including GPs and practice teams, patients, their families, and communities. Researchers work in partnership with participants and their healthcare teams to share decisions, plan and deliver research in a way that builds trust and mutual respect.
Ethical research	All RACGP-supported research adheres to fundamental ethical principles, including those outlined in the <i>National Statement</i> . This includes transparency around the use and ownership of data and ensuring customers are informed about how their data is used and shared.
Cultural safety	<p>All research recognises and respects cultural identity, and is delivered in a way that meets the needs, expectations and rights of participants.</p> <p>This strategy aligns with the <i>RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural and Health Training Framework (2024)</i>. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research supported by the RACGP is community-led, empowers self-determination and reflects Indigenous values and ways of knowing, being and doing.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance is embedded in research design and implementation. Research must not proceed without community engagement and support. Data governance, sovereignty and intellectual property are respected, and communities retain access and control over their data.</p> <p>Research teams should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and evaluation experts. Ethical approval must be sought through culturally appropriate channels, in line with the <i>AIATSIS Code of Ethics</i> and state-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research accords.</p>
Strategic alignment	All research supported by the RACGP aligns with the College's strategy and research priorities.
GP leadership	GPs have a central role in delivering, planning and interpreting research conducted in or about general practice. GP leadership ensures research reflects the complexity and diversity of the general practice environment.
Collaboration	<p>RACGP values the multidisciplinary expertise of academics and stakeholders in primary care. We will work closely with universities, GP academics, practice-based research networks (PBRNs), Primary Health Networks (PHNs), and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to generate and translate high-quality evidence.</p> <p>Members, practices and communities are central to this work. We prioritise meaningful engagement and recognise the importance of involving consumers early to design research that meets community needs.</p>

Research strategy values (continued)

Value	Description
Equitable research and processes	<p>Research should reflect the diversity of the population and reduce health inequalities. Activities must consider people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds, genders and sexual orientations.</p> <p>RACGP policies and programs must support fair access to research opportunities – especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and rural researchers</p>
Community benefit	<p>Research should strengthen the general practice profession and training programs, and improve health outcomes. Activities should promote co-design, community involvement and transparency.</p> <p>Under-represented communities must have a voice in shaping research priorities and how findings are applied. Research should minimise environmental impact and consider sustainability in general practice.</p>
Innovation	<p>We recognise that research leads to new ideas, methods, products, services, or solutions with the potential to deliver meaningful value. The RACGP will have a future-focused approach to developing research priorities and programs.</p>

Implementing this strategy

The RACGP will work with the Expert Committee - Research (REC-R) and teams to deliver this strategy. An implementation plan and outcome metrics will be developed, with regular reporting to the RACGP Board to monitor progress and impact.



Acknowledgements

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We thank and acknowledge all of those who shared their time and expertise to contribute to the development of this strategy, representing a diversity of knowledge, experience and affiliations:

- General practitioners from across Australia
- University Departments of General Practice
- Rural Clinical Schools
- Practice-based research network (PBRN) managers
- GP academics and academic registrars
- Primary health care researchers
- RACGP Foundation partners
- Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care (AAAPC)
- Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)
- TROPHI leadership and stakeholder groups
- RACGP Expert Committees
- RACGP National Research & Evaluation Ethics Committee (NREEC)
- RACGP Expert Committee-Research 2021-24
- RACGP Expert Committee-Research 2024-27
- RACGP Board
- RACGP Evaluation, Quality & Research team
- RACGP GP Training Research team
- RACGP Specific Interest Council
- RACGP Faculty Chairs and Managers
- RACGP Executive Leadership team
- RACGP Education and Training teams
- RACGP Censor-in-Chief
- RACGP Advocacy, Policy & Research business unit
- Joint College Training Services team
- RACGP Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health team
- Other RACGP staff/teams

This strategy was approved by the RACGP Board at its March 2025 meeting.

For further information, please contact our team at research@racgp.org.au.

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