



## Australian Health Research Alliance

### Proposal for a National Women's Health Network to promote better health and equity through collaboration and partnership in research and translation

#### Background

The Australian Health Research Alliance (the Alliance) encompasses all National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) accredited Advanced Health Research Translation Centres (AHRTCs) and Centres for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRH). Unlike other advocacy groups and representative bodies, the Alliance is a single voice that reflects the perspectives of the health sector, health professionals and the community through a research and translation lens. Its vision is a health system fully informed by quality health and medical research.

The Alliance provides an unprecedented opportunity for collaboration at a national systems level to build capacity in priority areas, and cut across systems level challenges to integrate research, education and health care and improve health outcomes. It provides an ideal vehicle for bringing together a national network of multidisciplinary clinicians and researchers to advance the health of Australians. Current activities are underway within the Centres that can be shared and scaled. Furthermore, opportunities exist to establish priorities and to develop new national research and translation initiatives, engaging stakeholders, transcending silos and generating national impact.

There is currently a range of national research networks that cover areas including cardiovascular disease, cancer, stroke and many other areas of health. There is no national research network in maternal or women's health as a clear gap area.

There are significant opportunities for better health through collaborative research and translation in partnership in women's health. Effort is needed from preconception through pregnancy to postpartum life stages through adolescence, the reproductive years and post menopause to ageing. It is also recognised that health outcomes in groups at risk of disadvantage including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and those of lower socio economic status or living in regional and remote areas, are considerably poorer and require urgent attention.

#### Proposal for a Women's Health Network

AHRA member Centres bring together a network of multidisciplinary leaders committed to partnering with community and key stakeholders to identify and address research and translation priorities for improving the health of Australia's women across the lifespan. Opportunities also exist to build capacity amongst women at the community level and in research healthcare and translation. A national steering committee will be established and a Chair elected to develop and progress joint initiatives, linked to existing women's health themes in the individual centres.

With the national women's health policy to be revised over the coming months, and with women's health a priority area under the medical research future fund, this network is as an opportunity for all centres to work together collaboratively and strategically for greater impact.

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