

Tackling The Brain Challenges That Shape Our Lives



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Acknowledgement of Country

Neuroscience Research Australia respectfully acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we stand and pays its respects to Elders past and present.

On the cover: NeuRA's Associate Professor Emma Devenney with her patient, Amanda Aycliffe, who shares what NeuRA's research means to her and why she's involved on p. 13.

Inside front cover: Associate Professor Claire Shepherd is the Director of the Sydney Brain Bank at NeuRA, a research facility that collects, characterizes and stores brain tissue for research into neurodegenerative disease.

Welcome



In a society where dementia is now the leading cause of death, the research undertaken by NeuRA has never been more vital. The strategic direction set by the Board under Professor Matthew Kiernan's leadership positions the institute to confront this challenge directly, building the scientific capability

and partnerships needed to thrive in the years ahead.

Three years ago, I wrote in this report of NeuRA's "organisational renewal". Today, we are seeing the clear impact of that process. The development and launch of our new Research Strategy gives NeuRA a focussed set of missions that will guide, measure and continually refine our research efforts. We are clearer than ever about our goals, and how they evolve as science progresses.

The community can now see the tangible outcomes of that clarity: from clinical trials for emerging neurodegeneration therapies to our central involvement in major public information campaigns. These efforts are reinforced by deepening relationships within the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct and across industry, partners whose commitment is translating into concrete opportunities for impact.

This year, we were pleased to welcome Professor Georgina Hold, Director of Research at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, to the Board. Professor Hold brings deep knowledge of our work, having served on last year's external review panel that provided key recommendations for reshaping our research portfolio. Her expertise will be invaluable as we continue to implement those changes.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Professor Chris White and Dr Jo Karnaghan for their service upon stepping down from the board, as well as my fellow Directors for their continued time, energy and insight.


James MacNevin
Chair



Neuroscience is entering a new era. As brain and mental health challenges rise and healthcare shifts toward precision and prevention, NeuRA is uniquely positioned to lead the discoveries that will transform our understanding of the brain and how we protect it across the lifespan.

In 2025 we launched *NeuRA Forward 2025-2030*, an ambitious strategy that sets a clear direction for transformative research and deeper collaboration. Developed with insights from across our community and aligned with our constituent partners, UNSW & SESLHD, it strengthens our commitment to innovation, impact and research excellence.

Throughout the year we were proud to showcase the inspiring work our researchers undertake: from an insightful NeuRA Talk, *The Secrets of Super-Ageing*, to our central role in a groundbreaking dementia awareness campaign, *Think Again*, run by News Corp.

We also held our inaugural Industry Open Day, which brought together researchers, government, industry leaders and academic partners to accelerate ideas that can become real-world solutions. Moments like this highlight the power of collective vision in shaping the next frontier of brain health.

A key milestone this year was the signing of a new 10-year Affiliation Agreement with UNSW Sydney, reinforcing our partnership and creating further opportunities for aligned research and innovation. We also formed a partnership with NSW Health Pathology, expanding the potential offered by our position within the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct.

At a leadership level, we bid farewell to Executive Director for Professional Services Carole Renouf, who moved to the UK for family reasons. At the start of 2026 we appointed Andrew Finch and Tegan Cox to the newly created roles of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Research Officer. Both Andrew and Tegan bring deep experience and new perspectives, particularly as we implement our new research strategy and ensure NeuRA is well placed for the future.

I'm proud of what we have achieved together and while our vision is bold, I'm energised by what lies ahead.



Scientia Professor Matthew Kiernan AM
CEO and Institute Director

Research Strategy

Research to tackle brain health challenges and propel NeuRA Forward

Tackle society's increasing brain and mental health challenges, while embracing opportunities from precision and prevention: that's the focus of NeuRA's new research strategy.

NeuRA Forward was launched in 2025 with new missions underpinning the strategy for the Institute's next five years.

"Our research strategy, *NeuRA Forward 2025–2030*, is designed to tackle the brain health challenges that shape our lives," said NeuRA CEO, Professor Matthew Kiernan AM.

"The strategy is built on three key missions that are bold, ambitious goals, but it also outlines how we will pursue them and measure our success. It sets out a clear path towards clinical translation and ongoing real impact for our research.

"It ensures that NeuRA's relevance and impact will be profound and anchored to the needs of the communities we serve."

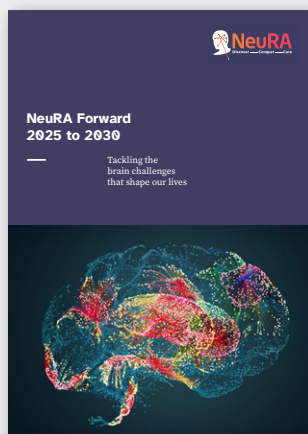
The strategy sets out three missions to focus the Institute's research. (1) Protect brain health across the lifespan and prevent loss of function; (2) Maximise brain function via the development of precision, science-based strategies that prevent loss of function and protect quality of life; and (3) Advance precision brain diagnostics using neuroscience, genomics, artificial intelligence and data-driven tools to detect problems earlier and predict health outcomes to enable personalised care.

"NeuRA's researchers are undertaking world-leading research in many areas, and these missions provide an opportunity to ensure we continue to conduct impactful research that tackles the current challenges in brain and mental health," Prof Kiernan said.

"Under Mission 1, you'll find our work on prevention, lifestyle and risk factors, while Mission 2 encompasses treatment and disease management.

"Mission 3 is about embracing precision diagnostics, including the opportunities offered by emerging technologies and the changes in healthcare."

Extensive consultation helped develop the new strategy, with input from research groups, external experts and representatives from partners like UNSW and the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.



Chief Research Officer, Tegan Cox, is working with NeuRA's research groups, staff and partners to implement the strategy. This includes positioning current research within the new missions and identifying new projects and opportunities to ensure NeuRA can continue to deliver impactful, world-class research.



Mission 1: Protecting Brain Health Across The Lifespan

Brain health is shaped from the earliest stages of life, and can be disrupted at any point by injury, disease or social determinants. From neurodevelopmental conditions and rare neurological disorders in childhood, to cognitive decline and dementia in ageing, many individuals live with unmet needs across their lifespan. While these challenges often go unrecognised or untreated, many aspects of brain health are shaped by modifiable risk factors that can be targeted to support early intervention and prevention. NeuRA is protecting and supporting brain health at every stage of life and working to prevent loss of function wherever possible.



Mission 2: Maximising Brain Function

Declining brain health from ageing, neurological disease, or mental health conditions often leads to loss of mobility, chronic pain, and reduced independence. NeuRA is committed to leading the development of precision, science-based strategies that prevent loss of function and protect quality of life. Our goal is to keep people active, safe, and thriving in the environments where they live and age.



Mission 3: Advancing Precision Brain Diagnostics

Despite advances in neuroscience, most brain and mental health care remains generalised and reactive. Conditions such as dementia, neurodegeneration, Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease and mental health disorders are often diagnosed too late and managed with one-size-fits-all approaches. We need to find smarter, more personalised solutions based on individual biology, clinical risk and lived context. NeuRA is leading a new era of precision brain health using neuroscience, genomics, artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven tools to detect problems earlier, and predict health outcomes to enable personalised care.



Dr Tertia Purves-Tyson is head of NeuRA's Preclinical Neuropsychiatry Laboratory.

Purpose

Transforming lives through medical research.

We are an independent, not-for-profit, medical research institute dedicated to improving the health and lives of people living with brain and nervous system disorders.

Impact



373

NeuRA staff



133

active research projects in 2025

32,286

times NeuRA research cited over past 5 years*

*2021-2025 SciVal 29/4/25



66

active human research projects in 2025



385

research publications in 2025

3,777

media mentions

352,000

NeuRA website visits

Increasing our impact



NeuRA and UNSW Sydney signed a new Affiliation Agreement in 2025.

Institute partnerships and collaborations to increase our impact

NeuRA has built a series of partnerships and alliances to be best equipped to address the brain health challenges that are rising rapidly in number, as well as to embrace new opportunities and continue to have global impact.

While NeuRA is proud to be an independent medical research institute, collaborations increase opportunity for impact.

“NeuRA stands at the forefront of brain research, driven by a mission to alleviate the burden of neurological and mental health conditions through innovation and collaboration,” said Institute Director and CEO, Professor Matthew Kiernan AM.

“We have a commitment to excellence and impact that is supported by strong partnerships with a range of institutes and sectors to allow us to rapidly translate discoveries into benefit for patients and the community more broadly.”

NeuRA’s position in the Randwick Health & Innovation Precinct allows for cross-precinct collaboration and connection, particularly with our foundational partners: the University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney), and the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD).

“Together, we are positioning Australia at the forefront of brain research and shaping the future of health for our communities,” said UNSW Vice-Chancellor Atila Brungs (pictured above, second from right).

“UNSW and NeuRA have a long history of delivering research that changes lives — from advances in dementia and mental health to the development of novel diagnostics and new treatment approaches. As we enter a new decade of collaboration under our 2026 Affiliation Agreement, we are strengthening a partnership built on world leading expertise and a shared commitment to translating discovery into real world impact.”

“Our relationship with NeuRA has helped deliver research in brain health, neurodegeneration, mental health and dementia that improves patient care, and that is the ultimate measure of its value,” said SESLHD CEO, Leisa Rathborne.

“As foundation partners, we are pleased to formalise our first partnership agreement with NeuRA. Moving forward together, in close partnership with NeuRA, we look forward to driving clinical and research outcomes through our collaborations as part of the Randwick Health & Innovation Precinct.”



Leisa Rathborne,
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District
Chief Executive



David Gonski AC,
Former UNSW
Chancellor

“NeuRA plays a key role on our campus and is integral to the success of our new 10-year strategy Progress for All, particularly as brain health has emerged as a key area of research and societal need,” said former UNSW Chancellor, David Gonski AC.

Our partnerships allow for many researchers to hold additional positions at these institutions, continuing their work as clinicians or academics and improving integration between clinicians, scientists and patients.

A partnership with NSW Health Pathology will advance genomic medicine by bringing together NeuRA's world-class research capabilities and NSW Health Pathology's experience in diagnostic science, with the Genetics Branch laboratory located at NeuRA to help drive innovation.

Industry partnerships are vital as NeuRA seeks to accelerate its work and translate it into benefits for patients and community. This includes working with

the pharmaceutical industry on new therapies and approvals, such as Teva and Roche Diagnostics.

“NeuRA has established a unique relationship with Roche that places NeuRA as Roche's Asia-Pacific Centre of Excellence for Alzheimer's disease diagnostics, clinician education and real-world evidence generation,” Prof Kiernan said.

“It connects NeuRA's world-leading neuroscience research with Roche's global diagnostic capabilities, creating an integrated platform that accelerates translation, strengthens national diagnostic readiness and positions Australia at the forefront of Alzheimer's innovation.”



Brian Hartzler,
CEO of
Quantum Health

The opportunities of artificial intelligence (AI) are also being explored in a partnership with Quantum, with aims of deepening and expediting medical research and supporting the transition from a 'one-size-fits-all' to personalised and precision treatment.

“As a global leader in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, we already have a number of alliances aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare through sophisticated analytics and actionable insights,” CEO of Quantum Health, Brian Hartzler said.

“Our collaboration with NeuRA is particularly exciting given its potential to help address some of society's most pressing challenges in brain health and neurodegeneration.”

NeuRA also maintains partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, community groups and

advocacy bodies. These relationships help ensure the voices of people with lived experience shape NeuRA's research, formalised through 'consumer panels', and further ensures relevancy and successful implementation of research findings, including shaping policy and informing clinical interventions.



Member for Coogee, Dr Marjorie O'Neill, with NSW Health Pathology's Director of Clinical Transformation, Professor Robert Lindeman, and NeuRA CEO Professor Matthew Kiernan AM

Future Focussed

Focussed on the future, through action now

A new next-generation philanthropy initiative has launched, with an aim of continuing to support NeuRA's research, and particularly the work of emerging neuroscientists.

A group of young philanthropists passionate about neuroscience research joined together to form NeuRA Next in 2025. Founding members Alexander Benze von Fritz, Sophie Utz, Lucas Hejtmanek, Emily Harris and Amelia de Haan have established the initiative focusing on events that attract their peers to the cause and showcase the work of NeuRA's early- and mid-career researchers.

Ms Utz said the committee recognised a widening generational gap in the philanthropic landscape, alongside an increasing prevalence of conditions impacting the brain and being researched by NeuRA.

"We wanted to empower a new generation of philanthropists and bring together people from diverse backgrounds to support NeuRA and its research," Ms Utz said.

"We are witnessing first-hand the impact of anxiety, depression, trauma on our peers. We are witnessing the cognitive decline of our loved ones and facing the long shadows cast by conditions like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. We are acutely aware of how brain health will shape the social, economic and personal realities of our future.



NeuRA Next members at their first event, which supported a PhD Pearl Scholarship.

"We want to help NeuRA realise its goals."

NeuRA Next's legacy has already begun, with funds raised to date supporting a PhD candidate through the Pearl PhD Program.

Undertaking a PhD is a big commitment, but for candidates like Martjie Venter, the Pearl Program provides extra support to advance their research.

A doctorate by research, or PhD, is the highest level of study in Australia involving a three-to-four-year self-directed research project and thesis on completion showing significant and unique contribution to their field.

The Pearl Program forges a personal relationship between NeuRA PhD candidates and philanthropists passionate about supporting the next generation of neuroscientists.

Motivated to change our brain health future

Catherine Fritz-Kalish AM is Co-Founder and Managing Director of Global Access Partners, a global network of over 4,000 members which initiates strategic debate on the most pressing social, economic and structural issues facing Australia. She joined the NeuRA board in 2024.

"I have become increasingly aware of the growing impact of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, on individuals, families and the health system,"

Ms Fritz-Kalish says of her decision to become a director of NeuRA.

"This is not an abstract issue for me. My husband's family has a history of early-onset dementia, and this made me want to contribute in any way I could to developing earlier detection of this disease and more effective interventions.

"My connection is also shaped by personal loss. A close family member died from brain cancer.

"Beyond these personal drivers, serving on the NeuRA board is an opportunity to support world-class neuroscience, help translate research into real-world

It provides support for the students, plus allows donors to invest in the future of research – and future research findings.

Ms Venter, a physiotherapist completing her PhD through NeuRA and the University of NSW, is working with Professor James McAuley in the Centre for Pain Impact, and has received the inaugural PhD Pearl Scholarship sponsored by NeuRA Next.

“I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be supported by the NeuRA Next Committee,” she said.

“Their generosity has made a meaningful difference to my ability to pursue my PhD research. The Pearl scholarship has provided me with funds to attend additional training courses in research methodology, as well as attend conferences to disseminate some of my results so far.

“These activities are crucial to being able to successfully answer important research questions and ultimately a successful research career. Without this funding it would be very difficult to do any of these activities, so I am appreciative and grateful for this opportunity.”

The scholarship will support Ms Venter as she continues her work researching implementation of a new treatment for chronic lower back pain, graded sensor motor retraining. This new treatment retrains a person’s nervous system, helping them move better, and ultimately improving their pain and function.



“I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be supported by the NeuRA Next Committee.”

Martjie Venter

PhD candidate, Martjie Venter, is being supported by a PhD Pearl scholarship sponsored by NeuRA Next.

“My research is focussing on the translation of evidence-based interventions for chronic low back pain to improve care for the people living with it,” Ms Venter said.

“Really there's not enough effective treatments for chronic lower back pain out there in clinical practice, and this is really frustrating for people who are in pain, but also for clinicians who want to help them. So, this is really what's driven me to research - to try to create some change.”

If you’re interested in finding out more about NeuRA’s PhD Pearl Program, please contact Charney Rooza, at c.rooza@neura.edu.au.

If you’re interested in NeuRA Next, visit website: www.neura.edu.au/get-involved/next.



impact and contribute to tackling some of the most pressing health challenges of our time.”

Ms Fritz-Kalish says NeuRA has the opportunity to play a leading role in addressing those health challenges.

“Australia is ageing fast, and since age is the strongest risk factor for dementia, an ageing population means the individual and community costs of dementia are

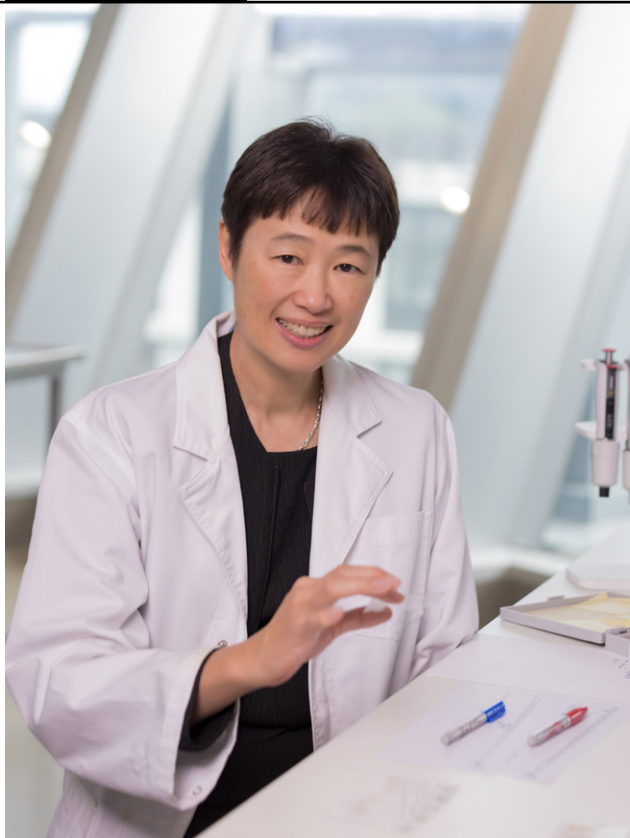
likely to keep rising unless prevention, diagnosis, and care improve,” she says.

“In that setting, NeuRA is valuable because its work is not limited to lab science, but to delaying onset, preserving independence, and reducing system-wide costs.

“Research organisations that can connect neuroscience with public health, ageing and real-world service design are therefore strategically important.

“Australia’s policy environment is now explicitly prioritising dementia. NeuRA helps supply the evidence base those policies need.”

Research Snapshot



Left: A new therapy trial to treat Parkinson's disease is underway, with Professor Carolyn Sue AM leading the Sydney site.
Right: Professor Jacqui Close is working to improve outcomes for people after a hip fracture.

Parkinson's disease

New stem cell treatment trial for Parkinson's disease

A global clinical trial for a new stem cell therapy to treat Parkinson's disease is underway, with Professor Carolyn Sue AM, the lead investigator for the Sydney site.

This is a Phase 3 clinical trial of a new stem cell therapy for BlueRock Therapeutics and Bayer that aims to target Parkinson's by directly replacing the old worn out brain cells with new ones, rather than just treating the symptoms.

More than 100 people are expected to participate in the trial globally, with 'baby brain cells' – or dopaminergic neuron precursors – surgically implanted in the brain of a person with Parkinson's. Once transplanted they have the potential to re-form neural networks affected by the disease and to potentially restore motor and non-motor function to patients.

A number of other Parkinson's research projects are also underway at NeuRA and researchers like Prof Sue are also undertaking advocacy roles and shaping policy.

Falls Prevention

Team shaping the future of falls prevention

Researchers in NeuRA's Falls, Balance and Injury Research Centre are shaping the future of falls prevention, through new technologies, advocacy and policy work.

A range of trials are underway at the Centre, including utilising technology to support falls prevention and working with specific patient cohorts of neurological disorders.

Professor Stephen Lord and Associate Professor Jasmine Menant updated the National Falls Guidelines to focus on improved falls prevention interventions and best practice recommendations for several settings. This work took five years, with the guidelines launched by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality Health Care.

The Australian New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry, which is managed by NeuRA and co-chaired by Professor Jacqui Close, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2025. It was noted the Hip Fracture Guidelines have improved patient outcomes, including a reduction in mortality.

Professor Kim Delbaere launched a clinically-validated falls prevention app, Standing Tall, and helped establish the Falls Prevention Alliance of Australia.



Left: Professor Kaarin Anstey is working to understand why more women than men are affected by Alzheimer's disease.
Right: NeuRA PhD candidate, Gerardo Mendez-Victoriano, has been exploring inflammation in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Neurodegeneration

Exploring the links between hormones and brain ageing

Professor Kaarin Anstey is deeply engaged in the links between women's hormones and brain ageing after being one of 17 teams funded under the \$50 million Wellcome Leap's CARE (Cutting Alzheimer's Risk through Endocrinology) program.

Prof Anstey and University of California Professor Kristine Yaffe will collaborate to identify why many more women than men are affected by Alzheimer's disease.

Their project will examine sex differences in common dementia risk factors, as well as female reproductive health factors and in relation to risk of late life Alzheimer's disease.

It's hoped the research may also shed light on how the various lifestyle factors known to affect dementia risk may affect men and women differently.

Prof Anstey is also working on a number of other dementia and ageing projects.

Schizophrenia

Improving understanding of brain inflammation in schizophrenia and bipolar disorders

Research exploring inflammation in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder is increasing understanding of the conditions and revealing potential new treatments.

Some people with schizophrenia and bipolar have overactive inflammatory signals in the part of the brain that creates dopamine, researchers have found. PhD candidate, Gerardo Mendez-Victoriano, who is in Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert's team, found the signals belong to a family of molecules called Tumour Necrosis Factor Superfamily, related to strong immune reactions and cellular death in the brain.

However, while inflammation in the brain is a component of both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, the same team has also found differences in immune cell activity. In both cases, immune cells are activated but the activation is different: in schizophrenia there is increased motility, while in people with bipolar there was a distinct, possibly suppressed, inflammatory state.

These findings suggest that anti-inflammatory treatments may help a specific subgroup of patients with high inflammation but would need to be tailored differently for each condition.



Left: NeuRA Quest Scholars and Associate Professors Julia Lappin and Emma Devenney will run the Optimising Brain Health from Midlife (OBHM) Clinic. Right: Paediatric neurologist Professor Michelle Farrar has joined NeuRA as a Quest Scholar.

NeuRA Quest Scholars set to solve brain health challenges

NeuRA's researchers are working to tackle brain health challenges across the lifespan and three accomplished researchers have joined the ranks to accept that mission and share their expertise.

Professor Michelle Farrar and Associate Professors Julia Lappin and Emma Devenney were appointed NeuRA Quest Scholars following an innovative recruitment program.

NeuRA CEO and Institute Director, Professor Matthew Kiernan AM, said the researchers had demonstrated potential and a commitment to making a difference in the world of brain health.

Prof Farrar is a paediatric neurologist, who will also continue roles at UNSW Sydney and the Sydney Children's Hospital Network.

"With technological advances we now have an opportunity to modify underlying disease mechanisms rather than manage symptoms and increase the number of therapies for children with neurological conditions," she said.

"We will be testing new ways to treat neurological conditions in clinical trials, investigating pathways for timely diagnosis that allow health issues to be addressed early and developing new biomarkers to allow tailoring of treatments for children."

Assoc Prof Lappin is NeuRA's first clinical psychiatrist and will also continue her appointments at UNSW Sydney and the Prince of Wales Hospital.

"My work will approach brain health, that is, both mental and cognitive health, through a neuropsychiatric lens, to better understand how issues such as mental health difficulties, sleep disruption, early life adversity and lifetime trauma, impact healthy brain aging from midlife, including in women experiencing peri/menopause," she said.

Neurologist Assoc Prof Devenney is an NHMRC Early Career Fellow and Principal Investigator on the DIAN Study (Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer Network).

"My work focuses on identifying and understanding biomarkers to improve diagnosis and monitoring of neurodegenerative diseases," Assoc Prof Devenney said.

"I aim to strengthen collaborations across biomarkers, psychiatry and industry partners to optimise trial efficiency and expand access to emerging therapies. Our team hope to identify the overlap between neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric conditions and contribute to more timely and effective interventions."

Assoc Prof Lappin and Assoc Prof Devenney are also working together to establish the Optimising Brain Health from Midlife (OBHM) Clinic.

NeuRA Quest remains active, with the institute committed to attracting new talent to help deliver projects that support the research strategy, *NeuRA Forward 2025-2030*.

Research makes Amanda feel like the ‘luckiest chick alive’

Amanda Aycliffe says she’s “the luckiest chick alive”, which may sound extraordinary with the knowledge that she carries a gene which means she’s almost certain to develop Alzheimer’s Disease.

The reason she says that is because more than 20 years ago, when testing confirmed the gene had been passed down from her father, Amanda assumed the clock was ticking rapidly for her cognitive health. Her father and her uncle had both displayed symptoms of dementia in their late 40s and passed away in their 50s.

But then, as she says, “I discovered NeuRA” – and that’s why she believes she’s lucky.

For years Amanda has been part of the Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer’s Network, a worldwide research study whose Sydney base is at NeuRA and which targets genetic Alzheimer’s before symptoms appear.

Regularly Amanda packs her bags from her home in Newcastle for a week in Sydney – visiting NeuRA daily to give samples of her blood and spinal fluids, take part in scans and undertake a variety of testing under the care of Associate Professor Emma Devenney, NeuRA Quest Scholar and Principal Site Investigator for DIAN. With volunteers around the world following suit, all of it creates

an unprecedented, longitudinal body of research tracking changes in the biomarkers of people almost certain to develop Alzheimer’s.

Tracking those changes could also lead to developments in treating the disease in the general population. To that end, Amanda has also been part of a series of drug trials, to try to prevent the changes in the brain that cause the disease from taking hold.

“Now I’m 56, I’m a mum of three, a grandmother to five with another grandchild on the way and I live a very full, very active life,” she says.

“When I got my (genetic) result, I was devastated. I thought my life would end early. I thought I wouldn’t see my children grow up, get married, or have families of their own.

“Then I realised I had a choice. I could fall in a heap or I could stand up and live every minute I was given. That’s when NeuRA came into my life.

“NeuRA’s researchers are extraordinary. They’ve given me confidence and given my family reassurance. And they’ve given us something incredibly precious; time.”

“Then I realised I had a choice. I could fall in a heap or I could stand up and live every minute I was given. That’s when NeuRA came into my life.”



Amanda, with her husband David, during a visit to NeuRA.

Research Snapshot



Left: Professor Tony Roscioli is a clinical geneticist whose PreGen study has supported families with genomic testing.
 Right: Professor George Paxinos AO and Dr Steve Kassem are advancing paediatric neurology through the Child Brain Atlas.



Genomic testing

Pre-Gen: Helping deliver answers in pregnancy

Pregnancy is an exciting time for many, but for others uncertainty about genetic conditions can be stressful.

Physical problems are present in 2-3% of pregnancies and can cause health conditions for a baby. Some of these differences are due to genetic events, but it has been historically difficult to identify the genetic cause prior to birth until relatively recently.

Prenatal genomic testing tries to identify the cause of health problems associated with genetic conditions in pregnancy. The PreGen study, led by NeuRA's Professor Tony Roscioli, has provided funded genomic testing for families who have abnormalities identified through ultrasound in pregnancy from hospitals around Australia to better understand their needs.

Families were asked about their hopes and expectations for genomic testing, how they found the testing process and also permission to analyse their health costs.

The PreGen study will help clinicians understand the best way to care for families who have genomic testing in pregnancy and an application for a Medicare item number for prenatal genomic testing has been submitted.

Brain mapping

World-first Child Brain Atlas improves research and clinical care

The Child Brain Atlas developed by NeuRA researchers has delivered the highest resolution images of the child brain in the world.

The atlas details brain structure, function and connectivity, which will improve research and clinical care.

NeuRA Senior Research Fellow, Dr Steve Kassem, in the Paxinos Brain Mapping Lab, is leading the project that has required development of new MRI protocols to assist with the shorter attention spans of children. Coupled with the improved quality and resolution offered by modern MRI, this has delivered strong results, with the team now working to expand the project.

Previously 'scaled-down' deductions of an adult brain have often needed to be used, with the new images allowing comprehensive investigation of brain structures, which will help advance paediatric clinical care and interventions through investigation of child brain anatomy.



Left: Director of the Centre for Pain Impact, Professor James McAuley, and the team are working to improve outcomes for people with chronic pain, including low back pain. Right: NeuRA Senior Research Fellow and Gammilaraay Woman, Dr Chontel Gibson, is working with older Aboriginal people and their communities on strengths-based models of care.

Chronic Pain

Understanding and improving low back pain treatments

Low back pain is a leading cause of disability globally, but the Centre for Pain IMPACT is working to improve patient outcomes. The brain and central nervous system generate and maintain pain, with researchers improving our understanding of pain mechanisms, what treatments work and develop new treatments to improve patient outcomes.

Dr Aidan Cashin found that only one in 10 common treatments for low back pain is effective, and many offer pain relief that's barely better than placebo. An NHMRC Investigator Grant will support Dr Cashin's work to improve care for chronic pain, implementing effective treatments and reducing medicine-related harms.

Professor James McAuley said while the term low back pain is often used, there are three main types – acute, subacute and chronic low back pain – which all required different treatments. An MRFF grant will support Prof McAuley to compare the effectiveness of graded sensorimotor retraining – developed by his team – with current best practice supervised exercise.

Aboriginal Ageing

Strengths-based approach for older Aboriginal wellbeing

Improved health, wellbeing and quality of life for older Aboriginal people and their communities is the focus of a new project from NeuRA's Aboriginal Health and Ageing team.

Senior Research Fellow and Gamilaraay woman, Dr Chontel Gibson, said “Co-designing and integrating older Aboriginal voices into strengths-based models of care” would listen to and work with older Aboriginal people to develop an evidence-based national guideline for health and aged care services.

The project, supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council, uses a strengths-based model developed by, with and for Aboriginal Elders, older Aboriginal people and their communities.

Dr Gibson said the model reflects Aboriginal wisdom, helps people listen respectfully and communicate appropriately, while the guideline would give service providers a practical framework to implement it in everyday practice

Corporate Partnerships



Left: Researchers like Dr Bianca Albanese and Byron Panos are improving road safety and shaping public policy. Right: NeuRA's Professor Caroline Rae with the Philips MRI scanner.

Transurban supporting road injury reduction

Research from the Transurban Road Safety Centre at NeuRA continues to shape policy and improve outcomes for motorists.

As Australia's first research-dedicated crash test lab, the Centre is a state-of-the-art facility producing world-class research and has been supported by a partnership with Transurban.

Researchers have undertaken work across a range of areas, including child restraint systems, older drivers, passenger safety, motorcycle safety and more. The work has shaped improvements to the use and effectiveness of child restraints, advice to older drivers about how to protect themselves behind the wheel, and exploring motorcycle design to reduce injury in crashes.

Research findings are provided to Australian regulatory bodies and motorists associations to inform the development of regulations and assist road users.

Unlocking Ultra-High-Resolution MRI with Philips

NeuRA Imaging's capability has been enhanced with the upgraded Philips MRI scanner now supporting research across the Institute.

The facility, under the leadership of Professor Caroline Rae, has a long-term collaborative relationship with Philips leading to advancements in imaging and research benefits.

The new technology, a Philips Ingenia CX 3T MRI Scanner, is state-of-the-art and is boosted by SmartSpeedPrecise, a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology that unlocks ultra-high-resolution 3-Tesla imaging.

NeuRA Imaging is among the first research centres in Australia to implement this technology which dramatically boosts image quality and scanning efficacy.

Improving genome sequencing with Oxford Nanopore

Implementing next-generation precision diagnostics is the aim of a partnership between UK-based Oxford Nanopore Technologies and NeuRA, which was signed in late 2025.

The agreement, which builds on NeuRA's alliance with NSW Pathology, is a collaboration to implement and clinically validate long-read whole genome sequencing (WGS) within the NSW public health system.

Long-read whole genome sequencing analyses long, continuous DNA stretches to identify complex genetic variants and rare diseases that can be missed by the short-read methods currently in use.

The technology was developed by Oxford Nanopore Technologies, founded in 2005 as a spin-out from the University of Oxford.

Financials

Income



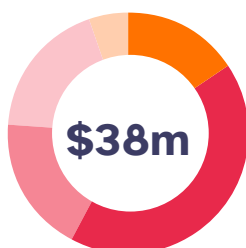
Grant revenue	\$12m
Fundraising	\$9m
Infrastructure support	\$5m
Investments	\$4m
Other	\$2m
Total income	\$32m

Financial Position



Investments - other financial assets	\$38m
Cash and bank balances	\$6m
Other current assets	\$2m
Non-current assets	\$54m
Total assets*	\$100m
Liabilities	\$11m
Net assets	\$89m

Expenditure



Research expenses	\$6m
Research salaries	\$16m
Operations expenses	\$7m
Operations salaries	\$7m
Depreciation & amortisation	\$2m
Total expenses*	\$38m

*Totals have been rounded

Governance

Board of Directors



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(Chair) Chief Operating
Officer, Perpetual Group



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Dean of Medicine and
Health, UNSW Sydney



Prof Sven Rogge
Dean of Science,
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(to February 2026)
Director Clinical
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November 2025) Director
of Research, South Eastern
Sydney Local Health District
and Professor of Gut Health,
UNSW Sydney



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Foundation Board



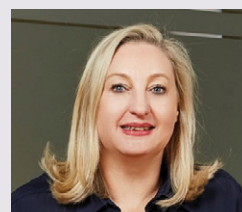
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Seven Network



Mr Murray Brewer
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Senior Executive, Global
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Ms Felicity Nicholson
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Mr Lee Valentine
(to May 2026)
Director,
Whiskey and Friends

In Gratitude

NeuRA would like to sincerely thank all our key supporters who made gifts of \$10,000 or more in 2025, including those who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you to all of you for your generous support and for your ongoing commitment to our mission.

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