



Prostate Cancer
Foundation of Australia

PCFA's Research Strategy 2019-2022



RESEARCH
AWARENESS
SUPPORT

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1. About the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) is a broadly-based community organisation and the peak national body for prostate cancer in Australia. It is dedicated to reducing the impact of prostate cancer on Australian men, their partners and their families.

PCFA does this by:

- Promoting and funding world leading, innovative research into prostate cancer
- Implementing awareness and advocacy campaigns and education programs for the Australian community, health professionals and Government and
- Supporting men and their families affected by prostate cancer through evidence-based information and resources, support groups and prostate cancer specialist nurses.

2. Why does PCFA need a research strategy?

As the peak body for prostate cancer in Australia, PCFA provides funds for research that will best serve the needs of its community. PCFA has had a strategy to guide allocation of its research funds from early in its life. This strategy builds on its most recent research strategy: *PCFA's Research Program Strategy 2013-2017*.¹

Many government and non-government organisations have research strategies. Some commonly identified challenges in developing strategies include: lack of clarity about the purpose of the strategy and what it is designed to achieve; over-contribution to the strategy of researchers who may be influenced by their own interests; the lack of involvement of 'research users' – the clinicians, service providers and policy makers who may be expected to act on the outcomes of the research; and the tendency to develop wide non-specific questions that provide little clear direction to researchers.

PCFA has a relatively small funding pool to support research. To ensure that these funds are invested for greatest benefit, PCFA aims to ensure that it aligns its research program with the present needs of men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families, and takes into account other research efforts nationally and internationally so as to maximise its utility and benefits for men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families.

The strategy allows PCFA to:

- State its research niche and goals
- Be clear to researchers, clinicians, consumers and the wider community about the research that PCFA will fund and the ways it funds it
- Identify research gaps that align with PCFA's research niche
- Develop specific research questions

¹ <http://www.prostate.org.au/media/70841/PCRSchPlan2013-2017.pdf>

- Make decisions about research funding
- Measure outcomes from its research
- Consider future research funding – where the research questions, topics or technologies are not yet known.

The process whereby this research strategy was developed is outlined in Appendix 1.

3. PCFA's strategic research goal

The goal of PCFA research funding is to **create** and **promote the uptake** of knowledge that will improve the lives of Australian men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families.

4. Objectives of PCFA's research program

- Support men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families
- Contribute to PCFA's work in advocacy, and its awareness and support programs

5. Principles of PCFA's research program

- Strongly align with PCFA's strategic research goal
- Seek to answer questions identified by consumers, clinicians and service providers as those where research is most needed
- Have the most impact on men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families, including delivering benefits in the near term
- Be fit for purpose and of the highest ethical standards and quality
- Identify areas of agreed priority where significant investment by PCFA could make a major difference in the near term
- Recognise the value of partnerships and include actions to make the best use of partnership opportunities to achieve the strategic research goal
- Recognise that support for capacity development is an important contribution by PCFA in achieving the goal of the strategy
- Actively support translation of knowledge into policy and practice.

6. Strategic directions

PCFA will fund practical research with direct implications for men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families on issues related to treatment, care and support in the near term.

Such research will include:

- A. **Clinical research projects** that deliver near-term outcomes (i.e. clinical trials) with inbuilt high research value (e.g. studies using biological samples collected during clinical trials)
- B. **Prostate cancer survivorship research**
- C. **Research in priority directions** identified through consultation with PCFA's stakeholders. A targeted number of research priorities were further determined in consultation with our stakeholders. These priorities will progress in 2019.

PCFA will expect of all research it funds that it:

- Includes a realistic plan for engagement of end users (e.g. clinicians, consumers, policymakers) in developing research questions and design and oversight
- Engages, where feasible, PhD students and post-doctoral fellows in the conduct of the research
- Leads to publications in peer reviewed journals and on PCFA's website
- Is used to produce for specific audiences brief and easily understood evidence summaries based on the research
- Brings together consumers, clinicians, researchers and policymakers to explore the implications of the research for policy and practice
- Has a formal translation (including implementation) plan with input from stakeholders and facilitated, where necessary, by PCFA.

7. Research funding mechanisms

A. Research projects or programs already underway

PCFA will continue to fund research projects or programs underway, subject to their performance and their continuing alignment with its Strategic Research Goal. These include:

- Research arising from its partnership with ANZUP, which currently includes the TheraP, a Lutetium-PSMA "theranostic" aimed at metastatic castration resistant prostate cancer
- Research into survivorship (as part of PCFA's membership of the NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence at Griffith University)
- Research on regional and rural inequity in prostate cancer outcomes to examine what is driving it and how best to address it (in partnership with the University of Southern Queensland).
- Through its partnership with the Movember Foundation, PCFA facilitates investment building clinician scientist capacity, supports multidisciplinary outcomes-focused research through the Revolutionary Team Awards program and funds two other clinical trials.

PCFA will also fully discharge commitments it made under its previous New Concepts Grants and Young Investigator Awards programs.

B. Calls for new research projects

Given the focus of this research strategy is on improving the lives of Australian men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families in the near term, PCFA will call for applications to conduct research in specific priority areas on a rolling schedule usually **up to four times a year**.

The process identified five top priorities of funding for 2019:

1. Research using existing repositories of biological samples from men with prostate cancer to better predict the cancer's course
2. Research on the performance of less invasive prostate cancer diagnostics that show promise but are not yet fully evidence-based
3. Research to better understand the scale and nature of adverse effects of prostate cancer treatments and how they can be managed more effectively
4. Research to gain a better understanding of how digital technologies can be used to improve access to prostate cancer information, monitoring, treatment and support
5. Research to gain a better understanding of the impact of prostate cancer on men's lives and how best to improve the quality of life of men diagnosed with prostate cancer, their partners and their families.

The identification of new priority areas will be an ongoing process operating under the oversight of PCFA's Research Advisory Committee.