

Brain and Mind Centre *Strategy 2026–2030*

Healthier brains. Stronger minds. Better lives.



Acknowledgment

The Brain and Mind Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and learn.

We pay our deepest respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their Elders past and present, and recognise their enduring connection to Country, culture, knowledge and community.

We recognise the importance of social and emotional wellbeing, and the invaluable contributions First Nations peoples make to improving the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities across Australia.

Image: 'Yanhambabirra Burambabirra Yalbailinya' (Come, Share and Learn), 2020 by Luke Penrith for the One Sydney, Many People Strategy.



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Welcome from the Co-Directors

Brain and mind health is one of the defining challenges of our time. Demand for mental health care continues to grow, while an ageing population brings increasing challenges in dementia and neurodegenerative disease. At the same time, advances in neuroscience, data and technology are creating new opportunities to understand, prevent and treat these conditions.

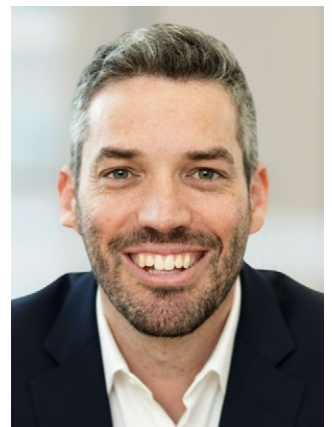
Meeting these challenges and realising these opportunities requires expertise that spans disciplines, sectors and communities. This is the distinctive strength of the Brain and Mind Centre. We bring together world-leading neuroscience, clinical care, lived experience, data and technology, creating a uniquely multidisciplinary environment in which new ideas can be discovered, tested and translated more rapidly.

This strategy sets our direction for the next five years. We will improve child neurodevelopment and youth mental health care. We will advance brain and mind sciences through discovery and innovation. We will promote healthy brain ageing while reducing the impact of neurodegeneration.

Our ambition is to create lasting impact: earlier intervention, better prevention and diagnosis, more personalised treatment and care, and better health care systems. By accelerating the path from discovery to real-world change, we can improve health and wellbeing for individuals, families and society.



Professor Ian Hickie, AO
Co-Director,
Health & Policy



Professor Ben Colagiuri
Co-Director,
Discovery & Translation

Our strategy at a glance

Our integrated strategy brings together world-leading science, clinical care, lived experience, data and technology to transform brain and mind health across the lifespan



Our Vision

Transform brain and mind health across the lifespan.



Our strategic priorities 2026–2030



1 Improving child neurodevelopment and youth mental health care



2 Advancing brain and mind sciences through discovery and innovation



3 Promoting healthy brain ageing and reducing the impact of neurodegeneration



Our strategic platforms



Neuroscience & biomarkers
Understanding the brain through discovery science, genomics, imaging and precision diagnostics.



AI, data & digital health
Accelerating prediction, prevention, personalised care and system transformation through AI, digital tools and data.



Lived experience & co-design
Embedding the voices and expertise of people with lived experience and communities in all we do.



Our enablers



Transdisciplinary expertise
Bringing diverse expertise together to solve complex challenges.



Community & partnerships
Building trusted partnerships across sectors and communities.



Clinical services & research
Integrating research with world-class clinical care.



People & culture
Investing in and supporting our people to thrive and lead.



Policy, advocacy & systems impact
Influencing policy and driving system change for population impact.



Our impact



Earlier intervention
Identifying risk and needs sooner.



Better diagnosis
More precise, timely and accessible.



Personalised care
Tailored treatments and supports.



Improved health systems
Integrated, equitable and sustainable care.



Greater quality of life
For individuals, families and communities.



Population-level impact
Better brain and mind health for all Australians.

**Bold science.
Real-world impact.
Healthier brains. Stronger minds. Better lives.**

How our strategy works

Unlike traditional research institutes, the Brain and Mind Centre brings discovery science, clinical services, technology, lived experience and policy influence together within a single model. This enables us to identify challenges earlier, develop solutions faster and deliver measurable improvements in brain and mind health across every stage of life.

Our Strategic Priorities define the outcomes we seek to achieve for children and young people, brain and mind science, and healthy ageing.

Our Strategic Platforms provide the distinctive capabilities that underpin our work, combining neuroscience, biomarkers, artificial intelligence, digital health and lived experience to drive innovation.

Our Enablers create the conditions for success, bringing together multidisciplinary expertise, partnerships, clinical research, people, culture and system leadership to ensure discoveries can be translated into practice.

Our Impact: Together, these elements form a unique integrated ecosystem that moves seamlessly from discovery to implementation, ensuring every breakthrough has a pathway to better care, healthier communities and population-level impact.



What success looks like

Early diagnosis and precision management need biomarkers that are practical to acquire, sensitive to progression, reproducible for broad adoption and interpretable at the individual level.

We have built our neuroimaging program with AI as the organising method across our model – from biomarker discovery to clinical validation and adoption – because treating these as one continuous problem is what accelerates both.

Associate Professor Chenyu Tim Wang, Principal Research Fellow in electronics engineering and neuroscience, Co-Lead of the Computational Neuroimaging Team at the Brain and Mind Centre; Co-Founder of the Sydney Neuroimaging Analysis Centre

By 2030, we aim to better delineate the pathogenic mechanisms underpinning neuroimmunological disorders to accelerate diagnosis, guide prognostication, and personalise treatment pathways including the timely escalation and de-escalation of therapy – thereby reducing relapses and improving outcomes for children and adults who are otherwise at risk of lifelong disability.

Associate Professor Sudarshini Ramanathan, neurologist and clinician-scientist, co-lead of Neuroimmunology Team at the Brain and Mind Centre, Head of the Translational Neuroimmunology Group, Kids Research, The Children's Hospital at Westmead

Breakthroughs in brain and mind care often require aligned advances in biology, diagnostics and therapeutics.

With expertise spanning from fundamental neuroscience through to clinical practice and policy, the Brain and Mind Centre is uniquely positioned to drive progress and translate it into better prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care.

Professor Michael Bowen, Neuroscientist and Psychopharmacologist, Co-lead Translational Psychopharmacology Team at the Brain and Mind Centre; Co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Kinosis Therapeutics

Impacts of our work

Transforming neurodevelopmental care

Neuroscience × Clinical Care × Digital Innovation × Lifelong Impact

Neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and ADHD are among the fastest-growing contributors to lifelong disability. Yet children and families often navigate fragmented health, disability and education systems, delaying access to support during critical periods of development.

The Brain and Mind Centre brings together neuroscience, mental health, clinical care, engineering and digital innovation experts to create integrated, life-course models of care.

Our approach focuses on understanding and responding to the interconnected developmental, neurological and mental health needs of children and young people, and combines:

- Earlier identification of developmental risk
- Embedded translational research
- Integrated neurodevelopmental and mental health care
- AI-enabled assessment and digital tools
- Assistive and communication technologies
- Long-term support for participation and independence

Australian Child Neurodevelopment Registry (ACNR)

A BMC established and led registry that connects children, families, clinicians and researchers to improve neurodevelopmental care.

- 5,000+ families enrolled
- 10 health districts **across NSW and Victoria**
- 50% CALD families
- 35%+ financially disadvantaged families
- 20+ research publications
- 690+ clinical hours saved **through digital service innovations**

Maya's story

Early Intervention × Integrated Care × Assistive Technology × Participation

Maya was born prematurely and identified early as being at risk of cerebral palsy. Through research-led assessment, intervention began during infancy, supporting development at a critical stage of brain growth.

As Maya grew, integrated care recognised the overlap between cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy and anxiety, enabling support tailored to her needs rather than individual diagnoses. Assistive technologies, communication tools and digital health solutions helped her participate more fully in school, home and community life.

Today, Maya is planning for university and future employment, demonstrating the lifelong impact of early intervention, integrated care and innovation.

Towards 2030 →

By 2030, we aim to advance earlier detection, precision assessment and integrated support through AI, digital health, assistive technologies and lived-experience co-design.

Our goal is to ensure more children can access timely, evidence-based care that improves development, independence and wellbeing throughout life.

Personalised mental health at scale

Digital Health × AI × Lived Experience × Better Health Care Systems

Mental health conditions are among the leading causes of disability in young people, yet access to timely, personalised care remains uneven. Many people face barriers to access, particularly in rural and remote communities, fragmented services and delayed support, while traditional models struggle to meet growing demand.

The Brain and Mind Centre is combining digital technology, data science, lived experience and clinical expertise to deliver more personalised mental health *'right care, first time, where you live'* at scale by getting young people back to work, back to school, and thriving in their communities across eight regions of Australia.

Our approach integrates:

- Digital mental health services
- AI-enabled assessment and triage
- Personalised care pathways
- Biological and behavioural markers of risk
- Measurement-based care and continuous improvement

Towards 2030 →

By 2030, the Brain and Mind Centre will leverage artificial intelligence, biological markers and real-world data to deliver increasingly personalised mental health care, ensuring more young people can access the right support at the right time, regardless of where they live.



Medicare mental health check in

Research Translation × Government Partnership × Digital Care × National Impact

In 2026, the Australian Government appointed the Brain and Mind Centre and its Youth Mental Health and Technology research team as the innovation and improvement lead for the national **Medicare Mental Health Check In** service.

Delivered in partnership with St Vincent's Health Australia, the service provides free digital mental health assessments, self management tools and low-intensity support pathways designed to help people access the right care earlier. By 2029, it is expected to support more than 150,000 Australians each year.

The initiative demonstrates how Brain and Mind Centre research is being translated into large-scale, government-funded reform, improving access to evidence-based mental health care nationwide.

BMC Researchers join national mental health rollout

[Read more: www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au/](https://www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au/)

The screenshot shows the Medicare Mental Health website. The main heading is "Not feeling like yourself lately? You're not alone." Below it, a subheading says "Medicare Mental Health is a free service that connects you with the mental health support that is right for you." There is an illustration of four diverse people standing together. Below the illustration, there is a section titled "How Medicare Mental Health can help" with text explaining the service and a "Watch video" button. At the bottom, there are three boxes: "Free service" (Medicare Mental Health is funded by the Australian government and is free to access), "Easy access" (You do not need a referral or Mental Health Treatment Plan to use our services), and "For everyone" (Whether you've had ongoing challenges or are reaching out for the first time, everyone is welcome). At the very bottom, there is a section titled "Medicare Mental Health Check In" with a "Visit website" button.

Helping people maintain cognitive health and independence for longer

Brain Ageing Research × Prevention Science × Multidisciplinary Care × Healthy Longevity

Dementia is one of Australia's fastest-growing health challenges, yet access to specialist assessment and support remains limited, particularly in regional and rural communities. At the Brain and Mind Centre, researchers and clinicians are advancing earlier detection, prevention and precision brain health through research into modifiable risk factors, novel biomarkers and emerging diagnostic approaches.

Building on research and clinical insights generated through the Brain and Mind Centre's Healthy Brain Ageing Clinic, we translated emerging evidence into practice through the development of the **Hybrid Virtual Memory Clinic (hVMC)**. Co-designed with clinicians, researchers, people living with dementia, carers, advocates and policymakers, the hVMC combines virtual specialist consultations with local healthcare services, bringing expert cognitive assessment, diagnosis and support closer to home.

First piloted in Echuca (VIC) and subsequently expanded through regional partnerships, the hVMC eliminated a nine-month waitlist for specialist memory assessment in its first month and increased clinic capacity by 675% within three

months. By reducing barriers to care, the model supports earlier diagnosis, access to evidence-based interventions and stronger dementia care pathways.

The hVMC demonstrates how research, digital innovation and clinical partnerships can be translated into scalable health solutions. The model is now being rolled out nationally through Dementia Australia, extending access to specialist dementia assessment and support to more than one million Australians.

Towards 2030 →

By 2030, the Brain and Mind Centre will advance earlier detection, personalised care and equitable access to specialist services through innovative care models, digital diagnostics and precision medicine, helping more Australians maintain brain health and independence for longer.



Precision care for multiple sclerosis

Neuroimaging × AI × Global Data × Precision Medicine

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a complex neurological disease that affects millions of people worldwide. Predicting how the disease will progress, and which treatments will be most effective, remains one of the greatest challenges in MS care.

The Brain and Mind Centre is bringing together advanced neuroimaging, clinical expertise and global data to improve understanding of MS and support more personalised approaches to care.

Our approach combines:

- Large-scale international imaging datasets
- Advanced MRI analytics and AI-enabled tools
- Development of new imaging biomarkers
- Global research collaboration
- Translational research embedded in clinical care



The MSBase imaging repository

International Collaboration × Big Data × Biomarkers × Better MS Care

Developed by the Computational Neuroimaging research team in partnership with the Sydney Neuroimaging Analysis Centre (SNAC) and the global MSBase network, the MSBase Imaging Repository (MSBIR) is one of the world's largest imaging repositories for multiple sclerosis research.

As of 2026, MSBIR contains more than **58,000 MRI scans** from **over 6,500 people** across **seven countries**, supporting **27 active projects and collaborations**. Combined with the broader MSBase research projects of more than 120,000 patient records from 45 countries, researchers can investigate MS progression and treatment outcomes at an unprecedented scale.

By enabling researchers to identify disease patterns and develop new imaging biomarkers, MSBIR is accelerating

discoveries that support earlier diagnosis, more accurate monitoring and increasingly personalised treatment for people living with MS.

Towards 2030 →

By 2030, the Brain and Mind Centre will integrate imaging, clinical and biological data to help deliver precision care for MS, enabling earlier intervention, more targeted therapies and better outcomes for people living with the disease worldwide.

From discovery to real-world impact

Discovery Science × Industry Partnerships × Commercialisation × Translation

Many disorders of the brain and mind remain underserved by existing treatments. Despite significant advances in neuroscience, translating discovering into new therapies is often slow, expensive and complex. This requires collaboration across researchers, clinicians, industry, investors and health systems.

By bringing together researchers, clinicians, entrepreneurs and partners, the Brain and Mind Centre connects world-class discovery science with clinical expertise, industry partnerships and commercialisation pathways to accelerate research translation and deliver real-world impact.



Translation that spans the full innovation pipeline

Discovery Science × Industry Partnerships × Therapeutic Innovation × Translation

From laboratory discovery to global commercialisation, Brain and Mind Centre research is accelerating the development of new treatments for brain and mind disorders.

This work led to the discovery of KNX100 and the creation of Kinaxis Therapeutics, a University spin-out developing therapies for social dysfunction, substance use disorders and dementia-related behavioural symptoms.

In 2023, Kinaxis entered a major licensing agreement with Boehringer Ingelheim, accelerating the development of novel therapeutics. More recently, the company secured \$2.5 million in CUREator+ funding to support the Phase 2a CARES-X clinical trial investigating KNX100 for agitation and aggression associated with dementia.

The Brain and Mind Centre is also partnering with Tessara Therapeutics and Xylo Bio to develop next-generation drug discovery platforms for mental health and substance use disorders.

By combining Tessara's 3D human brain models, Xylo Bio's novel compounds and the Brain and Mind Centre's neuroscience expertise, the collaboration is creating faster, more predictive pathways for developing treatments that promote neuroplasticity and cognitive recovery.

Towards 2030 →

By 2030, the Brain and Mind Centre will expand partnerships across industry, government, philanthropy and health services to accelerate research translation and maximise impact. Our ambition is to create a thriving innovation ecosystem where discoveries move more rapidly from the laboratory to clinical practice, delivering new treatments and better outcomes for people around the world.

The future we are building

A future where every person can benefit from earlier intervention, personalised care and healthier brain and mind outcomes across the lifespan.

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