



QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute aims to improve health by developing prevention strategies, new diagnostics and better health treatments.

Our mission

Better health through medical research

Our vision

To be a world-renowned medical research institution that translates discoveries into clinical practice

Our objectives

1. Foster scientific excellence

Excellence is the foundation of translating research to society and starts with leading researchers' discoveries.

Key strategies

- Recognise and reward scientific excellence.
- Continue to prioritise employment security for faculty.
- Fund early-stage research to leverage external grants.
- Continue to ensure research authenticity.
- Identify opportunities and change the emphasis of research to maximise the chances to be leaders.
- Stress a strong multi-disciplinary commitment to address key health challenges or further develop new inter-disciplinary clusters.

Performance measures

- Maintain number one position, among competitor institutes, for scientific output (measured by number of publications annually).
- Maintain a five-year growth rate of more than 15% for total citations.
- Increase quality and quantity of scientific output (measured by h-Index) of Faculty to 40 by 2022 and maintain that level.

2. Build scientific, institutional and international connectivity

The success of the Institute is dependent on the links it builds locally and internationally.

Key strategies

- Maintain strong relationships with the Herston campus and the universities and take an active involvement in the redevelopment of the Herston campus.
- Actively participate in the Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre as one of eight of Queensland's leading hospitals, health bodies, universities and research institutes.
- Maintain and strengthen the Institute's Asia Strategy that seeks to identify opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and fundraising in Asia.
- Develop greater links with European and US laboratories, building on ongoing collaborations.
- Continue to identify opportunities and support the delivery of international research conferences in Brisbane.

Performance measures

- Increase invitations to speak at international conferences to 100 in five years (measured using data gathered in the Institute's annual census).
- Increase international lectures to 200 in five years.
- Increase invitations to speak at national conferences to 150 in five years.

3. Undertake research with economic, clinical and community consequences

Our mission requires us to go beyond discovery research and to also increase our commercial-related activities, to translate our research to the clinic through clinical trials, and to engage with the community.

Key strategies

- Consolidate 'bench to business to bedside' into the philosophy and functioning of the Institute.
- Maintain the focus on translational research.
- Strengthen collaborations with clinical partners, especially those on the Herston campus.
- Undertake research of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.
- Engage with our community of supporters relevant to our growing programs in cancer, infectious diseases, mental health and chronic disorders.

Contribution to government objectives

QIMR Berghofer contributes to the Queensland Government's objectives for the community, *Unite and Recover*, in particular the objectives of *Safeguarding our health*, *Supporting jobs*, *Making it for Queensland*, *Investing in skills* and *Backing our frontline services*.

The Institute is *Safeguarding our health* through researching the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and conditions particularly relevant to Queensland and our near neighbours. As a 'translational' medical research institute, our research is designed to translate into clinical practice to provide more effective treatments for patients, and into public policy to provide better health for Queenslanders.

Our research in cancer and mental health is important given our ageing population. Our work in infectious diseases, especially tropical diseases, is vital given the increasing numbers of people living in the tropics and climate change bringing tropical diseases closer to major population centres. Our research into mental health, such as dementia, Alzheimer's and depression, addresses rises in the incidence of these diseases. Our work in Chronic Disorders addresses many health impacts associated with changes in our demographics and lifestyles.

QIMR Berghofer joined the global fight against COVID-19 soon after the pandemic was declared. We mobilised Institute resources and philanthropic support to repurpose our PC3 laboratory, Queensland's most bio-secure, to provide a safe facility to grow the virus for research. Wide-ranging research is underway into drugs and immunotherapies to prevent and treat severe COVID-19; to understand the impacts of the disease on mental health; and to develop Queensland-specific modelling of the pandemic and the effectiveness of various intervention strategies.

The Institute is *Supporting jobs* by leveraging government support five-fold to create high-skill, high value jobs. Some 1000 scientists, students and support staff work at the Institute, and we are actively recruiting researchers in key areas. The Institute has generated commercial ideas that have grown into start-up companies.

QIMR Berghofer's Q-Gen Cell Therapeutics manufactures advanced cellular therapies, contributing to the objective of *Making it for Queensland*. These provide cutting-edge immunotherapy treatments for a range of cancers and autoimmune conditions, as well as boosting the immune systems of immune-compromised patients.

QIMR Berghofer is helping train the next generation of scientists, thereby contributing to the objective of *Investing in skills*. Approximately 160 postgraduate students, most of whom are PhD candidates, are studying at the Institute. QIMR Berghofer is inspiring talented young people to consider a career in science through its high school education programs, which include classes at our purpose-built Education Laboratory, online lectures and scientist visits to regional high schools.

Frontline health workers should have access to clinical best practice. QIMR Berghofer is *Backing our frontline services* through world-leading translational medical research, including new and improved treatments and screening programs.

Performance measures

- Maintain the percentage of QIMR Berghofer researchers engaged in collaborations with clinicians at 60% or greater (measured using data gathered in the Institute's annual census).
- Increase the number of active clinical trials to 40 in five years.
- Grow commercial income to \$10 million per year in five years.

4. Strengthen enabling mechanisms

To succeed with our ambitious program, an integrated strategy has to be in place, which includes personnel, infrastructure, expertise and financial support.

Key strategies

- Diversify and expand income sources.
- Expand external stakeholder and consumer reference groups.
- Continue to plan and roll out a major philanthropy campaign.
- Maintain expenditure on required cutting-edge, large-scale equipment.
- Ensure efficiency across all operations.
- Maintain a high level of internal communication and input into decision making.

Performance measures

- Achieve an increase in philanthropic income.
- Achieve an increase in commercial income.
- Achieve an increase in NHMRC and MRFF grant funding.

Strategic risks

A scan of the environment in which QIMR Berghofer is operating highlights the following major strategic risks:

- Loss of funding, through constriction or re-focusing of national research funding, State Government funding, donor support or a drop in competitive grant funding success, resulting in a reduction in the Institute's research program.
- Problems experienced in a clinical trial or experimental research, or a fall in research or ethical standards, resulting in reputational damage.
- Over-burdening compliance/governance, stretching limited Institute human resources and resulting in reduction of service and standards.
- An inability to recruit and retain the highest-quality researchers in a competitive market, resulting in a reduction in QIMR Berghofer's reputation for scientific excellence.
- A decline in standard of research infrastructure, resulting in lowered research output.





QIMR Berghofer Strategic Plan continued

Key opportunities

- Continue to partner with key collaborating Institutions — including the Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners, the Herston Precinct and the Queensland Genomics Health Alliance — to maximise the impact of the Institute's research.
- Continue to tailor QIMR Berghofer's research program to the needs of the community.
- Establish a reputation as a world-leading location for cell therapy development and manufacturing.
- Continue to diversify income stream through commercialisation, philanthropy and rental income.
- Grow companies based on the discoveries at the Institute.

