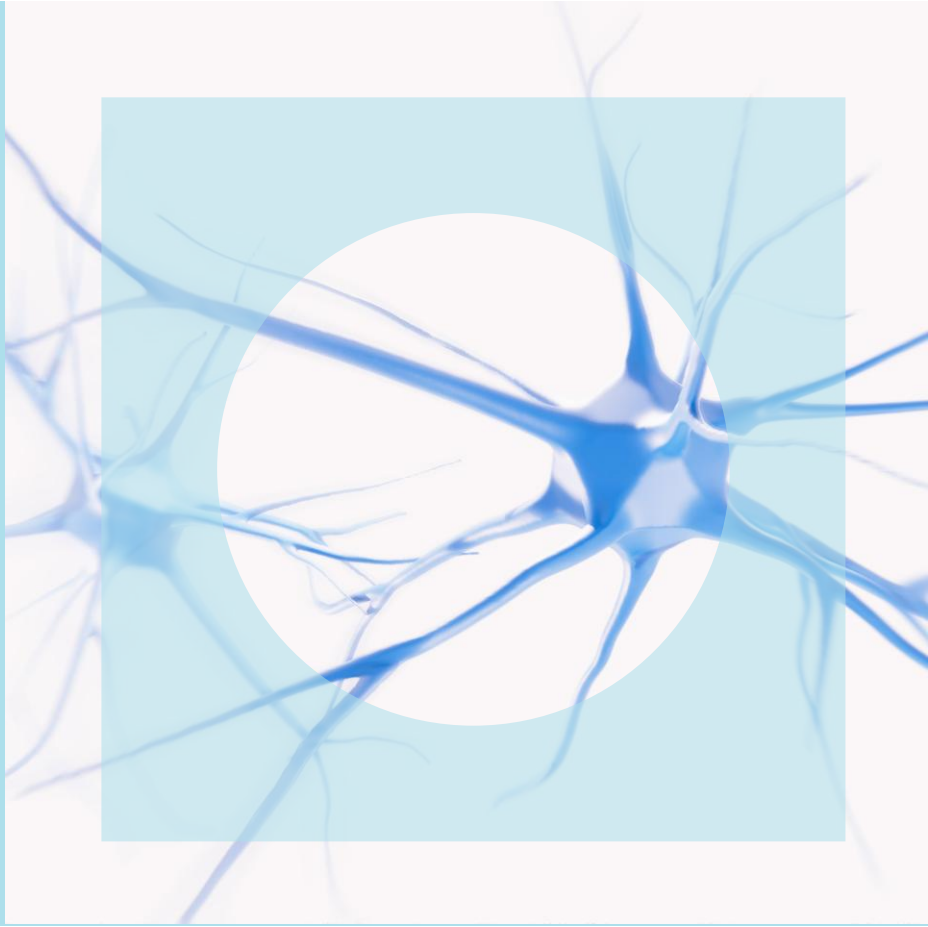
Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

5 November 2026

JST/CHORUS Forum Japan Library Fair

NHMRC and MRFF Open Science Policy

Preprint policy perspectives for funders



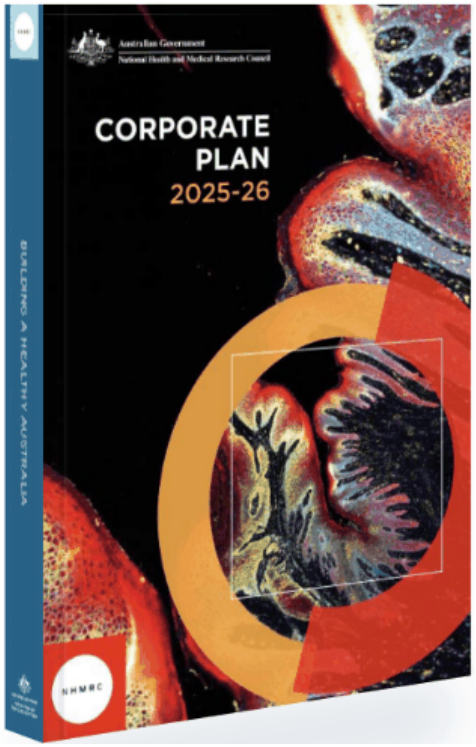
NHMRC

BUILDING
A HEALTHY
AUSTRALIA

About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's lead funding agency for health and medical research.

- NHMRC is also responsible for:
  - national codes of research conduct and ethics
  - regulation of research with human embryos
  - clinical, public health and environmental health guidelines and information statements.
- NHMRC works closely with other parts of government.
  - Medical Research Future Fund
  - Cancer Australia and other partners
  - Australian Research Council



Health and Medical Research Funding

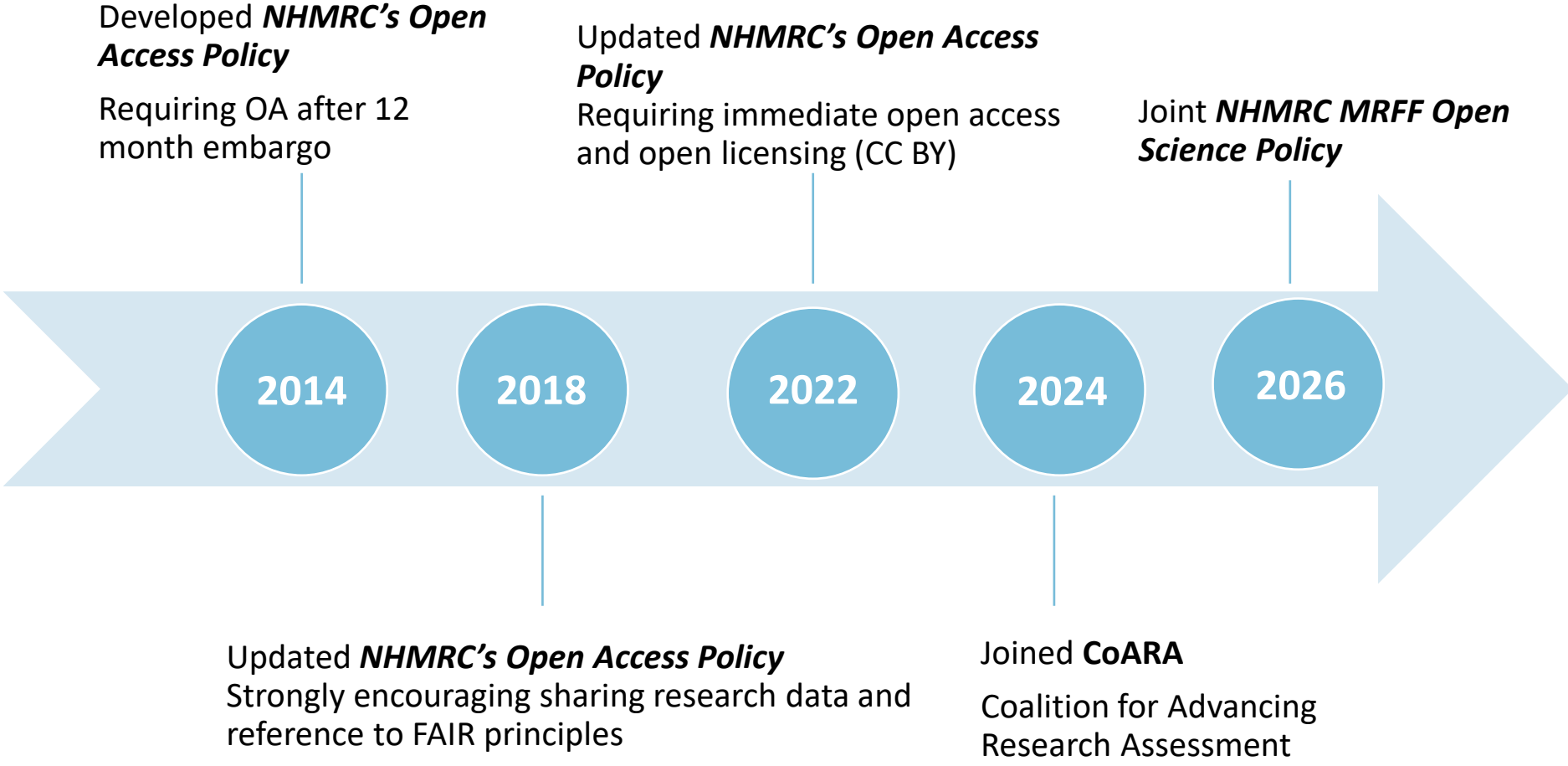
Australia's health and medical research investment is supported through two complementary funding streams:

NHMRC funding

- Primarily investigator led
- ~$900 million per year in new grants (2025-2026)
- Informed by Strategic, Health and Structural Priorities

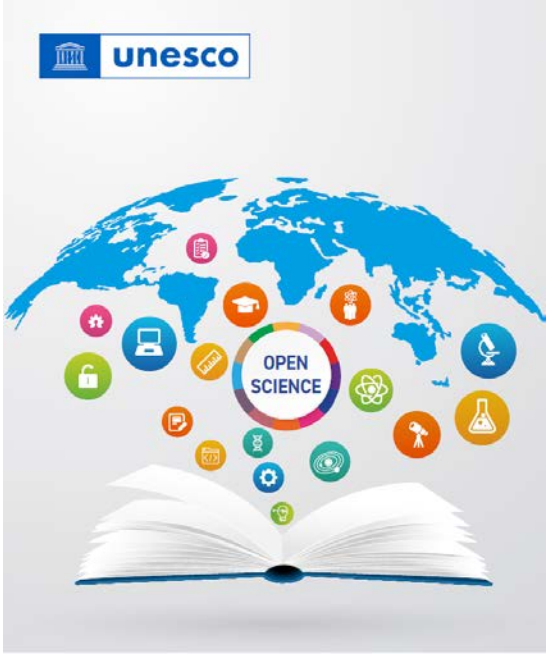
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

- Primarily priority-driven research
- ~$650 million per year in new grants (2025-26)
- Investments are guided by the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities and the MRFF Strategy


Developed ***NHMRC's Open Access Policy***
Requiring OA after 12 month embargo
2014
Updated ***NHMRC's Open Access Policy***
Strongly encouraging sharing research data and reference to FAIR principles
2018
Updated ***NHMRC's Open Access Policy***
Requiring immediate open access and open licensing (CC BY)
2022
Joined **CoARA**
Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
2024
Joint ***NHMRC MRFF Open Science Policy***
2026

The Policy applies to all research funded wholly or partly by NHMRC and/or MRFF, during or after the funding period, and all grant recipients must comply.

Researchers are expected to implement open science practices across the research cycle for all outputs, including papers, data, software and code.



Mandatory requirements

- Research papers immediately open with CC BY licence
- Funder acknowledgement with grant identification number and NHMRC ROR
- Reasonable steps to share research data and metadata, using ‘as open as possible as closed as necessary’ and adhering to FAIR and CARE principles
- For research outputs involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities:
  - Take actions that consider ownership, management, use of, access to, and distribution of research results and outputs
  - Recognise and protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
- For all newly awarded NHMRC grants, lead investigators must have a valid ORCID to hold NHMRC-funded grants

Recommended practices

- Administering organisations to have or develop an institutional open science policy, and consider rewarding open science practices as part of recruitment, evaluation and promotion
- Persistent Identifiers (PIDs), such as Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for research papers, ORCIDs for researchers, Research Activity Identifiers (RAiDs) for research activities and Research Organization Registry identifiers (RORs) for research organisations
- Plan and document management and sharing of data from the outset
- Research software and code shared using the FAIR Principles for Research Software (FAIR4RS) and CARE principles, under an open license
- Research outputs have an appropriate open licence (CC BY) applied when they are shared
- Open engagement of societal actors through extended collaboration between scientists and societal actors beyond the scientific community

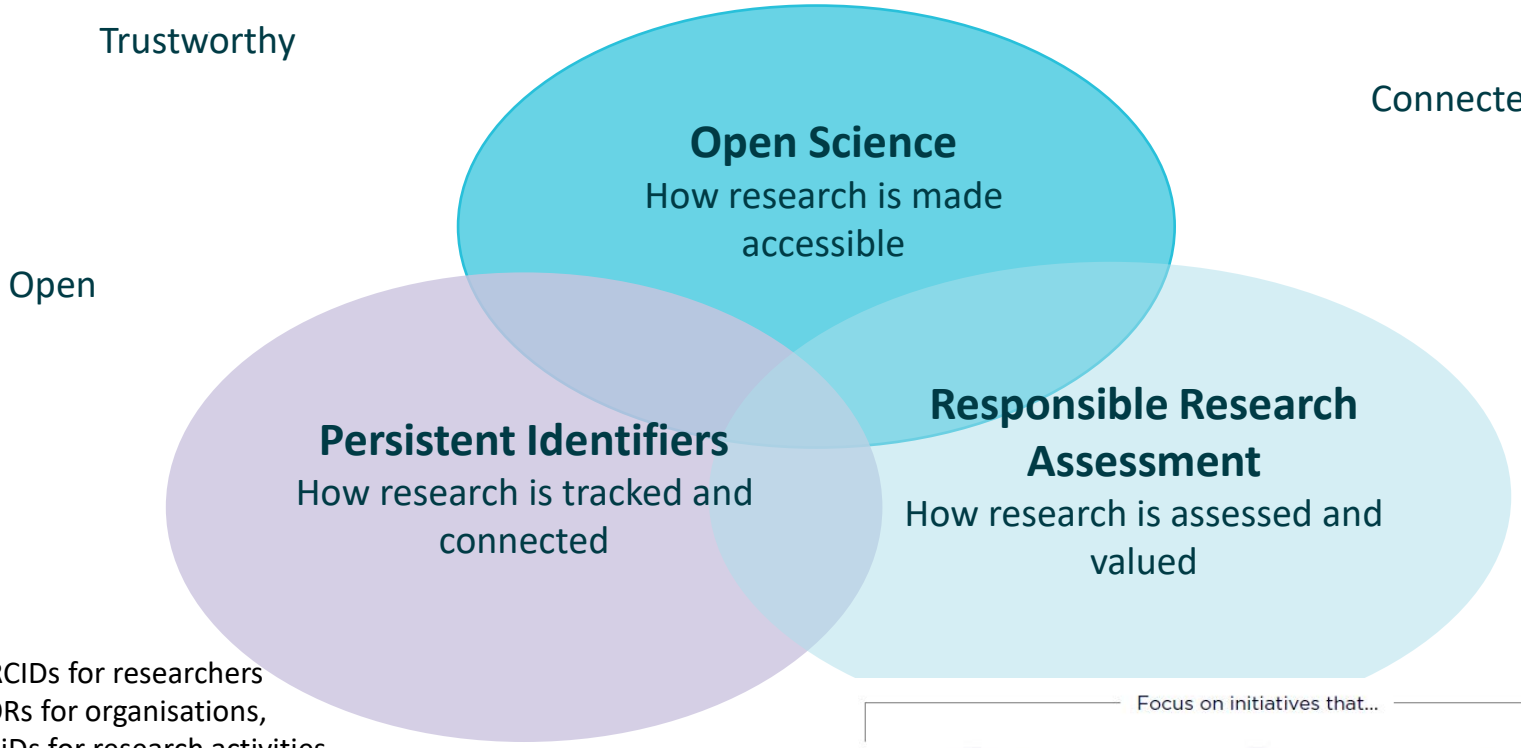
Research papers

Preprints, peer-reviewed preprints, author accepted manuscripts, versions of record

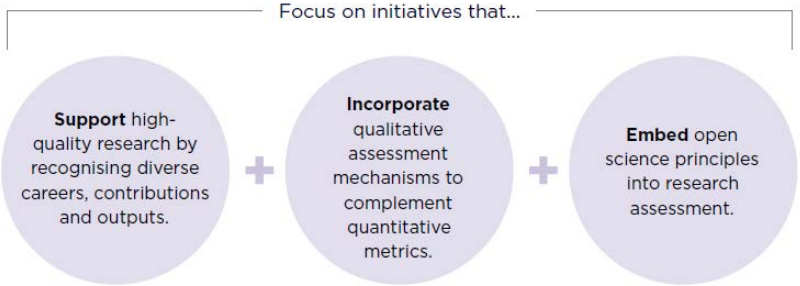
- 3 routes for compliance
  - Version of record
  - Author accepted manuscript
  - Preprint

- Preprints:
  - rapid dissemination
  - support sharing of negative and null results
  - free to post and free to access
  - support assessment based on scientific merit rather than journal-based metrics

Three complementary reforms



- ORCIDs for researchers
- RORs for organisations,
- RAiDs for research activities
- DOIs for publications and datasets



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Thank you

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