

# Living Evidence for Australian health care

**Key messages for the  
Australian Government**  
June 2018

## Contact

**A/Prof Julian Elliott**

Chair, Interim Executive Committee, Australian Living Evidence Consortium  
[julian.elliott@monash.edu](mailto:julian.elliott@monash.edu) / 0405 704 795

**Rhiannon Tate**

Strategic Development Coordinator, Australian Living Evidence Consortium  
[rhiannon.tate@monash.edu](mailto:rhiannon.tate@monash.edu) / 0407 941 260

## Key messages

### › **Australia's record investment in health & medical research promises major impact**

- The Australian Government's commitment to doubling health and medical research, through landmark measures such as the MRFF, recognises the transformative potential of research to improve the health of Australians and drive productivity and economic growth.
- The Australian Government, in partnership with the research sector, has built strong support for this level of investment from the Australian public, who trust that research leads to better health care.

### › **We must fast-track evidence to maximise the return on our research investment**

- Maximising the impact of the vast body of health research on health care requires a rigorous process of finding and analysing all of the research relevant to a topic – a process known as evidence synthesis – to produce reliable recommendations that inform clinical practice, policy making, licensing and reimbursement, and program investments.
- The methods for this critical step in research translation are well developed, but the systems are outdated, inefficient, drowning in a deluge of research data, and failing to harness innovations in technology that are driving the data revolution in many other fields. As a result, it can take years for clinical trials to be incorporated into key evidence products such as clinical guidelines.
- To deliver the potential benefit of Australia's rapidly growing investments in health and medical research, we need systems that can fast-track the synthesis and dissemination of reliable evidence to point-of-care and policy making.

### › **Australians should receive health care based on reliable, up-to-date evidence**

- No matter where they live or which health service they access, Australians should receive health care based on the best available evidence. Evidence-based guidelines reduce unwarranted variations in care by ensuring everyone involved in health care decisions is up-to-date with what we know works and what we should do.
- The current approach of updating guidelines intermittently is no longer able to keep pace with the speed of research and far too many Australian guidelines are out of date and underused. This is delaying timely, widespread access to new, more effective, treatments and prolonging exposure to those that are known to be ineffective or harmful.

### › **We have the required world-leading expertise and evidence technologies**

- Enabled by early investment from the NHMRC, Cochrane Australia and partners are building a suite of tools and processes to enable near real-time updating of guidelines and policy recommendations. This innovative approach uses advanced technologies such as text mining, machine learning and citizen science in a 'living' model of continuous evidence synthesis and dissemination.
- The Living Evidence model has the potential to reduce the lag time between research publication and incorporation into evidence-based recommendations from years to weeks, and to reduce the time and unit costs involved by 75%.

### › **Business as usual is no longer sustainable; we need to act now**

- A group of leading experts in evidence synthesis, automation technologies and guideline development in **stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and musculoskeletal conditions** has come together with **Cochrane Australia** in a world-leading consortium effort. We are united in a shared understanding of the urgent need to accelerate the development of Living Evidence in Australia.
- The consortium will deliver a series of key demonstration projects and provide the vital early leadership and coordination needed to build national infrastructure and capability for Living Evidence across the Australian health system. We are calling on all sides of Government to commit to realising the vision of near real-time evidence synthesis and dissemination in Australia by supporting formal establishment of the Australian Living Evidence Consortium.