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Working together for good health and wellbeing

10 YEARS OF IMPACT

2016–2026

Celebrating a decade of research translation at SPHERE

A decade of working together



Ten years ago, SPHERE was founded on an ambitious idea: that stronger partnerships between research and health services could change the future of healthcare.

We were established in 2016, accredited by the National Health and Medical Research Council as a Research Translation Centre in 2017, and reaccredited in 2022. Our commitment to turning research into better care has always shaped our work.

Over the past decade, we have brought people, expertise and organisations together to turn promising ideas into real-world change. Seed funding has helped projects grow and attract further investment, while collaboration across our network has supported research to move into practice, influence policy and guidelines, reshape services and strengthen the research workforce.

This anniversary is a chance to celebrate what we have achieved, and the many people and partnerships behind it. It is also a chance to look ahead.

Our Strategic Plan 2026–2031 builds on what we have learned over the past 10 years, with a stronger focus on implementation, equity, partnership and impact — and on helping effective approaches reach the people and places where they can make the greatest difference.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our journey so far. I look forward to building on these foundations together as we enter our next chapter.

Professor Julie White

Executive Director, SPHERE

Who is SPHERE?

We are a partnership of 14 leading health services, universities and medical research institutes spanning one of Australia's largest and most diverse health regions.



Our footprint stretches across central, inner-western, south-eastern and south-western Sydney and towards the Southern Highlands. The communities we serve are equally diverse, with different health needs, experiences of care, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and levels of access to health services and research.

We bring together clinicians, researchers, health services and communities around the health and healthcare challenges that matter. By connecting people across our network, we can share what we learn and help good ideas and evidence move into policy, practice and care. We also provide a stronger collective voice representing the needs of the communities we serve.



Ten years, made possible together

SPHERE's strength lies in its 14-partner network.

Across the partnership, organisations bring different strengths, including research expertise, innovation, frontline health service experience and strong community connections.

Together, these strengths create opportunities to work on shared priorities, learn from each other, build translation capability and connect people who might not otherwise have the chance to work together.

This helps good ideas, evidence and effective approaches move across organisations and disciplines, and into the places where they can have real, lasting impact.

Thank you to our partners, and to the many researchers, clinicians, consumers, communities and teams who have shaped our first decade.

NSW Health South Western Sydney Local Health District

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St Vincent's Hospital Sydney

ACU Australian Catholic University

UTS University of Technology Sydney

UNSW Sydney

Western Sydney University

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

Children's Cancer Institute

NeuRA Discover. Conquer. Cure.

Black Dog Institute

The George Institute for Global Health

Ingham Institute Applied Medical Research

Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

Ten years of SPHERE

A snapshot of SPHERE's reach, investment and contribution to research translation over the past decade — including the additional funding, capability and opportunities that early support has helped unlock.

OVER **119 PROJECTS** SUPPORTED

AVERAGE OF **3 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS** COLLABORATING PER PROJECT

10 FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED, WITH **OVER $2.3 MILLION** INVESTED BY SPHERE

OVER $7.8 MILLION INVESTED BY SPHERE INTO RESEARCH TRANSLATION PROJECTS

OVER **$143 MILLION** IN FUNDING LEVERAGED BY SPHERE-SUPPORTED PROJECTS

OVER **136 PUBLICATIONS** ARISING FROM SPHERE-FUNDED RESEARCH

Ten years of translation in action

Across our first decade, projects supported through the partnership have gone on to change clinical practice, influence policy and guidelines, redesign services and create benefits in communities. Others have built new collaborations, developed research capability and helped promising ideas attract the support needed to grow.

StandingTall: From seed funding to global impact

A digital exercise app is helping older Australians improve their balance, prevent falls and stay independent at home.

Led by Professor Kim Delbaere at NeuRA and UNSW Sydney, *StandingTall* delivers evidence-based, personalised balance exercises at home. A **$40,000 SPHERE seed grant in 2018** helped generate early evidence and momentum for further investment.

StandingTall has since grown into a nationally recognised digital health program, informing care at more than **85 health services across Australia and the UK**. One clinical trial showed the app **reduced fall-related injuries by 20% over two years**.





Pasifika communities leading diabetes prevention

Starting with just three Pasifika churches, the Pasifika Preventing Diabetes Program (PPDP) now works with more than 40 across Sydney to tackle disproportionately high rates of type 2 diabetes.

Led by Professor David Simmons, Professor Freya MacMillan and Mrs Ronda Thompson at Western Sydney University, PPDP delivers screening, peer support and practical lifestyle support through trusted church communities. **SPHERE funding in 2019** helped build partnerships and evidence to expand the pilot.

The program has attracted more than **$4.5 million in funding** and collected health data from over **1,100 participants**, while informing other culturally tailored health initiatives across NSW.

Rapid testing transforms access to hepatitis C care

The TEMPO Study, led by Professor Jason Grebely at the Kirby Institute, tested new ways to bring hepatitis C testing and treatment closer to people who inject drugs.

It found that people attending needle and syringe programs were nearly **three times more likely to start treatment** when offered rapid point-of-care RNA testing compared with standard testing.

SPHERE provided early funding in 2017, helping build the evidence and partnerships behind the approach. That work helped shape a national program that has now delivered **more than 65,000 hepatitis C tests across Australia**, while informing clinical guidelines, government strategies and international research.





Dementia education designed with diverse communities

More than 300 people across six language groups have taken part in *Dementia Friends Unite!*, a culturally inclusive education program improving dementia knowledge and support across Western Sydney.

Led by Dr Diana Karamacoska and collaborators across health, academia and local government, the multilingual courses were co-produced with culturally diverse communities and people with lived and caring experience of dementia. A **$97,580 SPHERE grant** supported the co-design and evidence-building.

Participants reported better knowledge and support practices, and the program is now embedded in local council plans and expanding into new communities, helping turn culturally responsive dementia care into lasting practice.

Watch Me Grow gives children stronger starts

A SPHERE-backed child development pilot has grown into a nationally recognised program influencing policy and attracting more than $10 million in follow-on funding.

Led by Professor Valsamma Eapen AO, *Watch Me Grow*, a digital platform and integrated-care model, was developed to reach children who were missing vital developmental checks and connect families earlier with health and social-care support. **SPHERE seed funding** helped establish proof of concept and demonstrate that the approach was effective.

The program has since expanded across Australia and helped shape NSW policy, including the 2022 Blue Book revision and Brighter Beginnings initiative, supporting earlier identification of developmental concerns and faster access to support for more children.





Closing the gap in hip fracture care

A six-week follow-up clinic is now part of routine hip fracture care at Liverpool Hospital, closing a gap in support for older patients after discharge.

The multidisciplinary clinic coordinates fracture healing, bone health and prevention of future falls and fractures. **SPHERE seed funding** enabled the team to test whether this evidence-based model could work in everyday clinical practice.

The project also identified gaps in continuity of care and prevention, informing new discharge and rehabilitation initiatives across south-western Sydney. The result is more coordinated follow-up for older people recovering from hip fracture, with the model now embedded in ongoing service delivery.



Giving children and families a national voice

A SPHERE initiative created around the needs of more than one million Australian children living with chronic illness has grown into a national voice for children and families.

Kids to Adults brought clinicians, researchers, families and community organisations together to tackle fragmented care and give families a stronger say in research and services. That collaboration evolved into **Child UnLimited**, led by Professor Raghu Lingam, embedding lived experience in research, service design and policy.

Today, its work is helping shape family-informed research priorities, strengthen care coordination and support young people with chronic illness to navigate healthcare with greater confidence and independence.

ACCELERATE Plus turns evidence into nursing practice

Almost **50,000 patient admissions** across 24 hospital wards helped test a new approach to strengthening nursing communication and patient care.

Led by Professor Sandy Middleton and Adjunct Associate Professor Karen Tuqiri, ACCELERATE Plus combines comprehensive patient assessment, structured bedside handover and stronger multidisciplinary communication. A **2022 SPHERE Big Ideas Grant** brought together more than 50 researchers, clinicians, consumers and implementation experts to trial the approach.

The model is now embedded across every ward at The Sutherland Hospital and multiple wards at Prince of Wales Hospital, showing how large-scale implementation research can translate evidence into everyday clinical practice.





Virtual care for complex health needs

With **$200,000 in SPHERE seed funding**, Professor Nigel Lovell from UNSW and Professor Sze-Yuan Ooi from Prince of Wales Hospital are developing TCC-360, a virtual care platform designed for people living with multiple chronic health conditions.

Working with clinicians across South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, the team is exploring how virtual care can better connect hospital, home and ongoing care. SPHERE funding has also helped bring forward the integration of NeuRA's StandingTall exercise program, adding virtual rehabilitation and prevention to the platform.

The project has since attracted further funding to support its continued development.

Precision Care Initiative brings genomics into cancer care

For people with complex cancers, genomic testing can uncover new treatment possibilities. The Precision Care Initiative helps turn those results into practical guidance for treating teams.

Led by Professor Natalie Taylor at UNSW Sydney, the clinic brings oncology, genomics and implementation expertise together to support personalised cancer care. It has received **more than 200 referrals from almost 150 clinicians across 100 cancer services**, with one third of those services in regional or rural areas.

SPHERE supported the initiative early, providing expert review and helping strengthen its funding proposal. Today, patients across Australia can access specialist genomic advice, including via telehealth.



Celebrating ten years of impact

The SPHERE 10 Years of Impact Awards celebrate outstanding contributions from across the partnership and the people, teams and collaborations translating research into better healthcare and health outcomes.

The five categories highlight work that strengthens equity, puts innovation into practice, builds strong partnerships, supports emerging research leadership and advances women in translational health research.

Equity in Health Impact Award

Recognises research, partnerships or programs that reduce inequities in access to care and health outcomes for priority populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other underserved groups.

Partnership and Collaboration Award

Honours teams or networks that demonstrate exemplary cross-institutional, community, clinical, academic, or consumer partnerships that advance translational research and health impact.

Innovation and Implementation Award

Recognises work that combines innovation with effective implementation to deliver measurable improvements in patient outcomes, experience, or health system performance.

Emerging Researcher Award

Acknowledges a researcher who is building strong collaborative networks, producing high-quality research and showing clear potential to translate evidence into improved clinical practice or community outcomes.

Women in Translational Health Leadership Award

Recognises an outstanding researcher who has demonstrated leadership in translational health research, collaboration, and impact. This award celebrates women who are advancing innovation, strengthening research capacity, and contributing to meaningful improvements in health outcomes.

Our direction for the next five years

SPHERE's Strategic Plan 2026–2031 builds on what we have learned over the past decade and sets a clear direction for the next five years.

The research translation landscape is changing. There is a stronger expectation that research responds to real health system needs, is shaped with consumers and communities, addresses inequities and leads to measurable improvements in care. Good evidence also needs the right support to move beyond individual projects or pilots and become part of everyday practice.

For SPHERE, this next phase means putting greater emphasis on implementation, partnership, equity and impact. We will continue to draw on our strengths in collaboration, education and research translation, while doing more to help effective approaches become embedded in practice and spread across the health system.

The strategy also recognises that research translation does not follow a single path. Sometimes impact comes through changes to clinical practice, models of care, service delivery, policy or guidelines. In other cases, working with industry and other external partners can help innovations develop further and reach the people who could benefit from them.

We also want to strengthen how we understand and demonstrate the difference this work is making. That means looking beyond research activity alone to understand whether it is changing care, reducing inequities, strengthening capability and delivering value for the health system.

SPHERE
Strategy at a Glance



Our vision

Transforming healthcare through research translated into practice for the benefit of the diverse communities we serve.



Our mission

SPHERE enables health services, researchers and communities to work together to translate research into better healthcare and health outcomes at scale.



How SPHERE creates value

By connecting health system and community priorities with the partnerships, capability, research evidence and collective voice needed to inform policy, influence practice, and strengthen equity, care and health system impact.

Strategic Priorities



1. **Shape research translation** around health system and community priorities



2. **Build connected capability and capacity** for health service-led research translation



3. **Enable implementation, sustainment and spread** of research-informed improvements



4. **Mobilise partnerships** to create system-wide value and influence



5. **Demonstrate impact** in care, equity and health system value

Cross-cutting commitments



Equity-driven research translation



Consumer and community partnership