

05 June 2026

We were very surprised by the findings in the document having not been actively engaged in the process or requested to review or provide feedback before the document was finalised. We have reached out to the South Australian Productivity Commission to seek feedback on the process.

While SAHMRI welcomes ongoing policy review to ensure the sustained efficacy of the state's research sector, we fundamentally reject the characterisations of SAHMRI's priorities, conduct, and cost-benefit ratio. These assertions are not supported by our operational data and run contrary to earlier assessments, including the Health and Medical Research Productivity Commission report and previous South Australian Productivity Commission findings, both of which affirmed SAHMRI's strong strategic position and structural efficiency.

In the previous Health and Medical Research Productivity Commission report:

The Commission notes throughout the report that SAHMRI has made a positive contribution to the sector and has outperformed the Universities in a number of research metrics and impact measures. SAHMRI's publication output and impact factor surpasses the Universities by a considerable margin.

"Based on the category-normalised citation impact, South Australian research institutions perform above the world average and SAHMRI has outperformed the universities by a considerable margin. SAHMRI has a higher share of publications with international or industry collaborations." (p.14)

"SAHMRI has made a positive contribution to the state's HMR effort over the past decade despite having a purpose and governance that raises friction and conflict with its university members. While it has been criticised by some stakeholders as lacking clear direction and focused research priorities, and as absorbing most or all of the South Australian Government's funding for HMR, the Commission considers this perception to be a significant overstatement of reality." (p.15)

SAHMRI has made a positive contribution to the State's performance over a period where SA Health and the University of Adelaide have declined (p201).

Far from being a cost burden, SAHMRI operates as the singular, unified institute for medical research in South Australia, delivering an estimated **\$110 million in annual savings** to the state health system.

For your reporting, please find the factual background regarding SAHMRI's operational efficiency, economic return, and direct health impacts below.

1. Structural Efficiency and Economic Return

The claim that SAHMRI's costs outweigh its benefits overlooks the fundamental economics of the independent Medical Research Institute (MRI) model.

- **Capital Efficiency:** Research within an MRI requires an additional \$0.63 investment per dollar, compared to the \$1.20 required within Group of Eight university structures.
- **Sovereign Capability:** SAHMRI provides critical sovereign manufacturing for South Australia, producing over 12,000 radiopharmaceutical doses (such as fluorodeoxyglucose) to diagnose, track, and treat diseases like cancer locally.
- **Industry Investment:** SAHMRI drives state economic development through active product collaborations with major multinational corporations to small and medium sized enterprises.
- **Talent & Revenue:** SAHMRI has successfully attracted 86 national and international research leaders who have subsequently secured over \$171 million in funding.

2. State Positioning and Governance

Unlike states such as New South Wales and Victoria, which house 17 and 13 independent MRIs respectively, SAHMRI acts as the singular, agile hub for South Australia. This unified model allows for rapid responses to emerging state priorities:

- **Pandemic Risk Management:** SAHMRI provided the rapid evidence synthesis, mathematical modelling, and scientific support to the State Government that directly contributed to South Australia experiencing the fewest days in lockdown of any state.
- **Direct Employment & Capacity Building:** We employ 525 people (with 10% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) and support the training of approximately 150 postgraduate students annually, directly boosting local university rankings, and providing a pipeline of highly skilled individuals for the industry.
- **Academic Impact:** Over the past five years (2021-2025), SAHMRI's output includes 2,460 publications and 35,476 citations, with 79% of our documents cited globally. This is well above the industry average.

3. Translation to Patient Care

Assertions of "flawed priorities" fail to account for the direct, systemic improvements SAHMRI has engineered for local and global health outcomes:

- **Maternal and Perinatal Health:** SAHMRI led international research demonstrating that correcting low omega-3 status reduces the risk of prematurity. Our world-first pregnancy screening to identify and treat at-risk women is now being adopted across the UK, USA, Belgium, and the Netherlands. (See Blair Boyer MP recent social media posts)
- **Aged Care Quality:** We developed the Outcome Monitoring System for the Royal Commission to ensure standardised quality indicators are implemented across every aged care home.
- **Oncology:** SAHMRI has led global research that has been instrumental in transforming Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia from a fatal diagnosis into a manageable chronic disease.
- **Aboriginal Health:** We are leading national efforts to improve foot health and drastically reduce amputation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with diabetes.

SAHMRI's research translates directly, bridging the gap between laboratory discovery and patient care. We remain entirely focused on continuing this vital work for the people of South Australia and the health of the global community.