



Forensicare

Operational Plan

**Strategic Direction 4 - Research,
Education & Innovation**

2021 - 2026



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Introduction

Forensicare enjoys a sound research base and a strong commitment to supporting research throughout the organisation. In addition to providing specialist clinical services through inpatient, community-based and prison programs, Forensicare is required (under the Mental Health Act 2014) to provide research, training, and professional education. Specifically, the statutory functions and powers of Forensicare include the requirement “to conduct research in the fields of forensic mental health, forensic health, forensic behavioural science and associated fields” and to “promote continuous improvements and innovations in the provision of forensic mental health and related services in Victoria” (Mental Health Act 2014 s.330(g) & s.330(h)). The requirement of Forensicare to conduct research is quite unique among forensic mental health services in Australia. All too often, a tension exists between research and practice in clinical services, and forensic mental health services are typically no different. Within Forensicare, however, there is a critical nexus between science and practice – with each informing the other to ensure excellence and evidence-based practice in our service. Ongoing research in forensic behavioural science and forensic mental health is critical owing to the highly specialised nature of the field as well as the rapidly emerging knowledge in the field.

From its inception, Forensicare has worked with a range of universities to develop a research capacity in forensic mental health and related fields. The relationships have ensured that Forensicare attracts academics and research funding to undertake research relevant to Forensicare’s clinical work. The Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science (CFBS) operates under the auspices of Swinburne University of Technology in partnership with Forensicare. The CFBS serves as the research arm of Forensicare, conducting independent research and facilitating the research enterprises of Forensicare. The research program ensures that high quality research is undertaken to better inform clinical practice in the provision of public mental health services. Forensicare is also committed to disseminating research findings to Mental Health Service Areas and other stakeholders. All staff are encouraged to participate in the research program.

Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System – 2020-2021

The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System recognised the importance of research in the final report released in 2021. The final three recommendations of the report highlighted the importance of facilitating translational research and its dissemination; the need to drive innovation in mental health treatment, care and support, and the importance of evaluating mental health and wellbeing programs, initiatives, and innovations. The Royal Commission also reiterated the call to establish a Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, of which Forensicare aims to be a key collaborative partner.



Forensicare

Forensicare Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Our purpose

Our purpose is to empower recovery for all Victorians living with mental illness who are at risk of entering, or have entered the justice system, to lead safe and meaningful lives free from offending. Our strategic plan is the culmination of hard work by many people. We consulted widely with staff, executive, the board, as well as consumers, carers, families, supporters, service delivery partners, and other organisations. In this plan, we share brave and inspiring ideas from our people in creating a new vision and direction for our organisation.

Our new vision

Meaningful lives lived safely

Hope in recovery

Connected care

These are the things we are aiming for as an organisation. Supported by our four strategic directions, we will be able to achieve this new vision within the next five years.

Our four strategic directions

1. Consumer recovery pathway
2. Connections and partnerships
3. Workplace of choice
4. Research, education and innovation



Forensicare Strategic Direction 4 – Research, Education and Innovation

We are trusted international thought leaders who lead innovation in the interface between mental illness and offending behaviour recovery.

Priorities

We will work with the Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing to:

4.1 Promote innovation, knowledge creation, translation and application of best practice in forensic mental health services through:

4.1.1 Adopting a knowledge to action framework for translating research into clinical practice.

4.1.2 Sharing research findings in a way that is accessible to consumers and carers, families and supporters.

4.1.3 Exploring opportunities to collaborate in the design of effective behaviour change programs.

4.1.4 Inspiring new ideas and delivering evidence informed decisions across Forensicare.

4.1.5 Learning from other services and jurisdictions to improve the consumer recovery journey

4.2 Strengthening the research capability of Forensicare staff and aligning with future service directions.

4.2.1 Drive a research agenda where “research is everyone’s business”

4.2.2 Work with service delivery partners and government to strengthen our understanding of the consumer recovery journey.

4.2.3 Embed an evaluation in everything we do.

4.3 Teaching, training and education in forensic mental health services across Victoria supports the prevention, early intervention and recovery of those living with mental illness and engaging in offending behaviours.

Outcomes

- > Evidence of scholarly excellence and impact.
- > Implement and measure the Framework to Assess the Impact from Translational health research (FAIT) across Forensicare research programs.
- > Annual increase in the number of teaching, training and education programs provided across Victoria.



Forensicare

Prioritising research aligned with our Research Priorities

Our research priorities and enablers were identified through key stakeholder engagement and expert consultation over multiple workshop and planning sessions and subsequently approved by the Forensicare Operational Research Committee (ORC) (see Figure 1). The strategic plan is founded in the nexus between science and practice – with each informing the other to ensure excellence and evidence-based practice in our service. The six research priority areas align with our vision; meaningful lives lived safely; hope in recovery; connected care.

Forensicare Strategic Plan 2021-26: Research Priorities & Enablers

Research at Forensicare is conducted to:

- evaluate and improve our services and strengthen the capability and wellbeing of our staff;
- improve how we collaborate with our consumers and their families, carers and support partners in identifying and meeting their needs to maximise illness, social and offending recovery and community safety; and
- generate new knowledge and innovation in forensic mental health environments, practice and teaching that shapes policy and drives local and international improvement in the field of forensic mental health.

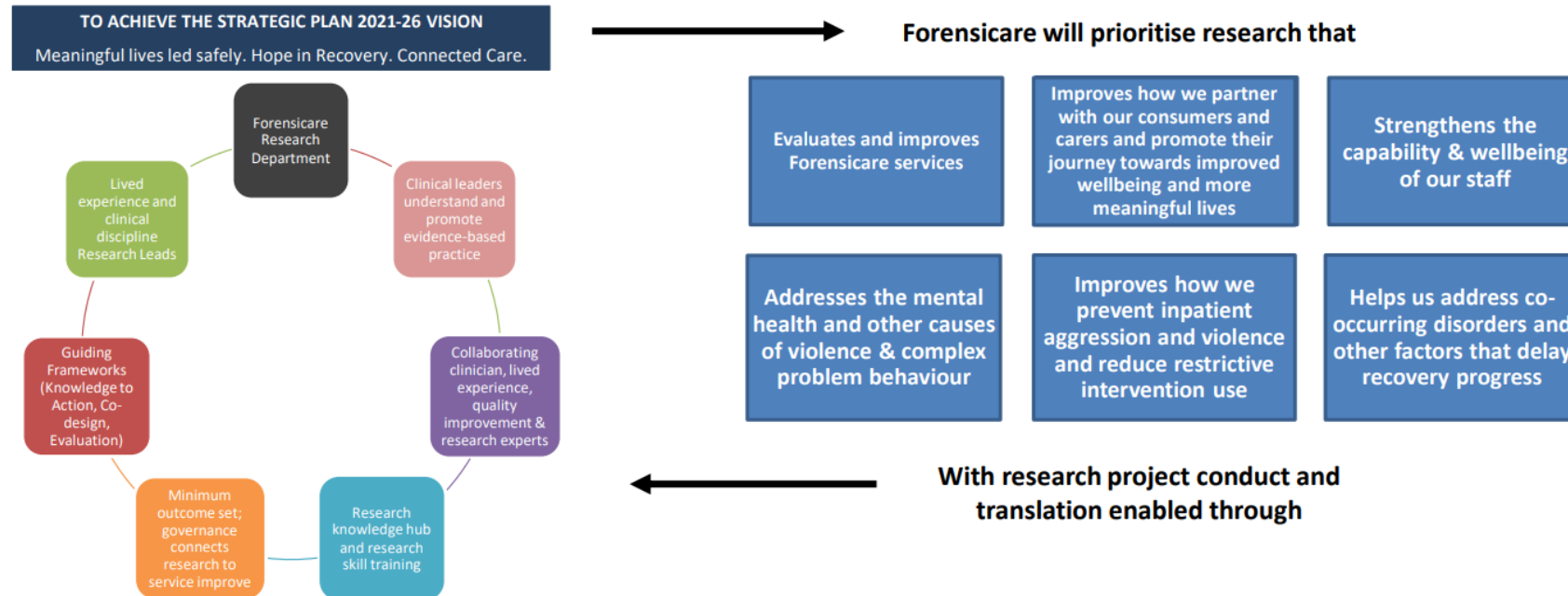


Figure 1. Research Priority Areas



Meeting our strategic research direction

The Forensicare Research Department will build research resource and capacity. This will be attained through seven key overlapping elements; (1) Co-design, (2) Collaboration, (3) Dissemination, (4) Evidence-based practices, (5) the Operational Research Committee, (6) Research literacy, and (7) Translation. The elements overlap and intersect and as such no single element has priority over another. Rather, equal focus on each allows for a systematic pathway critical to the achievement Strategic Direction 4

The Forensicare Research Department

Research, innovation, and education at Forensicare are driven by the Forensicare Research Department and partnership with the CFBS. In addition to driving research and innovation strategies, the Forensicare Research Department will provide oversight to our strategic research direction (see figure 2). The Forensicare Research Department will be responsible for monitoring, collating, and reporting outcomes and progress relative to our seven key overlapping elements (see table 1). The Forensicare Research Department consists of three core Forensicare staff members:

- > Executive Director of Research & Psychological Services
- > Research Manager
- > Research Fellow

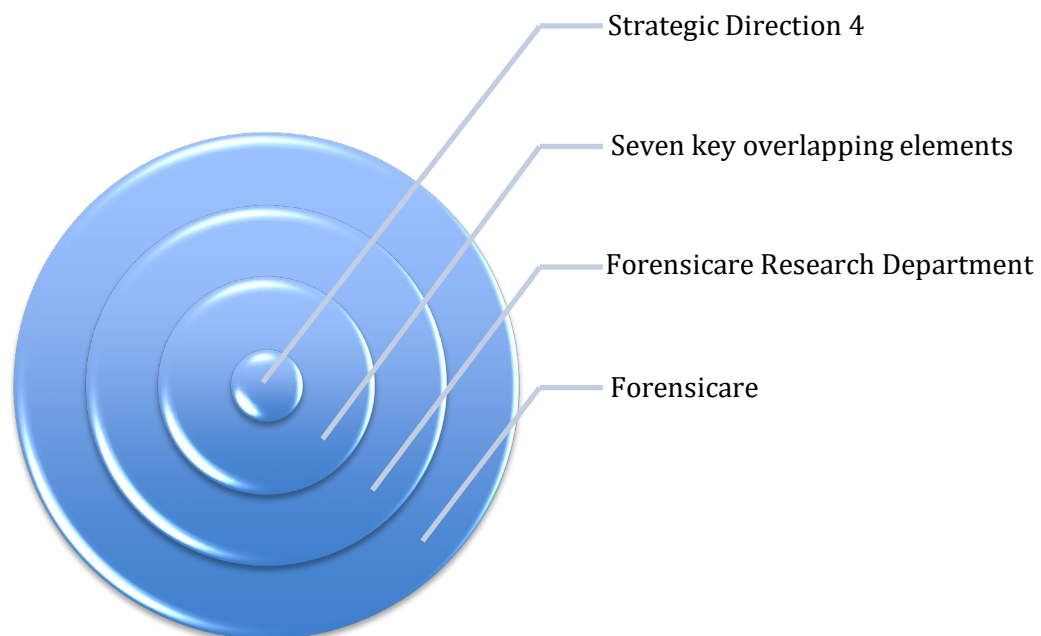


Figure 2. Strategic overview



Table 1 shows structures the Forensicare Research Department will use to meet our strategic direction of research, education and innovation.

Table 1. Structures to meet our strategic research goals

Co-design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A Forensicare consumer lived experience team member is a member of the Operational Research Committee > Maintain presence of Forensicare research staff at TEH and Community Consumer Advocacy Group meetings > Co-design and participatory action research methods are embedded in Forensicare service evaluation projects > Establish mechanisms to increase multi-stage consumer involvement in research and evaluation activities
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintain the existing close partnership between Forensicare and the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science at Swinburne University of Technology > Engage with the new Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing > Engage CAG and other carer/consumer organisations > Maintain academic appointments in Forensic Psychiatry and Forensic Mental Health Nursing > Establish and/or maintain academic appointments in Occupational Therapy and Social Work/Lived experience. > Develop co-funded Forensicare and Swinburne industry scholarships to support HDR (PhD or Masters by research) candidates > Collaborate in national and international service benchmarking
Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure proposed research projects specifically identify dissemination actions for approval by the ORC > Produce regular internet and intranet news pieces regarding national and international research outcomes relevant to our services > Produce regular user-friendly communication of research outcomes for Forensicare key stakeholders > Maintain regular dissemination of research and evaluation findings via the internet, publication, and presentation > Support staff to publish and present research outcomes nationally and internationally > Explore future external expansion of the Forensicare Research Dissemination Seminar
Evidence-based practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Create and maintain the Forensic Mental Health Professional Development Program with the CFBS > Support clinicians' ideas for research opportunities and liaise with HDR students at the CFBS and other institutions > With input as required from CFBS and Forensicare Research Department staff, deliver a program of research, supervise or educate research students or colleagues, and advise on the use of research for innovating or improving practice > Support mechanisms to ensure that prospective evaluation frameworks are developed and initiated before the roll-out of major new services and clinical interventions



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support a close interface between research/evaluation, quality and safety, and health information management across all Forensicare services > Support service evaluation efforts by working with the Forensicare Executive, to establish reliable, accurate, efficient, and accessible ways to collect and supply data about Forensicare consumers and about the services/treatment provided to each individual > Support advocacy for standardised assessment of psychiatric, psychological, criminogenic, and functional factors at multiple time points across all direct care services. Work with clinical services to ensure that assessment measures are well validated and agile > Support work with clinical and operational services to ensure that staff are upskilled to record clinical data in such a way that maintains information integrity and supports service monitoring and evaluation > Facilitate staff access to relevant internal and external research published in subscription only peer reviewed journals
Operational Research Committee (ORC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Evolve ORC membership to maximise research engagement relevant to Directorates, disciplines, and key stakeholders > Continue to monitor research and evaluations across the organisation > Evolve research governance procedures and policies to update content and to maximise utility for researchers > Continue monitoring and redeveloping research governance procedures and policies
Research literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > For all Forensicare staff, maintain access to the Melbourne Health Library. > Develop and maintain The Forensicare Intranet “Research” tab for all recent Forensicare and CFBS staff publications > Provide advocacy and advice to Forensicare staff and consumers who wish to engage in research/evaluation activities > Develop research literacy content relative to discipline, directorate, and CAG groups > Develop clinician-led seed funding opportunities
Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure proposed research projects specifically identify translation actions for approval by the ORC > Strengthen and further enhance the nexus of clinical practice and research within Forensicare > Translate research findings into clinical practice within Forensicare and across external mental health services using the Framework to Assess the Impact from Translational health research (FAIT) > Engage Forensicare clinical staff to translate research findings into clinical education and professional development activities > Create ‘Forensicare Research Translation’ packs for relevant stakeholders upon research project completion and mandatory reporting to the ORC



Program Logic for Strategic Outcomes

INPUTS Forensicare Strategic Directions 4	OUTPUTS	IMPACTS	OUTCOMES
1. Promote innovation, knowledge creation, translation and application of best practice in forensic mental health services 2. Strengthening the research capability of Forensicare staff and aligning with future service directions	1. Forensicare Research Department driving research and innovation and oversight of the key overlapping elements (reporting of structures within – Co-design, Collaboration, Dissemination, Evidence-based practices, Research literacy, and Translation) 2. Forensicare Research Department driving research and innovation and oversight of the key overlapping elements (reporting of structures within – Co-design, Collaboration, Dissemination, Research literacy, the ORC, and Translation)	1 & 2. Forensicare Research Department Short-term 2021-2022 Update – Forensicare Research Proposal Protocol form, Forensicare guidelines for the submission of research proposals form, and ORC Terms of Reference Develop – protocols and/or guidelines and/or capacity buildings content for key elements (Co-design, Collaboration, Evidence-based practices, Research Literacy, and Translation). Develop – Key elements reporting tool Mid-long-term 2023-2026 Continue monitoring then collate and report on the seven key elements structures annually	1. Evidence of scholarly excellence and impact 2. Implement and measure the Framework to Assess the Impact from Translational health research (FAIT) across Forensicare research programs
3. Teaching, training and education in forensic mental health services across Victoria supports the prevention, early intervention and recovery of those living with mental illness and engaging in offending behaviours	3. Forensicare partnership with SUT/CFBS – Forensic Mental Health Professional Development Program (Forensicare Research Department reporting and collating evidence of teaching, training, and education delivery and enrolment)	3. Forensicare/SUT/CFBS partnership Short-term 2021-2023 Develop – Internal and external advertising strategy Report and review – internal and external enrolments Modify/develop content as required Mid-long-term 2024-2026 Continue to advertise, report, review, develop and modify content	3. Annual increase in the number of teaching, training and education programs provided across Victoria.
ASSUMPTIONS		EXTERNAL FACTORS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Forensicare staff remain in current positions within the Forensicare Research Department Forensicare will collaborate with the Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ongoing pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) will negatively impact face-to-face education delivery and research data collection modes – subsequent reduction in volume of strategic direction outcomes 	