

# The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital Research Strategy

---

August 2014

---

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Aim.....	3
Objectives .....	3
The Eye and Ear Research Strategy Framework.....	4
Strategy Element 1 - Enhance Engagement with Research Partners.....	4
Eye and Ear Campus Forum and other campus research committees .....	5
RVEEH's representation on Campus partners' Research Advisory Committee .....	6
Establish broader community partnerships, awareness and training.....	6
Open Day for the Senses .....	8
Strategy Element 2 - Establish and support RVEEH research themes and priorities.....	8
ENT Research Priorities .....	8
Ophthalmology Research Priorities .....	10
RVEEH Research Priorities.....	10
Strategy Element 3 - Funding of targeted research .....	12
Strategy Element 4 - Enhance translation of research into practice.....	12
Strategy Element 5 - Infrastructure and Resources to support the RVEEH's Research Strategy.....	13
Appendix 1 – Eye and Ear Campus Forum Terms of Reference .....	15

### Aim

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (Eye and Ear) Research Strategy aims to provide clarity and guidance on how the Eye and Ear will prioritise, support and manage research in the hospital.

In particular it will define:

- how research on the Eye and Ear campus will be managed;
- how governance oversight will be applied;
- how resources will be better utilised;
- the type of research the Eye and Ear will support;
- the Eye and Ear research priorities;
- how collaborations and partnerships will be encouraged and promoted; and
- how Eye and Ear research will be monitored to ensure that it helps facilitate better health service delivery and patient outcomes.

The Eye and Ear Research Strategy acknowledges and respects the research autonomy of its campus partners and it does not intend to impose on, influence or direct their research, but aims to identify common research interests that can be conducted in collaboration, or explore opportunities by which the campus partners can assist the Eye and Ear with its research priorities.

### Objectives

The Eye and Ear Research Strategy will:

- Provide greater clarity and transparency on how and which research occurs on campus
- Ensure that the Eye and Ear's research priorities are identified and appropriately supported
- Provide guidance on how and which campus research will be funded and supported by the Eye and Ear
- Ensure that research on campus is supported in an integrated and coordinated manner that will help facilitate the research strategic objectives of the Eye and Ear and its campus research partners
- Establish greater interaction, collegiality and communication with all RVEEH campus research partners to encourage research collaboration and the forging of an eye and ENT campus research strategy going forward

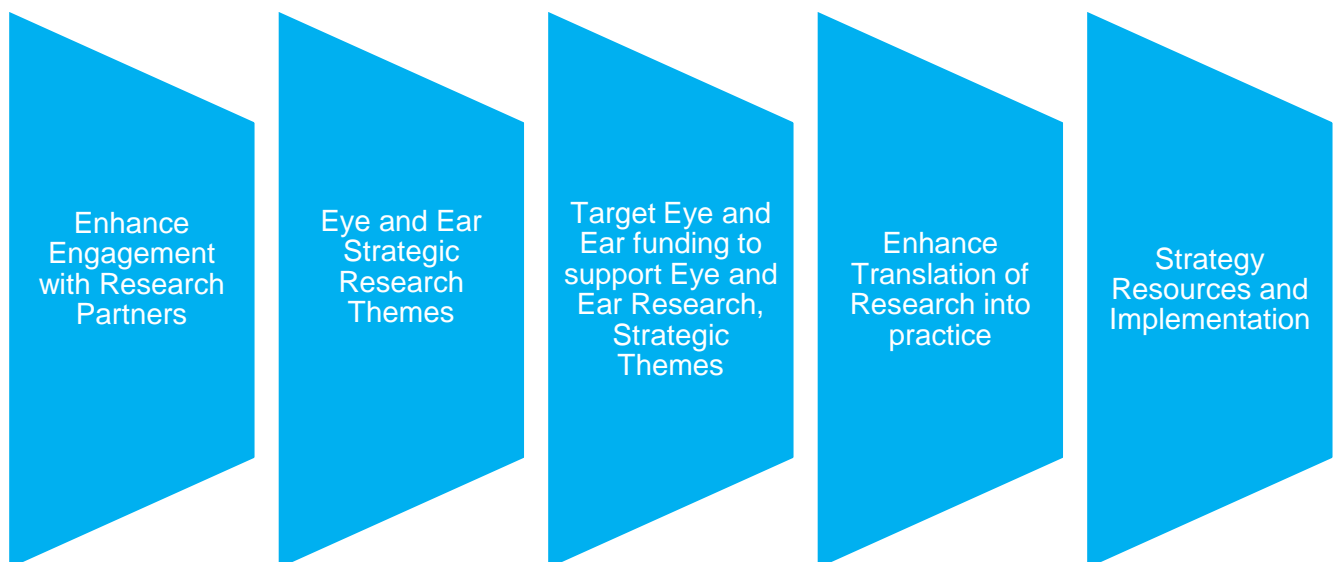
## The Eye and Ear Research Strategy Framework

The Eye and Ear Research Strategy will facilitate a systematic and integrated approach to guide and manage the conduct of research on campus and define how RVEEH resources will be utilised to facilitate certain research initiatives.

The Eye and Ear Research Strategy comprises five key elements:

1. Enhance the Eye and Ear's engagement with Research Partners
2. Establish the Eye and Ear's Research Strategic Themes
3. Establish a targeted approach to how the Eye and Ear's campus research is supported and funded
4. Enhance translation of research into practice and promote greater dissemination of findings
5. Explore resourcing options to facilitate implementation and support of the Eye and Ear Research Strategy

Diagram 1: The RVEEH Research Strategy Framework



### Strategy Element 1 - Enhance Engagement with Research Partners

The RVEEH Research Strategy aims to enhance the RVEEH's relationships with existing campus partners and also explore opportunities to expand the RVEEH's research collaborations, links and partnerships. The strategy aims to expand the RVEEH's sphere of influence, ensuring that it is able to partner in teaching, research and clinical care with a broader base and also assume a leadership role in public and community awareness.

## Eye and Ear Campus Forum and other campus research committees

The establishment of the Eye and Ear Campus Forum (*the forum*) is an important initiative in creating a collegiate and united platform through which all campus partners can be engaged, expectations declared and a mutually beneficial pathway forged.

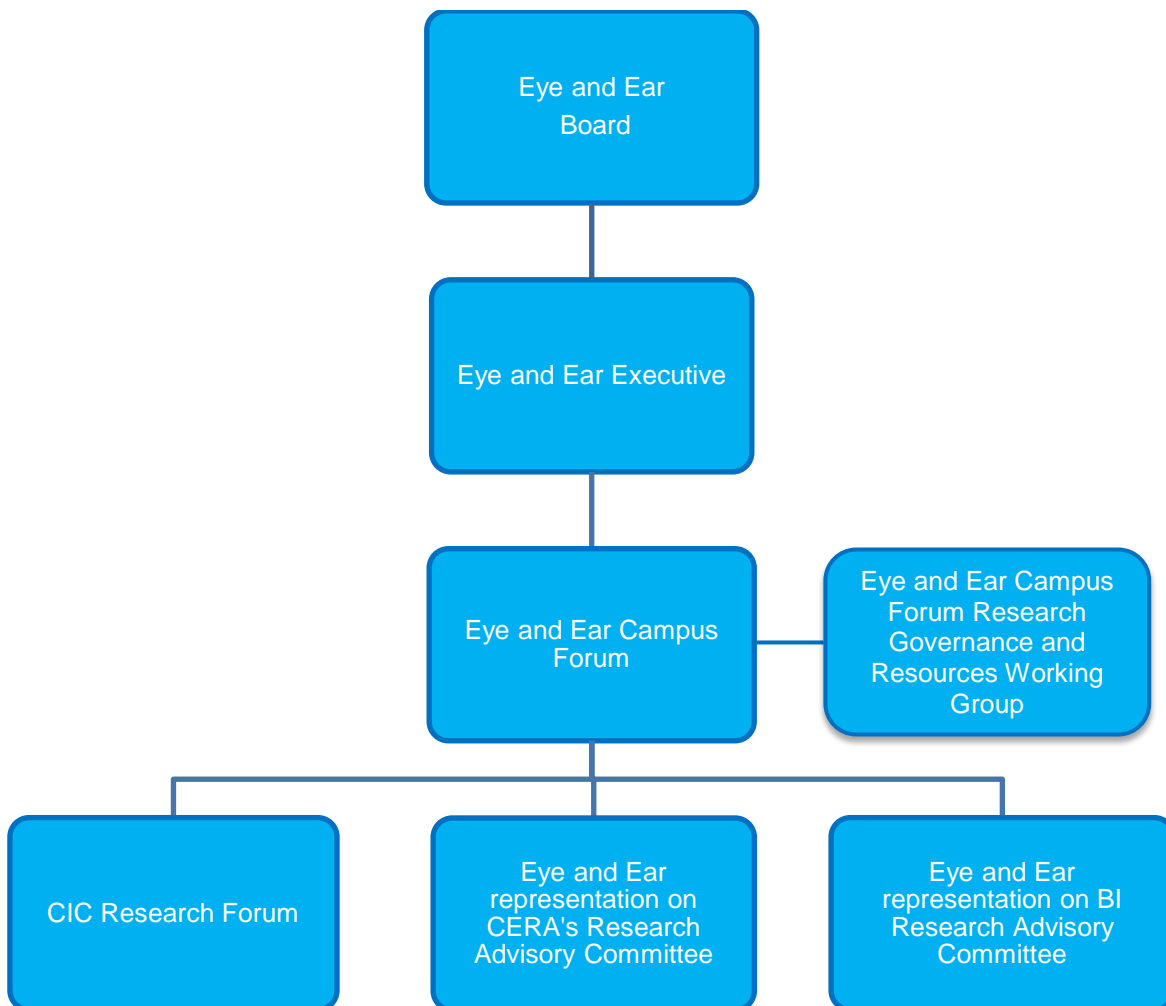
The forum will help enhance the collaboration and cooperation between the RVEEH campus research partners via greater communication and awareness of research activity, expectations and requirements of the campus partners. The Forum will have campus research as a standing agenda item. The forum will provide a structured and formalised way that The RVEEH campus research strategic matters can be discussed. This will ensure that high-level research matters from across the campus can be accordingly tabled and addressed.

The forum members will receive regular consolidated reports on The RVEEH campus research activities and on any research matters that it will need to be aware of, or is required to provide guidance or resolve.

Attached as Appendix 1 is the Eye and Ear Campus Forum Terms of Reference

The diagram below depicts the committees and governance that will inform the research agenda item on the campus forum agenda.

Diagram 2: Representation of the Eye and Ear Campus Research Governance Committees



### RVEEH's representation on Campus partners' Research Advisory Committee

In order for the RVEEH to increase its awareness of research being undertaken on campus and its potential impact on the RVEEH, the RVEEH will facilitate representation on the research advisory committee, or equivalent of its campus research partners. This will allow the RVEEH to have direct knowledge of current research activity currently underway and what is planned down the track. In return it will provide the RVEEH the opportunity to convey any research opportunities, challenges or needs that the RVEEH may have and which could be accommodated by the campus partners.

### Establish broader community partnerships, awareness and training

The RVEEH Research Strategy will endeavour to expand the sphere of research capability awareness, collaboration and influence for the RVEEH, beyond the current traditional research partners.

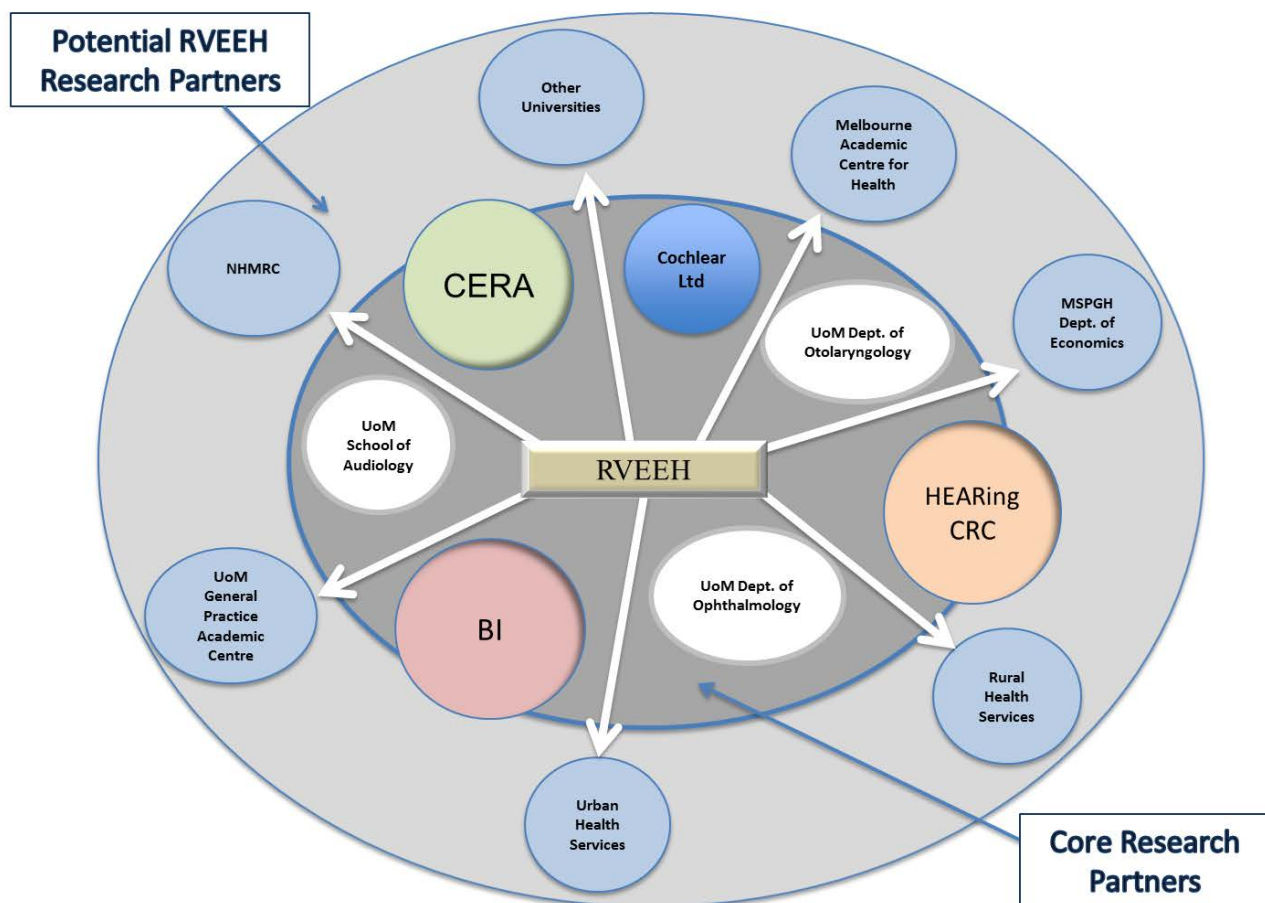
An annual review of the RVEEH Research Strategy will involve a broad environmental scan to gain a better appreciation of important players within the immediate and broader research sphere that are able to facilitate aspects of the RVEEH's research priorities.

In the short term, great benefit may be gained for the RVEEH by establishing greater interaction with other schools and departments within the University of Melbourne and associated health services, such as the University of Melbourne General Practice and Primary Care Academic Centre, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health-Department of Health Economics, other metropolitan health services.

Where possible, these broader interactions will be facilitated through the existing campus partners but will not be exclusively reliant on them, and may also be facilitated through the RVEEH's membership of the Melbourne Academic Centre for Health.

The diagram below depicts existing and potential research partnerships that the RVEEH will investigate as part of its first year research strategy.

Diagram 3: The Eye and Ear campus and potential broader research collaboration partners



The RVEEH will explore and establish broader and greater partnerships with primary care in clinical pathway delivery. This would also entail the development and evaluation of education, including online education and resources, for primary care providers.

### Open Day for the Senses

Promoting the RVEEH and its research partners to the broader community is important to ensure that appropriate recognition and support is attained. The benefits received from benevolent donations cannot be overstated and are integral in providing essential funding for certain research endeavours conducted on campus. Attracting new donations is a priority that will help build on the current research investment capital.

*'Open day for the senses'* will allow the public to witness the research activity and outcomes of the RVEEH and its partners across both the Ophthalmic and ENT domains. Key achievements such as the Bionic ear and Bionic eye would be just some of the key attractions. Coupled with other research and services provided by allied partners of the RVEEH, *'Open day for the senses'* will provide an unique opportunity to demonstrate to the public the value proposition of the RVEEH and its partners in enhancing the quality of life for many individuals, but also demonstrate the potential contribution and application of its campus research beyond just the science of vision and hearing.

## Strategy Element 2 - Establish and support RVEEH research themes and priorities

Through considered consultation, including with its campus stakeholders, the RVEEH has identified a number of research themes that it is interested in pursuing and supporting either as standalone initiatives or through appropriate research collaborations.

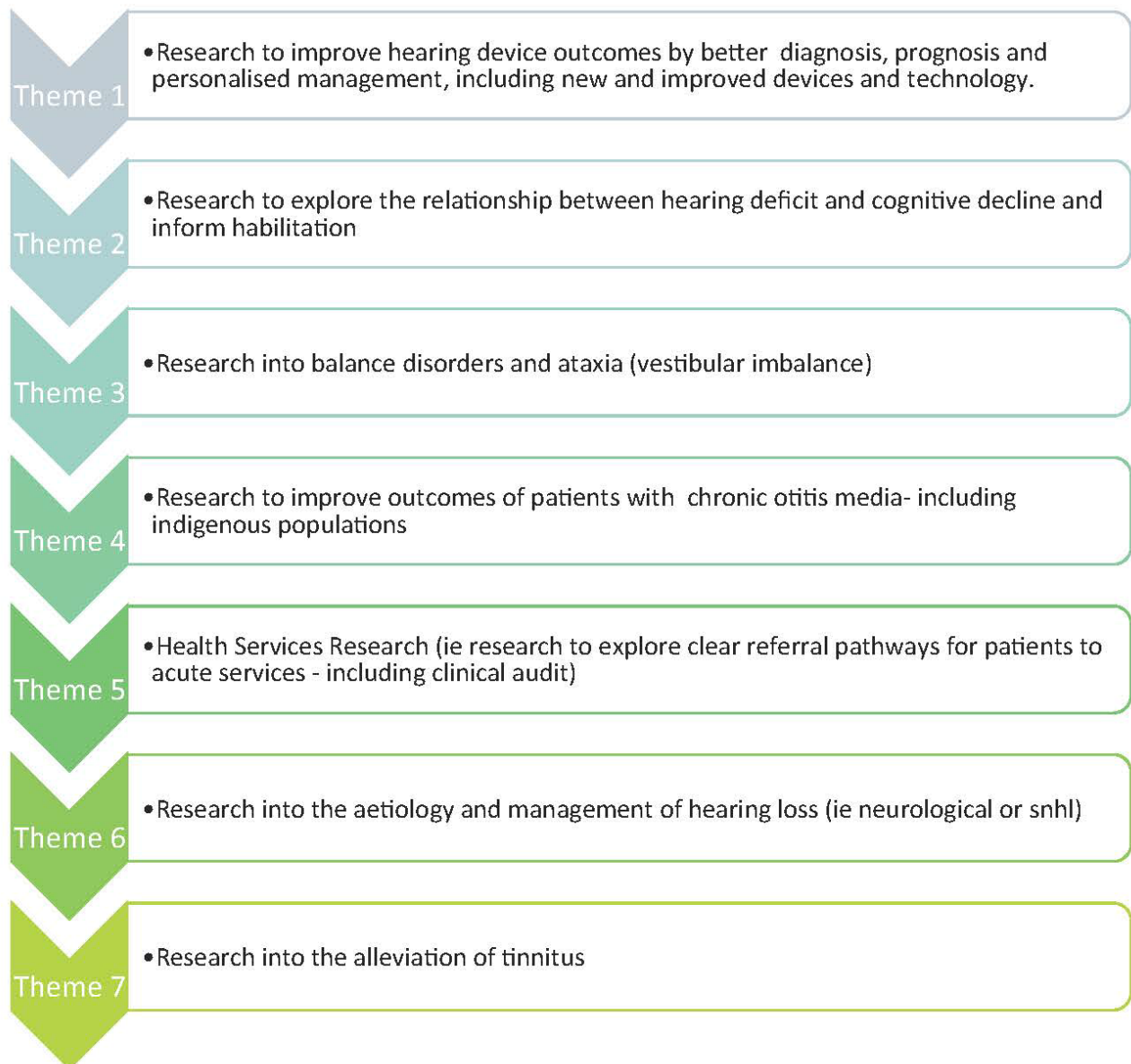
### ENT Research Priorities

The RVEEH through the Cochlear Implant Clinic (CIC) has established an overarching CIC research governance framework that defines the terms by which cochlear research will be supported by the RVEEH, and the manner by which access to CIC patients and databases will be administered. Part of the CIC research governance framework was to establish the CIC partners agreed research strategic priorities, with due consideration to the research needs and expectations of the RVEEH. The below flow chart depicts the key strategic themes that will guide the conduct of research by the CIC partners.



These ENT research priorities will support and align with the overall RVEEH Research priorities.

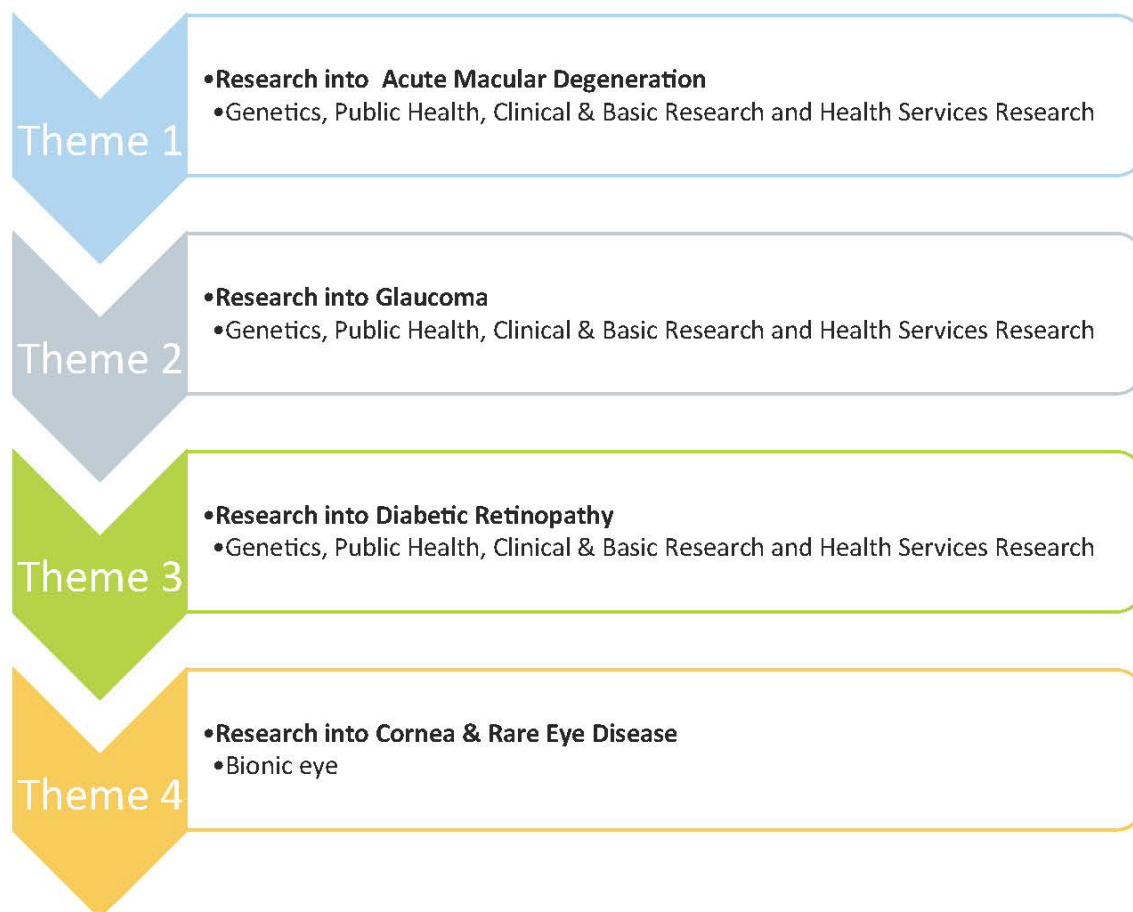
Diagram 4: ENT research themes and research priorities



## Ophthalmology Research Priorities

CERA has established its key research strategy having identified four distinct areas of research focus, as depicted in the below flow diagram. Each of the identified research themes has associated areas of research focus that involve genetics, public health, clinical and basic research and health services research.

Diagram 5: CERA research themes and research priorities



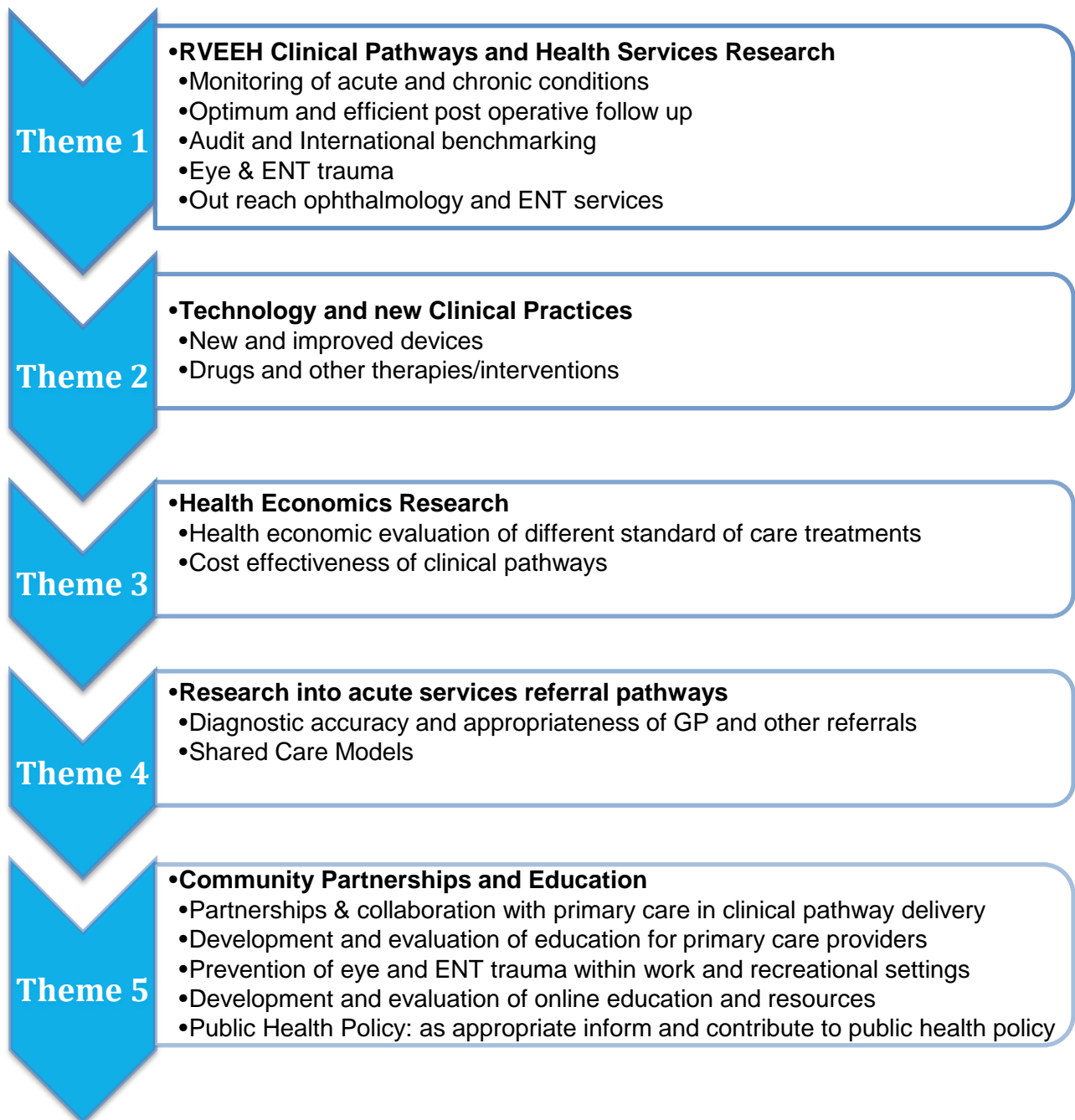
These Ophthalmology research priorities support and align with the overall RVEEH Research priorities.

## RVEEH Research Priorities

Discussions with key RVEEH stakeholders has confirmed the need for the RVEEH to identify and support research that will help the hospital address a number of health service delivery challenges across the ENT and Ophthalmology domains.

Five overarching Research Themes and priorities have been identified to enable RVEEH to better identify and support research :-

Diagram 6: RVEEH Research Themes and Priorities



Any approach by a campus partner requesting research support from the RVEEH, will be considered based on the research project aligning with the RVEEH research themes that are depicted in the diagram above.

It is proposed that the RVEEH Research Manager will be a new position created to develop and manage the process by which campus research may be considered for support by the RVEEH.

## Strategy Element 3 - Funding of targeted research

The RVEEH's research themes will underpin the RVEEH's research focus and investment going forward. It is appreciated that there will be elements of research that are undertaken by the campus partners that will provide benefit back to the RVEEH but may not be easily captured under any of the identified RVEEH research themes and priorities. Such research may provide value and potential benefit for RVEEH's patients down the track and also contribute to the RVEEH's reputation as a centre of excellence.

To acknowledge the value of this research, the RVEEH provides support in the form of subsidised infrastructure in the space provided at hospital and will explore other options to provide more targeted infrastructure (e.g. resources to provide appropriate patient data required for research. statistical analysis etc.) to acknowledge the benefits of the broader research on campus to the RVEEH. It is considered that support for basic science research on the Eye and Ear campus is the core responsibility of the respective campus research institutes and University departments.

The RVEEH does have some Specific Purpose Funds available to fund Research and will support and encourage research on campus by developing a more transparent and targeted approach to utilising these funds to support research. The RVEEH will review how its research funds will be allocated for the support of research, and this will be coordinated by the Research Manager and implemented effective from July 2015.

## Strategy Element 4 - Enhance translation of research into practice

The RVEEH, in collaboration with its campus research partners, has been successful in supporting translational research, particularly through the conduct of drug and device clinical trials. CERA, the Bionics Institute, Cochlear Ltd, the University of Melbourne and the HEARing CRC are all active participants in the conduct of clinical trials involving patients of the RVEEH and are integral in helping facilitate research discoveries into treatment options.

There is also a significant level of clinical audit activity undertaken on the Eye and Ear Campus.

Despite the apparent translation success that emanates from the conduct of clinical trials, the translation of clinical audit findings into informing clinical practice is not high, and their dissemination is not broad. Dissemination of clinical audit findings is usually achieved through peer or journal publications but this does not necessarily address their subsequent implementation into clinical practice at the RVEEH and more broadly.

Similarly, the need to provide broader dissemination of clinical audit findings across the RVEEH's departments and other health services needs to be considered, and a process by which uptake can be encouraged and monitored needs to be carefully explored. As part of its research strategy, the RVEEH will provide greater visibility and guidance to the

type of clinical audits being undertaken, informed by areas of clinical need, rather than being driven by the requirement to fulfil Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points.

## Strategy Element 5 - Infrastructure and Resources to support the RVEEH's Research Strategy

There are 2 major mechanisms for the RVEEH to support research on campus

### 1. Infrastructure Support

This is provided through the provision of subsidised allocated space on campus to research partners, as well as making shared areas available for general use by campus partners, such as meeting and seminar rooms, Lucy Jones Hall etc. The RVEEH also provides the funding to support the secretariat and administration of the RVEEH Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Bionics Institute Animal Research Ethics Committee

### 2. Funding Support

This is provided through some Specific Purpose Funds, such as the Wagstaff Fund, the Research fund etc. Funding is applied in different ways currently, such as through fellowships (Wagstaff) and direct project funding (Research Fund)

The RVEEH will work closely with Campus partners and others to explore ways to review how funds are utilised to look at other options, such as funding shared resources, available to support research more generally that can streamline and reduce duplication of effort across the campus.

As a first step, The RVEEH will establish the position of '*Research Manager*' that will be charged with enabling research on campus, implementing the various elements of the strategy, monitoring research on campus and enhancing existing campus partnerships, exploring new collaboration opportunities with external entities and promoting the research of the RVEEH and that of its partners to the broader community.

This position will be responsible for initiating and managing the following RVEEH research strategy initiatives, including

- Provide support for the accreditation of the RVEEH HREC under the NHMRC HoMER initiative
- Encourage harmonising and streamlining of the Eye and Ear campus partners' research governance processes by facilitating greater cooperation and communication between the campus Research Governance Officers.
- Explore existing 'free of charge' database systems that will help administer the conduct of research on campus. Establishing links with the HaBIC at the University of Melbourne will be a priority.

- Augment RVEEH campus research methods capability by leveraging on existing capabilities from the University of Melbourne and affiliated partners, where possible via collaboration or on a 'cost recovery' model, and establish partnerships with other University departments and health services.
- Work with the Eye and Ear campus partners to identify opportunities to better utilise available research funds and develop streamlined and appropriate procedures to support applications, assessment and disbursement of funds.
- Support the translation of research by promoting more targeted clinical audits with provision of support for the dissemination and implementation of findings into practice.

## Appendix 1 – Eye and Ear Campus Forum Terms of Reference

---

### *Eye & Ear Campus Forum*

---

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

##### **Statement of Objectives**

The key stakeholder organisations working within the Eye & Ear Hospital's campus comprise:

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital [RVEEH]  
The Centre for Eye Research Australia [CERA]  
The University of Melbourne [UoM]  
The Bionics Institute (BI)

Collectively we have agreed to work together in partnership to advance the interests of eye and ENT health in the community by fostering excellence in teaching, research and clinical care.

We agree that we are interdependent and that the advancement of ophthalmology and ENT on the Eye & Ear Hospital campus is the task of each of us individually as well as of the collective.

We share a vision for the campus and agree to work collaboratively on issues that impact on all stakeholders on the campus, , including branding, fundraising, cost sharing, senior appointments with cross party interests, and research governance and support .

The Eye and Ear Campus Forum has a shared vision of a world-class ophthalmology and ENT service that incorporates integrated clinical care, research, teaching and training.

##### **Objectives:**

1. To advance communication and collaboration between the stakeholders to ensure the integration of research, clinical services and education.
2. To work together to agree on an integrated approach for setting the future strategic direction of eye and ENT health service delivery, research and training on the Campus and within other outreach services.
3. To ensure that all clinicians, , researchers, , students, trainees, management and leadership are working towards the common aim of furthering the eye and ENT health outcomes for our patients and the community in general.
4. To work towards an integrated approach to research, research governance and research resourcing within the overall framework of the respective parties' independent governance and compliance obligations to optimise the outcomes from research to support our shared vision for eye and ENT health.

5. To work together to achieve efficiency savings by sharing where possible and being involved early in strategy and direction setting.

Underpinning all of this, the Eye and Ear Campus Forum will work towards alignment of policies and procedures for the stakeholders sharing the Eye & Ear Hospital campus.

### Working Groups

A number of working groups will be established, reporting to the forum, to work on specific areas of shared interest, commencing with:-

1. Research Governance and Resources
2. Philanthropy/Branding/Marketing
3. Physical Space and Equipment
4. Corporate Services
5. Education and Teaching

### Meetings:

Meetings will be held 6 times a year on the first Friday of February, April, June, August, October and December from 8-9am.

Meetings will alternate between Core and Extended Group attendances commencing each year with the Expanded group.

Only the named representatives are eligible to attend meetings of the campus forum. Nominees/delegates are not eligible for these meetings.

### Core Group Representatives

RVEEH– Ms Ann Clark, CEO  
CERA – Professor Jonathan Crowston, Managing Director,  
UoM – Professor Mark Cook, Director of Clinical Neurosciences.  
BI – Professor Robert Shepherd, Director

### Expanded Group Representatives

Ms Ann Clark  
Ms Jenni Gratton–Vaughan, Executive Director, Strategy Planning and Redevelopment RVEEH  
Dr Caroline Clarke, Executive Director, Medical and Ambulatory Services RVEEH  
Professor Jonathan Crowston,  
Ms Gerlinde Scholz, General Manager, CERA  
~~Professor James Best~~, UoM - tba  
Professor Terry Nolan, UoM/CERA  
Professor Stephen O’Leary, UoM  
Professor Robert Shepherd, BI  
Mr Peter Gover, BI

Document name:	Eye & Ear Campus Forum Charter
Held by:	CERA Management
Date first created:	21/03/2014
Adopted:	Core group meeting 21/03/2014
Last updated:	15/08/2014
Next review:	[adoption date + 12 months]



The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital  
32 Gisborne Street  
East Melbourne Victoria 3002  
Australia  
Locked Bag 8  
East Melbourne Victoria 8002  
Australia  
T +61 3 9929 8666  
TTY +61 3 9929 8681  
F +61 3 9663 7203  
E [info@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:info@eyeandear.org.au)  
W [www.eyeandear.org.au](http://www.eyeandear.org.au)

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital  
32 Gisborne Street  
East Melbourne Victoria 3002  
Australia  
Locked Bag 8  
East Melbourne Victoria 8002  
Australia  
T +61 3 9929 8666  
TTY +61 3 9929 8681  
F +61 3 9663 7203