

### **1. Western Australia's small share of national competitive funding**

Western Australian scientists are routinely funded at rates well below other states despite the excellent research being conducted in WA. In the 2024 application round, just 9% of submitted applications were funded, compared to rates of 12-15% in NSW, Vic and SA. Since 2018, WA has consistently received the lowest, or second-lowest percentage of funded applications in the Country. This disproportionate funding received by WA scientists from an already reduced funding pool has made it particularly difficult to have a career in research in WA. Competitive funding pays for research costs and salaries for researchers; a lack of funding success means that many researchers trained in WA are forced to either move interstate or overseas, or leave research careers due to lack of funding.

### **2. How the state's health and medical research priorities are determined**

It is not clear to researchers how the state's health and medical research priorities are determined. The WA Government released the WA Health and Medical Research Strategy 2023–2033 which identifies broad goals and focus areas, and though this is publicly available it does not outline health or medical research areas of importance for WA. Greater transparency and consultation is needed in identifying and developing areas of medical research priorities.

### **3. The impact on specific types of research and areas of need.**

WA is experiencing a 'brain drain' whereby researchers are leaving the state (or leaving research altogether) due to poor career prospects in WA. This is particularly true for biomedical and health researchers, for which salaries overwhelmingly come from competitive research funding.

Areas of research need include those concerning neurological illness and disease, workplace injuries and disease related to the ageing population. WA is set to have an increase to 1 in 5 people over 65 by 2050. A lack of investment in research in these areas means a greater financial, structural and emotional burden on Western Australians.