

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a light blue jacket and yellow shorts, is hiking on a trail. She is looking to her left. The background shows a mountain range under a cloudy sky. A large, stylized white logo is visible on the right side of the image.

Annual Report **2023—2024**

SaxInstitute 

The background of the page is a vibrant orange color, overlaid with intricate white and light orange geometric patterns. These patterns include various shapes such as circles, ovals, and lines, some of which are filled with a lighter shade of orange or white. The overall effect is a rich, textured, and culturally inspired design.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Sax Institute acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora nation as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Sax Institute office is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the strong cultural connections of all First Peoples to their land and water across Australia.

We value our partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and are committed to continuing our work together, enabling community-driven research that will make a difference to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Contents

- 02** Message from the Chair
- 04** Message from the CEO
- 08** Promote the use of credible
evidence in policy and practice
- 18** Drive innovative and impactful
approaches to addressing
complex policy challenges
- 26** Strengthen capabilities in the
mobilisation, translation and
implementation of evidence
- 34** Maximise the impact of our
programs and services
- 40** Our people
- 48** Financial details at a glance

Message from the Chair

The Sax Institute's commitment to innovation, collaboration, and impact ensures it will remain a key driver in shaping a healthier future for all Australians.



Over the past five years it has been my great privilege to serve as the Chair of the Board at the Sax Institute. It has been a wonderful and fascinating experience, but as I will be stepping down at the end of the year, this will be my last message as Chair. I am delighted to let you know that my successor in the role will be Dr Ian Pollard AM, who throughout his very distinguished career has served as Chair, Director or CEO of over 30 companies.

As I look back over the Institute's progress and achievements during my tenure, I am immensely proud of the work we have done and confident of its beneficial impact on the health and wellbeing of Australians. I have appreciated the support and collegiality of the Board members. I have also valued the expertise of the staff and particularly commend them for successfully negotiating the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

My term as Chair has been very much focused on preparing for the future so that we as an organisation remain well adapted to meet the challenges ahead. I have been pleased to oversee the development and

implementation of a new five-year strategy for the organisation. While our core mission remains the same – to improve health and wellbeing by driving the use of evidence – our new plan will contribute to building the organisation's profile and ensuring that the Sax Institute is the partner of choice in tackling complex health challenges.

I am also pleased to have overseen the appointment of our new CEO, Dr Martin McNamara, following the retirement of the Institute's founding CEO, Professor Sally Redman AO, in 2022. Dr McNamara's leadership since his appointment has already further cemented the Institute's strong reputation in the health sector and opened new avenues for growth.

At the same time, we have refreshed the organisation at the governance level with the appointment of several new Board members, who provide the Institute with an expanded breadth of experience and expertise to draw on. This renewal at both executive and governance levels puts the Institute in a strong position to seize new

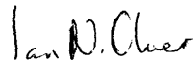
opportunities that will ensure our ongoing success. We have also broadened our engagement with our members with the introduction of Sax Forums, which highlight topics of mutual interest.

Throughout my time as Chair of the Institute, a focus on innovation has been at the core of our success. This has been evident in many of the initiatives undertaken over the past twelve months. They include the establishment of a standalone division for Aboriginal Health, which will allow us to broaden the scope of our efforts working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to address their health and wellbeing priorities.

Dynamic simulation modelling is another area where we continue to innovate. A Hospital Digital Twin is currently under development,

which will provide hospital administrators with a powerful data-driven simulation tool to support their operational and strategic decisions to improve patient outcomes. Change and innovation is on the horizon for our 45 and Up Study as well, as we actively explore what the next generation of the Study will look like and what we can achieve with it.

As I step down from the Board, I am confident that the Sax Institute is well-equipped to continue its vital work in driving evidence-informed improvements in public health policy and programs. The Institute's commitment to innovation, collaboration and impact in all its work ensures that it will remain a key driver in shaping a healthier future for all Australians.



Professor Ian Olver AM
Chair

Message from the CEO

The Sax Institute empowers decision makers with evidence-informed support to tackle complex health challenges.

Today's decision makers face an increasingly complex landscape of health policy and practice. The ability to access and use evidence – often in fast-evolving policy areas that require multilevel decision making – has never been more important.

At the Sax Institute, we are uniquely placed to provide the evidence-informed support that decision makers need, thanks to a broad suite of solutions that encompasses everything from dynamic simulation modelling to evaluation services, evidence reviews, Aboriginal-led research expertise, healthy ageing data from the 45 and Up Study, our secure health research platform SURE and more.

This report details the many ways in which we have leveraged high-quality evidence to address complex health challenges. Our Evidence Check on effective treatments for young people with gender dysphoria, commissioned by NSW Ministry of Health, is one such example, where we were able to synthesise a rapidly evolving evidence base to help policy makers better understand the latest evidence in an emerging area of health policy.

Another example is the work of our Decision Analytics team, in collaboration with the National Heart Foundation, to create a systems map to better understand the complex interplay of factors contributing to heart disease in Australia. Insights from this mapping will allow the Heart Foundation to pinpoint where it can

have the most effect and lay the groundwork for strategic action over the next 25 years.

A third example is the important information we are collecting through a new wave of surveys in our 45 and Up Study. As people enter a phase of life where aged care and cognitive decline become more prominent, the new data collected this year will provide important insights to support informed decision making in these complex areas.

And a final example to highlight is the establishment earlier this year of an Aboriginal Health Division. We recognise that achieving positive change in Aboriginal health requires action at multiple levels, in particular through community-led initiatives, which is a key focus for the new Division. It is led by Dr Scott Winch, who I am delighted to welcome to the Institute. Scott is a proud Wiradjuri man who brings over 30 years of experience in Aboriginal health.

Finally, on behalf of the whole organisation, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Ian Olver AM, who is stepping down as Board Chair, for his leadership during a period of significant transition for the Sax Institute. Ian's guidance has been instrumental in shaping the future direction of the Institute and in consolidating our ongoing success.



Dr Martin McNamara
CEO



At a glance



106,122

health surveys

sent out to 45 and Up Study participants in 2023-24



68

papers published

in our journal *Public Health Research & Practice*



700+

researchers

actively using the SURE platform at 30 June 2024



74

Sax Institute Members

located around Australia at 30 June 2024



400+

researchers, policy makers and practitioners

attended the Institute's forums, training programs and industry events



101,227

visitors

to the website of the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre



Sustainable solutions. Powered by evidence.

Our mission is to improve health and wellbeing by driving the use of research in policies, programs and services.

Over the past 20 years, the Sax Institute has built an impressive portfolio of products and services to support decision making and address challenges in the health sector. Our expertise ranges from complex modelling through to rapid evaluation and knowledge synthesis, and the use of large-scale datasets. We are leaders in co-production, forging close partnerships in key health areas.

We specialise in identifying and mobilising evidence regardless of the health problem. This approach gives us independence and an ability to bring new thinking to ongoing problems. It makes us well-suited to address the hard-to-anticipate policy challenges that will emerge in coming years.

About the Sax Institute

The Sax Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity that improves health and wellbeing by driving better use of evidence in policies, programs and services.

The Institute works with governments, health organisations, research organisations and a network of experts nationwide to analyse policy problems and find the best evidence-based solutions.

We have an international reputation in providing evidence support that helps decision makers analyse and address complex issues in public health.

The Institute's funding is derived from a mix of government, non-government, philanthropic and competitive grant sources.

We are:

- **Established to work at the interface** between the worlds of research and decision making
- **Trusted by agencies and researchers** and valued for our independence
- **Strengthened by close connections** to our Member network of more than 70 research centres, universities and other organisations that are leaders in research

We provide evidence support that focuses on improving the health of Australians. We help put evidence at the heart of decision making.

What we do:

The 45 and Up Study

Australia's largest ongoing study into health and ageing

Secure Unified Research Environment

Australia's most trusted platform for sharing and analysing sensitive data

Reviews and dialogues

Helping decision makers to find the best evidence-based solutions

Aboriginal health

Collaborations to improve the health of Aboriginal communities

Modelling for decision support

Testing the effect of potential new policies using dynamic systems modelling

Evaluations and support

Helping policy agencies understand the value, impact and outcome of programs and policies.

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre

A partnership approach to chronic disease prevention

Public Health Research & Practice

Australia's leading health policy journal*

*Scimago Journal Rankings, 2023

Promote the
use of credible
evidence in policy
and practice





Celebrating outstanding research with real-world impact



Pictured L-R: Dr Martin McNamara, Sax Institute CEO; Professor Bronwyn Hemsley, award winner; Professor Gary Sacks, award winner; Professor Ian Oliver AM, Sax Institute Chair; at the 2023 Research Action Awards.

The Sax Institute's annual Research Action Awards recognise early and mid-career researchers whose work has made a direct impact on health policy, programs or service delivery.

In 2023, our Research Action Award winners led inspiring research projects in areas as diverse as dysphagia and obesity prevention.

Professor Bronwyn Hemsley, of the **University of Technology Sydney**, won her award for her innovative work on providing safe and enjoyable meals for people with swallowing disability, while Professor Gary Sacks, from **Deakin University**, was

honoured for his highly impactful Food-EPI Australia initiative to advance obesity prevention policy.

The awards were presented to our winners by the Sax Institute's Board Chair, Professor Ian Oliver, at a special ceremony held at the New South Wales Parliament attended by over 100 senior policy makers, research leaders and academics.

Established in 2015, the annual Research Action Awards recognise researchers whose work has made a significant impact on health policy, programs or service delivery.



Professor Bronwyn Hemsley

Head of Speech Pathology, University of Technology

Improving the quality of life for people with difficulty swallowing, known as dysphagia, is the focus of Professor Hemsley's work. Around 8% of the general population and up to 80% of people with a disability have dysphagia, which impacts hugely on their health, nutrition and quality of life. Tragically, choking on food and aspiration pneumonia are leading causes of death in residential care.

Professor Hemsley was the lead investigator for a project funded by the **NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission** and **Victorian Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing** to address this issue. She led a large, interdisciplinary team to investigate and co-create training for support workers providing mealtime assistance to people with swallowing difficulty.

The result was an online course, 'Co-Creating Safe and Enjoyable Meals for People with Swallowing Disability', which has provided training for well over a thousand support workers across Australia. It has been adopted into NDIS legislation and rules, practice standards, quality indicators, practice alerts, and training materials.

"Our research is having a real impact in an area that **affects so many people but that often flies under the radar**. I'm very pleased to see our work recognised with this award."



Professor Gary Sacks

Professor of Public Health Policy and Co-Director of the Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition, Deakin University

Professor Sacks's work focuses on obesity prevention, at a time of soaring obesity rates in Australia. He initiated and continues to lead the **Food Policy Index (Food-EPI Australia)** initiative, which provides an ongoing assessment of the extent to which Australian jurisdictions are implementing recommended policies for obesity prevention, with reference to international best practice.

"There is global consensus on the best policies and actions to create healthier food environments. But policy implementation has been slow globally and in Australia. Through our research, **we've improved implementation of effective policies and highlighted the responsibility of governments** and the food industry to create healthier food environments."

The Food Policy Index covers up to 50 key policy areas – including food composition, labelling, promotion, prices and provision – that have been shown to have an important impact on population diets and obesity, as well as infrastructure support that helps facilitate effective policy implementation. It has contributed to important advancements in obesity prevention policy in Australia, including as part of the adoption of the National Preventive Health Strategy in 2021 and the National Obesity Strategy in 2022.

Shining a light on critical public health issues

This year the Sax Institute's peer-reviewed journal, *Public Health Research & Practice* (PHRP), addressed important public health issues in papers that often garnered significant media interest.

Generating media attention for research findings is an important tool for boosting impact and driving policy change, as it increases the visibility of the research with both policy makers and the general public. This year, our journal helped shape the debate in a number of critical areas, including:

- The use of psychedelics to treat certain mental health conditions
- Funding for obesity prevention
- The affordability of eyecare.

Research papers on these issues published in PHRP attracted widespread media attention, both in the general media – such as in **The Australian**, **Guardian Australia** and **Nine News** – as well as in publications aimed at health professionals and decision makers.

A paper that surveyed key stakeholders on psychedelic treatment for mental health issues, published shortly after a landmark decision by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to authorise use of psychedelics for treatment-resistant depression and post-traumatic stress

disorder, received significant media coverage, notably in *The Australian* and in the GP publication *Medical Republic*.

The paper, which has received attention from professional bodies and in subsequent public health literature, has been cited in ongoing debates on how best to prepare for the arrival of psychedelics in the treatment of mental health conditions.

A paper on funding for obesity prevention, published in April 2023 in a themed issue of PHRP focused on the prevention of chronic diseases, received media coverage in the medical press, in particular the **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners** publication **NewsGP** and the **Medical Republic**. The paper reported on low investment rates and significant gaps in obesity prevention funding in Australia. It elicited comment from the Chair of the RACGP Specific Interests Obesity Group Dr Terri Lynne-South, who called for an increase in federal funding allocations.

And a paper on the affordability of eyecare, which found that people often forego eye treatment due to out-of-pocket costs, was the subject of an AAP story that was syndicated to dozens of mastheads, including the **Daily Mail**, **Canberra Times** and the **West Australian**. It also caught the eye of the country's flagship publication for ophthalmologists, *Insight*, which led a themed issue on eyecare costs on the paper.



Public Health Research & Practice is ranked the number 1 health policy journal in Australia and the number 1 journal in the field of public health, environmental and occupational health (Scimago Journal Rankings, 2023).



National engagement with our Members

The Sax Forum, one of our knowledge-sharing initiatives for Member organisations, fostered connections between leading research and public health figures from Australia and overseas.

This year, the Sax Forum focused on emerging concepts in the use of research evidence. The key speaker at this event was Professor John Lavis, Director of Canada's **McMaster Health Forum**, who spoke on the current work of the **Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges**.

Professor Lavis discussed three critical priorities for improving the use of evidence: strengthening domestic evidence-support systems, investing in living evidence syntheses, and making evidence more available to citizens.

The event had a highly interactive discussion between panellists and the audience on the best ways to improve the use of research evidence, both in routine times and in future global crises.

Another Sax Forum discussed the state of rural health in Australia, with presentations from: Adjunct Professor Ruth Stewart, **National Rural Health Commissioner**;

Brendon Cutmore from the **NSW Ministry of Health's Regional Health Division**; and Dr Yann Guisard, Director of Knowledge Mobilisation at **Rural Doctors Network**.

The panellists shared their perspectives on meeting the challenge of providing high-quality health services and facilities in rural and regional Australia.

Each speaker provided thoughtful discussion on how the health system can meet these challenges and their optimism for the future of rural health in Australia.

The Institute also launched a bi-annual newsletter for Members this year, 'Behind the Evidence', sharing important updates about our work and special opportunities for Members.

Our Member network continued its strong growth this year, with five new Members joining us in the past 12 months. As of 30 June, 2024, we had **74 Member organisations** from New South Wales, Victoria, ACT, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Sax Forum connected leading experts to discuss making research evidence more accessible and impactful.

45 and Up Study drives research with impact

Data from the 45 and Up Study has informed important research on cancer, diabetes and other pressing health issues this year, generating widespread media attention and helping to inform evidence-based decision making.

The 45 and Up Study, Australia's largest ongoing study of health and ageing, supported a world-first study into the experience of pain by cancer survivors that has been used by cancer advocacy groups and widely shared with clinicians.

The research, led by the **Australian National University**, compared the pain experiences of 16,000 participants in the 45 and Up Study who had had a cancer diagnosis with a control group of over 100,000 cancer-free Study participants.

The study found that pain levels experienced by many cancer survivors are like those experienced by the general population, but that pain levels varied markedly depending on the type of cancer.

"Pain is one of the really feared symptoms of cancer patients," said lead author Associate Professor Grace Joshy. "The 45 and Up Study enabled the detailed investigation of pain during long-term cancer survivorship, highlighting cancer types and stages of cancer where pain is more common, and providing the evidence base to guide cancer survivors, policy makers and health professionals."

In another important study, researchers from the **University of Sydney** shed light on the link between lifestyle behaviours and risk of

nursing home admission later in life, gaining widespread media coverage and influencing subsequent research.

The study, which analysed data from 125,000 45 and Up participants from a 10-year period, found that those older than 60 with the unhealthiest lifestyles were significantly more likely to require admission to aged care than their peers with the healthiest lifestyles.

Researchers analysed lifestyle behaviours such as diet, exercise and smoking status to give participants a lifestyle score, and then



"The 45 and Up Study is a unique and powerful research tool that is getting better with time for long-term health conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dementia."

Dr Alice Gibson
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Menzies Centre for Health Policy and
Economics, The University of Sydney



identified nursing home admissions using Medicare Claims Data items in combination with hospital data. These methods, which were developed for the paper, have gone on to inform other research.

Lead author Dr Alice Gibson said she is grateful to the 45 and Up Study team for their support of this influential paper. “The team behind the 45 and Up Study are always willing to go the extra mile to facilitate the research process, from analysis through to publication and dissemination.”

The 45 and Up Study also supported new research that raised awareness of the issues of diabetes complications and fracture risk, and how they could be prevented.

A study by the University of Sydney found that men are more likely than women to experience complications from diabetes. The study looked at over 25,000 participants from the 45 and Up Study who had been previously diagnosed with diabetes. The

team of researchers found that rates of heart disease and complications of the leg, foot and kidney were all markedly higher in men, over an average monitoring period of around ten years. The findings, which highlighted the need for targeted screening for diabetes complications, were reported across Australia and internationally.

Another study by the **Garvan Institute** found that people who reported greater difficulty walking one kilometre were more likely to experience a fracture over a five-year period. The team of researchers analysed survey responses from more than 230,000 participants and used linked data to hospitalisations and visits to the emergency department to track fracture outcomes.

The findings, which were reported in Australia, UK, US, China, India and France, suggested a straightforward and cost-effective way for clinicians to identify those in need of further bone health screening.



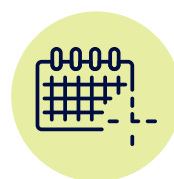
14,000+

academic citations of 45 and Up Study research



570

journal articles published using 45 and Up Study data



19

years of 45 and Up Study survey data



Evaluating new models of healthcare for rural communities

We helped strengthen primary care for communities in rural and remote NSW with our evaluation of a new model of collaborative care, and our recommendations for scaling these models for greater impact.

A significant challenge in rural areas is a lack of access to primary care. Many communities don't have enough GPs to service their population, and some no longer have any GPs at all.

A range of projects in NSW, supported by the **NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN)**, are tackling this problem with collaborative approaches to healthcare, which supports communities to develop solutions to their primary care challenges.

We helped evaluate the effectiveness of one of these projects, the 4Ts model. The model, named after the four rural towns in

Central West NSW that it services – Trangie, Tottenham, Tullamore, and Trundle – began in 2019, after the last private general practice shut down in the region. A single employer, **Western NSW Local Health District (WNSW LHD)**, organised health professionals to work across all four towns.

In 2023, we worked closely with WNSW LHD and other stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the 4Ts model, drawing on primary care data and hospital data, as well as qualitative data from interviews with patients, health care workers and developers of the model.

The evaluation found that the 4Ts model increased community access to GP services in all four towns, and that patient-reported experiences of care were higher than the NSW average. The model was also found to have contributed to a decrease in emergency department presentations for non-urgent care.

Dr Alice Knight, Director of Evaluation and Evidence Services at the Sax Institute, said that it was fantastic to help demonstrate the impact of the 4Ts program. “My family live in rural NSW and have experienced challenges accessing GPs and other healthcare, so it was really exciting to work on such an important and innovative project, that will have huge benefits for the people of rural NSW.”

Dr Shannon Nott, former WNSW LHD Director of Rural Medical Services, said that the evaluation will help other NSW communities facing similar issues. “The 4Ts model is vital in addressing the escalating challenges of primary care sustainability in rural and remote communities. This evaluation provided critical insights into its effectiveness over the past four years, delivering networked primary and acute care services in towns where the private primary care market had faltered.”



“Engaging with an organisation like the Sax Institute ensured a rigorous and independent evaluation, giving us confidence in the findings. The outcomes hold great significance for other NSW communities facing similar issues.”

Dr Shannon Nott

Former WNSW LHD Director of Rural Medical Services

Supporting the expansion of collaborative care in NSW

In addition to evaluating the 4Ts model, the Sax Institute also conducted a scalability assessment for collaborative approaches to healthcare for the **Regional Health Division of the NSW Ministry of Health** (MoH).

Working closely with members of the MoH and the **Western NSW Collaborative** – a partnership of the **WNSW LHD**, the **Far West LHD**, **RDN** and the **Western NSW Primary Health Network** – plus other key stakeholders, the assessment sought to understand the critical factors of the approach that contributed to its success, and how the MoH could best support other rural and remote communities experiencing primary care failure, to implement similar approaches.

“It was wonderful to partner with the NSW Ministry of Health and other stakeholders on this project, which has delivered insights to support the expansion of the program to other rural communities in NSW,” Dr Knight said. “Collaborative care is a great approach that prioritises community involvement in local health decision making and community-led solutions that improves access to critical health services for people in rural NSW.”

Drive innovative
and impactful
approaches
to addressing
complex policy
challenges





Powerful modelling tools to support decision-making

The Sax Institute's expertise in dynamic simulation modelling was used to address complex problems in health policy and practice this year.

Our modelling work helped **The Children's Hospital at Westmead** manage the flow of patients through its Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) – the largest of its kind in NSW. The work informed critical decisions around management of the unit and set a precedent for the use of dynamic simulation modelling as a strategic tool in health service planning.

Our modelling team also worked with the **National Heart Foundation** of Australia to develop a better understanding of the complex interplay of factors contributing to heart disease in Australia. We created a systems map that shows how different factors connect and influence each other, highlighting intervention opportunities that may otherwise have been overlooked.

Our models are powerful 'what-if' tools that allow our partners to explore the effects of possible policy, operational and implementation strategies before applying them in the real world. We work closely with policy makers and service providers to ensure they can apply insights from our models.

Improving paediatric care at a major Western Sydney hospital

When The Children's Hospital at Westmead faced challenges in managing the flow of patients through its PICU, it called on the Institute to build a sophisticated modelling tool.

A key issue for the unit was the need to balance cardiac care needs with those of other patients and to ensure cardiac surgeons had reliable access to PICU beds. One proposed solution was to 'ring-fence' beds specifically for cardiac patients. However, the potential impact of this strategy on the PICU's overall efficiency was unclear.





Working closely with hospital staff, we built a discrete event simulation model, using six years of data from PICU patients. This model simulates patient flow, taking into account factors such as arrival rates, diagnoses, urgency of procedures, staffing needs and lengths of stay. It simulates scenarios across various operational stress points – such as surgical cancellations, after-hours discharges or differing levels of unit occupancy – to understand the impact of ‘ring-fencing’ beds on patient flow and resources.

The model showed that while ring-fencing beds could potentially enhance the throughput of cardiac patients, it could not be achieved without negatively impacting overall patient throughput and increasing cancellations of elective surgeries. It provided actionable insights to the staff, allowing them to make more informed decisions around bed allocation without disrupting overall patient care.

“What modelling has given us is the ability to see the whole system more clearly and the overall effect of inflows and outflows of patients, which is not always so easy when you’re working at the coalface,” said Dr Marino Festa, a senior staff specialist at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead.

“It’s also given us a shared language and objectivity that we can use with clinicians, heads of departments and the Ministry of Health to better understand the benefits of adding resources and getting the best outcomes in the most efficient way.”

Reducing the impact of heart disease

Heart disease is a complex issue that impacts the lives of millions of Australians. It’s not simply a medical problem, but one that is also deeply connected to social, economic, and environmental factors.

These factors interact in a complex web, often creating feedback loops that worsen the disease’s impact. Understanding these intricate relationships is crucial for developing effective solutions that can reduce the impact of heart disease.

The Sax Institute was commissioned by the **National Heart Foundation of Australia** to create a systems map to better understand the complex interplay of factors contributing to heart disease in Australia. This map – known as a causal loop diagram – is a visual representation of the complex relationships between factors influencing both the rate of heart disease and its impact on Australians. To build the map, we tapped into the knowledge and experience of a broad range of stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the multiple drivers of the complexity of heart disease.

Our causal loop diagram reveals how different factors connect and influence each other, highlighting intervention opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked. Its insights will allow the Heart Foundation to pinpoint where it can have the most effect and lay the groundwork for effective, strategic action over the next 25 years to reduce heart disease prevalence and improve quality of life for those living with the condition.



Supporting impactful work with priority populations

This year, our Evaluation and Evidence Services team has worked with new and exciting clients in the for-purpose sector, that help address complex social challenges.

Dr Alice Knight, the Institute's Director, Evaluation and Evidence Services said the diversification of her team's work over the past 12 months is an exciting step forward.

"We've shown that we can master content across multiple complex areas and work collaboratively with community-based organisations to strengthen their service offerings and demonstrate their impact," she said. "These organisations can continue to improve outcomes for some of the most priority populations in our society."

Strengthening women's economic safety

The Institute has helped strengthen financial services for women, non-binary and gender diverse people experiencing economic abuse or financial hardship in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence.

We undertook an evaluation of **Money Clinics**, an initiative of the **Centre for Women's Economic Safety** (CWES) that provides free financial safety planning and information in a one-on-one session with a female financial specialist. The initiative services clients online around Australia as well as offering mobile in-person sessions in Sydney, the Illawarra region and Melbourne.

The Institute worked collaboratively with CWES to evaluate the initiative, using a wide range of data sources including

surveys, focus groups and case studies. The evaluation reported that Money Clinics are successfully reaching and meeting the previously unmet needs of a culturally diverse client group.

The program received overwhelmingly positive feedback from clients, and survey responses also showed statistically significant pre-clinic to post-clinic increases in clients' self-ratings across six key financial capability indicators.

Rebecca Glenn, Founder & CEO of the **Centre for Women's Economic Safety**, said this report is integral to the ongoing success of the program.

"It's vital we understand the impact we're having, not only to be able to report to funders but also to know whether or not

we're on the right track and how we can make our Money Clinic service more effective."

Findings from the evaluation helped influence the re-funding of the program, with the survey instruments used for the evaluation informing CWES' own client management system. The Institute has also been re-commissioned by CWES to conduct a two-year evaluation of the program and publish a peer-reviewed journal article on findings.

Supporting children and young people in need

This year, the Sax Institute has supported children and young people in need through their work with **Youth Off the Streets (YOTS)**.

Our Evaluation and Evidence Services team helped YOTS evaluate their Youth Justice program, which offers a range of supports to young people involved with, or at risk of being involved with, the justice system in the Sydney, Hunter New England, and the Logan area of Brisbane.

They also worked closely with YOTS to collaboratively design an organisation-wide Impact Measurement Strategy which will support YOTS to demonstrate their impact and deliver even better outcomes for the children and young people they work with.

"We really enjoyed supporting Youth Off The Streets on the Youth Justice evaluation and were thrilled when they asked us to work with them to develop an organisation-wide Impact Measurement Strategy," Dr Knight said.

"It's a very exciting time for the organisation as they have just released their new Strategic Plan for 2024-2028. The Impact Measurement Strategy will enable them to track their impact and work towards their strategic priorities."

"We've really valued the collaborative working relationship with the team at Sax Institute and can now feel confident we're positively supporting women's economic safety."

Rebecca Glenn

Founder & CEO, Centre for Women's Economic Safety



Bringing together evidence to support decision making

This year the Sax Institute has delivered evidence reviews that have played a valuable role in guiding the development of health policy in Australia, including work in sensitive and rapidly evolving areas such as the most effective treatments for young people with gender dysphoria.

Our evidence reviews are fast and accurate summaries of evidence that answer a specific question on health services or health policy. We make sure that the right research questions are asked, that the best research team is brought on board to answer those questions, and that the findings are presented in an accessible format for decision makers.

Our Evidence Check on effective treatments for children and young people with gender dysphoria, commissioned by **NSW Ministry of Health**, is one such example. We were able to synthesise a rapidly evolving evidence base to help policy makers better understand the latest evidence in an emerging and sensitive area of health policy.

For this review, which updated work we had previously done for the NSW Ministry of Health in 2019, we worked with researchers at **Monash University** and the **University of Melbourne** to summarise the latest international research about approaches to care and treatment for children and young people who have gender dysphoria. The review included information about risks and benefits of five types of medical and psychosocial interventions: psychosocial

therapies, puberty blockers, gender-affirming hormone therapy, gender-affirming chest surgery and fertility preservation. We found 82 new peer-reviewed papers published between 2019 and 2023 that met the **National Health and Medical Research Council's** quality standards for reliable research – representing a rapid growth in research in an emerging research field.

Our report has been widely circulated to clinicians and policy makers involved in gender services across NSW to ensure policy is informed by the best available evidence.



“Our strong connections with research experts allowed us to quickly respond to the NSW Ministry of Health’s request for a comprehensive update. We provided a detailed review of the strengths and weaknesses of the current research and offered recommendations for future studies in this area.”

Eileen Goldberg

Deputy Director, Evidence Mobilisation
Sax Institute

Rapid survey data informing healthcare

Our rapid-response surveys have helped address emerging priorities in health policy such as older Australians’ use of health care and attitudes to aged care.

45 and Up Health Compass is an innovative program of shorter, topic-focused surveys that are sent online to **21,000 participants** in the 45 and Up Study, aged 59 and older.

The surveys, which launched in 2022, can provide data within one month after a survey closes, with extremely high participant engagement rates of around 90%. Survey questions are developed in consultation with stakeholders from government, health organisations and advisory bodies.

This year, we worked with the **NSW Ministry of Health’s Aged Care Branch** to develop survey questions to examine attitudes to aged care, use of health care, and social connections and isolation.

Findings have been used within the Aged Care branch to inform internal service planning.

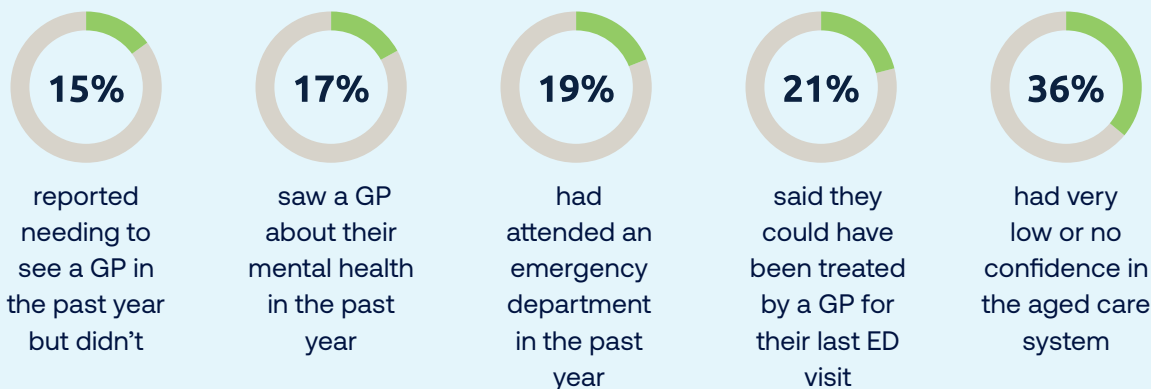
“Our positive working relationship with the NSW Ministry of Health meant that we could design a survey that effectively informed their work,” said Dr Greer Dawson, Deputy Director Research and Partnerships, 45 and Up Study.

“We were also able to provide nuanced analysis of the survey responses, such as how people with chronic conditions used primary care and emergency departments, or how a person’s view of the aged care system was linked to receiving aged care services.”

It’s a great example of how 45 and Up Health Compass continues to provide insightful and influential data to decision makers.

Our rapid data collection has informed research and decisions on aged care, vaccination, mental health, head injuries, and end-of-life care.

Survey data, collected between April and June this year, included these findings:



Strengthen
capabilities in
the mobilisation,
translation and
implementation of
evidence







Supporting chronic disease prevention in Australia

As a vital centre of the Sax Institute, The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre is dedicated to enhancing the chronic disease prevention system, ultimately aiming to help Australians lead longer, healthier lives.

Collaborative system leadership

The Prevention Centre promotes system leadership in chronic disease prevention through robust partnerships. It collaborates with a breadth of stakeholders such as the Australian Government, state and territory health departments, public health organisations and research institutions.

Nadia Mastersson, Head of Prevention, emphasises the importance of a collaborative approach.

“We are in an incredibly unique and privileged position. Our job is to bring people together to see the bigger picture, identify what can be achieved through collaboration and support meaningful change,” she says.

The Prevention Centre values its many partnerships, including hosting the **Collaboration for Enhanced Research Impact (CERI)**, a group of 12 leading **Centres for Research Excellence** focused on prevention. CERI’s unique strength lies in its

ability to influence the prevention system and support high-quality applied research in Australia.

The Prevention Centre’s investigators and partners have been leaders in championing systems thinking to address the complexities of chronic disease prevention. The Prevention Centre continues to strengthen systems science capability for policy through workshops and training.

Addressing policy-relevant evidence gaps

Over the past year, the Prevention Centre has focussed on supporting new knowledge relevant to prevention policy and practice.

Facilitating policy research dialogues has been critical to bringing researchers and policy makers together to identify evidence gaps and promote collaborative solutions. For example, one dialogue on addressing equity in the implementation of prevention was held in Darwin and attracted 100 researchers, policy makers and practitioners. The event not only fostered valuable connections for future collaboration but also identified a gap in practical, evidence-based guidance to improve health equity. The Prevention Centre is now partnering with a key research institution to address this gap.

The Prevention Centre continued to nurture the next generation of leaders through its **Emerging Leaders Network**, which hosted webinars and Communities of Practice. With around 400 members, this community offers early- and mid-career researchers, policy makers and practitioners opportunities for networking and skill development.

As one member stated, “Being a member of the network has provided me with opportunities to develop policy-relevant research ideas and collaborations that will last throughout my career.”

Enhancing research communication and translation

The Prevention Centre continued to synthesise knowledge to inform policy and practice, producing two knowledge syntheses on implementation research and the economics of prevention. These syntheses go beyond problem description by bringing policy makers to the table to identify key questions and analysing Prevention Centre research to provide evidence-informed, practical advice.

Our extensive experience and innovative approach in **science communication**, particularly in **translating complex health research into policy-relevant, accessible information**, positions us to meet the specific needs of diverse audiences.

The Prevention Centre has built science communication capability over 11 years, employing innovative methods such as storytelling, improvisation, and translating findings into news stories, policy briefs, videos, and podcasts. These efforts help disseminate evidence and engage networks.

Over the past year, the Prevention Centre also upskilled members of the prevention research community in science communication and promoted collaboration through webinars, a community of practice, and workshops.

“Our community of practice model showed that bringing researchers together with science communication experts can help promote the communication of synthesised evidence and provide a unified message on what works for prevention,” says Ainsley Burgess, Director of Science Communication at the Prevention Centre.

This year, through CERI we published a special issue of the Institute’s **Public Health Research & Practice** journal, titled Collaborative partnerships for prevention: health determinants, systems and impact. This issue showcased collaborative research from the **CERI Centres of Research Excellence**, representing approximately \$27.5 million in funding awarded to more than 200 leading prevention and public health researchers since 2016.

Sustained national support

The Prevention Centre remains committed to supporting co-designed prevention research that communicates effectively to influence policy and practice. The ongoing support from funding partners highlights the value the Prevention Centre brings to the public health landscape.

“The Prevention Centre has a unique balcony view,” Mastersson explains. “We’re positioned to facilitate higher-level discussions and ambitions among prevention partners to support better health for all Australians.”

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre is proudly funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, ACT Health, Cancer Council Australia, NSW Ministry of Health, Preventive Health SA, Tasmanian Department of Health, and VicHealth.

Supporting breastfeeding in First Nations communities

The Sax Institute is committed to supporting Indigenous-led efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples.

It has partnered with two **Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services** in a project that aims to increase rates of breastfeeding among First Nations women and improve the health and wellbeing of mothers and their babies.

Breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life has important and well-recognised health benefits – but the ongoing impact of colonisation and other complex intersecting personal and social factors has led to lower rates of breastfeeding initiation and maintenance among First Nations women.

This project, funded by the Australian Government's **Medical Research Future Fund**, aims to increase rates of breastfeeding among First Nations women through an evidence-informed, community designed pilot breastfeeding program and strengthened capacity of Aboriginal midwives and health workers to provide specialist lactation care.

Using decolonisation methods, the project is surfacing new knowledge from First Nations' understanding of how best to support Aboriginal women to initiate and maintain breastfeeding. It is applying this knowledge to develop and test a comprehensive breastfeeding program for First Nations women and enhance the capacity to provide culturally appropriate lactation care.

Key to the project is the co-development of a framework for a First Nations specialist lactation care training for midwives and

health workers, which will be scalable to encompass a broad range of First Nations communities.

The project is led by Sandra Bailey, a proud Yorta Yorta woman who is Senior Adviser on Aboriginal Health at the **Sax Institute** and an expert in Aboriginal primary care. She says that while most First Nations women have a strong desire to breastfeed, colonisation has introduced a whole range of barriers.

"We want to address these barriers by focusing on our community's unique needs, with solutions based on culturally sensitive support informed by First Nations ways of knowing, being and nurturing," Ms Bailey said



"It's so important that this project is First Nations-led and founded on strong partnerships with Aboriginal-led health services. Change is only possible when First Nations people have real control over their own lives and destiny."

Sandra Bailey
Senior Advisor, Sax Institute



Measuring the impact of innovative Aboriginal-led health programs

Aboriginal people experience disproportionately high rates of chronic disease and social and emotional wellbeing challenges.

While programs designed for the general population have largely failed to close this gap, **Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services** (ACCHS) have led and developed a range of innovative, culturally appropriate primary care programs that directly support their communities. With the limitations of funding, capacity and local capabilities, these programs are rarely rigorously evaluated.

In collaboration with participating ACCHS, the **Indigenous Led Evaluation of Aboriginal Programs** (ILEAP) project is building local capabilities and providing the much needed evidence around the effectiveness of these programs, evaluating three programs in critical health areas such as Aboriginal youth suicide and adult chronic disease.

The project aims to **increase Aboriginal-led evaluation** of programs, better translation of evidence into practice in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and above all **better access to essential primary care services**.

It offers valuable insights into the elements of each program that are working well and the opportunities to further strengthen and build on what's been established.

Led by Sandra Bailey, Senior Adviser at the Sax Institute, the ILEAP project is being conducted in close collaboration with Aboriginal leaders, primary care workers and the community.

It is founded on the Institute's strong, long-term collaborations with the Aboriginal health sector, including the **Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation** in Campbelltown, **Orange Aboriginal Medical Service** in rural NSW, **Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service** in remote NSW, and **Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council**.

ILEAP is laying the foundations for ongoing innovation in Aboriginal-led primary health service delivery and improvement in the health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Facilitating an evidence base for safer medicine use

Our advanced data platform, SURE, has supported impactful health research within a secure environment.

This year, the Sax Institute's Secure Unified Research Environment (SURE) has allowed data custodians to share critical health and other sensitive data with researchers safely and securely. Approved users accessed a wealth of linked data from hospitals, cancer registries, clinical trials, government services and more, for their ethics-approved projects.

Since its inception in 2011, more than 1,200 researchers and policy analysts, and over 35 data custodians from national and state governments, clinical registries and cohort studies, have used SURE for research projects that have tackled major health issues such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and mental health.

As of June 30, 2024, **over 700 users** from academia, government agencies and private industry were working on **303 research projects** using SURE.

This year, one of SURE's major projects was its continued work with the **Medicines Intelligence Centre of Research Excellence** (MI-CRE) to provide a dedicated research platform, the **Medicines Intelligence Data Platform**. This platform has helped to accelerate the development and translation of evidence about real-world medicine use and outcomes.

Professor Sallie Pearson, Director of MI-CRE, said the Medicines Intelligence Data Platform has led to real-world improvements. "This advancement is pivotal in promoting the quality use of medicines and mitigating medicine-related harm at scale."

The MI-CRE is an initiative of **UNSW Medicine and Health's School of Population Health** which develops and delivers new knowledge of medicines in Australia for use by regulators and payers, knowledge that can be translated directly into policy and practice, improving responsiveness to current and emerging policy imperatives.



"The Sax Institute's innovative and tailored approach in hosting our new linked data asset, the Medicines Intelligence Data Platform, has significantly enhanced our ability to generate comprehensive real-world evidence."

Professor Sallie Pearson

Director, Medicines Intelligence Centre of Research Excellence, UNSW Sydney

Enhanced support for researchers

Significant improvements have made SURE easier, faster and more effective for researchers and data custodians to use.

This year, we have doubled the memory (RAM) available on all SURE Virtual Machines, in response to feedback from users.

Researchers and policy analysts working on larger datasets gained significant improvement in the speed of analysis operations once the upgrade was implemented with the support of an NCRIS Capital Upgrade and Maintenance grant from the **Population Health Research Network (PHRN)**.

SURE has also enhanced its information security capabilities to meet current and emerging threats. SURE was recertified against the current ISO27001:2022 standard which ensures that our Information Security Management System is fit-for-purpose to protect the sensitive health and human services data we hold on behalf of more than 35 data custodians around Australia.

“The enhancements made to the Curated Gateway, performance of our virtual machines and security accreditations keep SURE at the forefront of enabling cutting-edge research using increasingly large and powerful linked data,” said Matt Gorringe, Senior Director, Data and Research Services Sax Institute.

User satisfaction with SURE remains high, with 80% of surveyed users reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the services.

Celebrating the SURE community

In July 2023, Australia’s leading data custodians and users of linked data came together at an online event to learn about the ways SURE is supporting health research through improved data sharing and analysis capabilities.

‘SURE 2.0: Ready for the future of research’ was **attended by more than 100 people** and included presentations from representatives of major data custodians, including Associate Professor Gillian Caughey, Associate Director of the **Registry of Senior Australians**, and Dr Diane Watson, Chief Executive of the **NSW Bureau of Health Information**.

“This knowledge-sharing initiative is one of the ways that SURE stays connected to its community of researchers and custodians this year,” said Mr Gorringe.

“We continue to improve the flexibility and responsiveness of SURE to foster enhanced collaboration between researchers, policy analysts and data custodians.”



1,280

users since
SURE’s inception



303

research projects
currently underway



35+

data custodians
sharing databases

Maximise the
impact of our
programs and
services







Improving data access for research into chronic conditions

The 45 and Up Study has supported the next generation of research to investigate new strategies for chronic disease prevention and management, to the benefit of all Australians.

The Chronic Conditions Umbrella Program Linkage (CUPL), an initiative that provides faster access to multiple linked datasets, became fully operational this year after its pilot phase concluded at the end of 2023.

The initiative brings together the 45 and Up Study with 12 key linked datasets and readied them for researchers, meaning they were available for analysis as soon as approvals were granted.

The Sax Institute manages a streamlined ethics approval for each project, drastically simplifying and speeding up the task of gaining ethics approval.

CUPL has made it **faster and easier for researchers** to launch a wide range of research studies with the potential to improve patient care and **better prevent chronic diseases**.

In its pilot phase, CUPL supported several projects into cardiovascular health through a grant partnership with **The National Heart Foundation of Australia**.

This year, CUPL has facilitated the approval of several new projects and is being widely promoted to researchers.

“We’re excited to be taking CUPL to our researcher community, who can immediately see the benefits to this streamlined approach,” said Matt Gorringer, Senior Director, Data and Research Services at the Sax Institute.

The research governance model for CUPL has become well-established, incorporating both independent peer-reviews and scientific assessments.

This year, the 45 and Up Study added two new datasets to CUPL. Data from the **National Death Index** (including cause of death) and the **Australian Immunisation Register** became available, as well as **Medicare data**, prescription data, hospital admissions, emergency department presentations, **NSW Cancer Registry**, mental health care, and notifiable conditions (including COVID-19 cases).

The 45 and Up Study has also invested in updating all available datasets, so that CUPL continues to drive more high-quality research into chronic conditions, said Mr Gorringer.

“CUPL represents a major step forward in the ability of researchers to conduct important work into the treatment, management and prevention of chronic conditions.”

Strengthening skills in knowledge exchange

We've helped hundreds of researchers and decision makers to build their expertise in data analysis, partnership building, evidence use and program evaluation.

Our training program included 11 events, which were a mix of publicly available courses and custom training for government departments and organisations.

There continued to be high demand for our training course on working with data from the Medicare Benefits Schedule and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The course was delivered several times throughout the year by Dr Anna Kemp-



“We've helped researchers understand the policy world and ways of communicating and working with decision makers, so that research evidence can have real-world impact.”

Associate Professor Sarah Thackway
Senior Advisor, Sax Institute

Casey, a Research Fellow in the **Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre** at the **University of South Australia**.

It has helped dozens of researchers, policy makers and program planners use important health data to drive their work.

Our course on **building partnerships** has helped early and mid-career researchers foster the skills needed for collaboration so that **more research has real-world impact**.

The course was facilitated by Sian Rudge, Head of Strategic Development at the Institute, and included presentations from renowned policy experts Associate Professor Sarah Thackway, the former Executive Director for the **Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence**, and Associate Professor Carmen Huckel Schneider, Deputy Director at the **Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics**.

The Institute also delivered several courses for policy makers and program planners, harnessing the expertise of renowned experts to further the use of evidence in policy work.

Emeritus Professor Adrian Bauman AO from the **University of Sydney** continued his acclaimed course on program evaluation, and Adjunct Professor Mary Haines from the Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics along with Associate Professor Huckel Schneider led a successful course on developing skills in critical appraisal of research.

A new era of data on healthy ageing in Australia

The 45 and Up Study has begun driving new insights into the experience of cognitive decline, disability and aged care, which will inform research and decision making for years to come.

The 45 and Up Study, Australia's largest ongoing study of health and ageing, has embarked on a new round of data gathering from 180,000 Study participants.

In August 2023, we launched the 45 and Up Study's Wave 4 survey, the fourth major survey of 45 and Up Study participants since the Study commenced in 2005. The complex operation will see surveys sent to all active participants in the Study over three years.

The survey asked more than 130 questions on lifestyle, diet, physical and mental health, wellbeing, health service use and more, making this one of the most comprehensive surveys of Australians' health ever undertaken.

A huge amount of thought, consultation and planning went into the development of the Wave 4 survey, said Matt Gorringer, Senior Director, Data and Research Services at the Sax Institute.

"To create this survey, the 45 and Up Study team met with dozens of experts across aged care, dementia, heart disease, cancer

and wellbeing. We've ensured that the information from Wave 4 will be needed by researchers and decision makers over the next decade."

For the first time, the survey asked extensive questions about participant's use of community aged care, including what services were received at home, out-of-pocket costs for aged care services and any barriers to accessing care.



"With the 45 and Up Study cohort now aged 60 years and older, their survey responses will feed into powerful evidence platforms for issues facing our ageing population."

Matt Gorringer

Senior Director, Data and Research Services
Sax Institute



There are also new questions on participants' disabilities and the services received for it, including funding from the **National Disability Insurance Scheme** (NDIS). Participants are also asked about memory loss and if they've had a diagnosis of cognitive impairment, dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

The survey also included a large number of repeated questions about risk factors for health, such as exercise patterns, diet and alcohol and tobacco consumption, to understand how people's behaviour changes over time and what effect that has on their health.

New insights into the impact of dementia and cognitive decline

In June 2024, early access to Wave 4 data collected from 17,200 participants was made available to support timely and policy relevant research.

The early survey data has already provided insights into the wellbeing and overall health of Australians living with cognitive decline.

Survey responses from 17,000 people showed that 6% reported a diagnosis of dementia, Alzheimer's or mild cognitive impairment.

Participants living with cognitive decline were twice as likely to report high levels of psychological distress, and almost twice as likely to report lower levels of quality of life, compared with those who aren't living with cognitive decline.

"The 45 and Up Study has almost 20 years of data on a quarter of a million Australians, and now there are rich insights emerging on their cognitive health," Mr Gorringer said.

"This accumulation of information in the Study will help guide policy and services in coming years."



180,000

Surveys to be sent out over 3 years



130+

Questions on health and wellbeing



17,200

Survey responses already accessible

Our people





Our Board

The Sax Institute is guided by a Board whose members collectively have excelled across a wide range of areas of professional and public life. The depth of skills, experience and judgment they bring are immensely valuable and continue to enrich our work and contributions.



Professor Ian Oliver AM MD PhD

Chair, Board of Directors

- Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Adelaide and Adjunct Professor, Discipline of Medicine, University of Notre Dame Australia
- Former Director of the Royal Adelaide Hospital Cancer Centre and CEO of Cancer Council Australia
- Former president of the Medical Oncology Group of Australia and the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer



Kim Anderson BA, PGDip LIS

- Chair of People, Culture and Nomination Committee
- Non-Executive Director of ASX listed companies CarGroup Ltd and Siteminder Ltd, and Non-Executive Director of Great Southern Bank



Mark Booth BA (Hons) Econ, MA Econ, PGDip Public Health, EMPA, GAICD

- Principal, Nous Group
- Former CEO, Food Standards Australia New Zealand



Dr Kerry Chant AO PSM MBBS (Hons), FAFPHM, MHA, MPH

Resigned 10/11/2023

- NSW Chief Health Officer
- Deputy Secretary, Population and Public Health Division, NSW Ministry of Health



Robin Low BCom, FCA, FAICD

- Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee
- Non-Executive Director of ASX listed companies Appen and Articore
- Non-Executive Director on not-for-profit entity boards including Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
- Former deputy chair of Audit and Assurance Standards Board and former PwC partner



Dr Ian Pollard AM MA DPhil DBus (Hon) FIAA

- Chairman, Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists
- Chairman, RGA Reinsurance Australia and New Zealand
- Former Chair of a number of Australian listed companies
- Actuary and Rhodes Scholar



Professor David Preen BSc (Hons), PhD

- Chair, Public Health at the School of Population and Global Health, University of Western Australia
- Holds an honorary position at Swansea University (UK)
- Current member of the NHMRC Research Committee and the Australian Health Ethics Committee
- Former Director of the UWA Centre for Health Services Research



Dr Lisa Studdert PhD, MPS, B.Agr.Sc (Hons)

Resigned 31/12/2023

- Head of Office at the Australian Government's Productivity Commission
- Former Deputy CEO at the National Disability Insurance Agency
- Former Deputy Secretary at the Federal Department of Health (population health, aged care), and formerly with the Asian Development Bank (Health Specialist)



Professor David Whiteman AM B Med Sc, MBBS (Hons), PhD, FAHMS, FAPHM

- Medical epidemiologist, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
- NHMRC Leadership Fellow
- Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences
- Fellow, Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine



Dr Martin McNamara *Ex Officio*

For full bio, see page 48

Committees

The work of the Board is supported by the following committees:

- **Audit and Risk Management Committee** Chair: Ms Robin Low
Members: Dr Martin McNamara; Ms Jane Stanton*; Dr Ian Pollard
- **People, Culture and Nomination Committee** Chair: Ms Kim Anderson
Members: Dr Martin McNamara; Professor David Whiteman

*Non-Director

Our Executive Team

The Sax Institute draws from a breadth of skills and expertise across its staff. Our Executive Team has extensive experience across sectors including government, research and academia, the private sector, and not-for-profit sector.



Dr Martin McNamara *CEO*

Martin became the Institute's CEO in January 2023, after serving as Deputy CEO since 2018. Martin is also Chief Investigator of the Institute's 45 and Up Study. He has previously held a number of senior leadership roles at Commonwealth and state levels, spanning strategy and research to policy development and health system performance. Martin has a PhD in Public Health from the University of Sydney.



Justin Eccleston *Head, Business Transformation*

Justin has over 20 years' experience working in the research and not-for-profit sectors in the UK and Australia, including senior roles at the King's Fund in London and at national health charities in both countries. Justin leads the corporate functions spanning human resources, IT, commercial and facilities. He has a BSc (Hons) in Business Administration from the University of Bath.



Melinda Ewell *Head, Finance*

Melinda leads the Institute's Finance team and provides financial and regulatory guidance to the Institute's CEO and Board to support delivery of the Institute's Strategic Plan, as well as ensuring sustainability of the Institute's operations. Melinda has worked as a finance executive in the not-for-profit sector for more than a decade. Melinda is a Certified Practising Accountant and has a Master of Commerce from Western Sydney University.



Genevieve Ileris *Head, Partnerships and Communication*

Genevieve is Head of Partnerships and Communication at the Sax Institute. Previously, she led communications for Health System Transformation at the NHS in London and held an interim role in policy and public affairs with the British Psychological Society. Genevieve has postgraduate qualifications in Business (QUT) and Health Communications (University of Buckinghamshire).



Nadia Mastersson *Head, Prevention*

Nadia leads the Prevention portfolio at the Sax Institute and heads The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, a national leader in chronic disease prevention. With over 25 years in policy, program delivery, and health service strategy, she has focused on partnerships to improve community health. Nadia holds a Master of Business Administration, a Master of Nutrition and Dietetics, and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Sian Rudge *Head, Strategic Development*

Sian works in the nexus between research and decision making, and in connecting decision makers with research and researchers. Before joining the Institute in 2011, Sian worked with the Centre for Aboriginal Health in the NSW Ministry of Health. She was previously a paediatric physiotherapist (B App Sc (Physio)) and holds a Master of International Public Health.



Dr Rebecca Tinning *Head, Programs*

Rebecca leads the Institute's Programs Division and is responsible for the operational management and development of the Institute's programs and capabilities. She has over 20 years' experience in health services research and policy, population health management, and health service innovation and delivery. Rebecca has a Professional Doctorate in Applied Public Health (DrPH) from the University of New South Wales.



Dr Scott Winch *Head, Aboriginal Health*

Scott is a proud a Wiradjuri man, and leads Aboriginal Health at the Sax Institute. With nearly 30 years' experience across health, education, and early childhood sectors, he has held leadership roles in service delivery, academia, and policy for Indigenous affairs. Scott holds a PhD in Aboriginal Education, a Master of Applied Epidemiology, and a Graduate Diploma in Health Services Management.

Thanks to our Members

The Sax Institute's growing Member base ensures the Institute is well connected with a powerful public health network and world leading research expertise. Membership provides an invaluable avenue for collaboration to achieve common goals and pursue opportunities that may not be possible alone.

Members at 30 June 2024

- Australian Centre for Health Services Innovation, Queensland University of Technology
- Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer
- Australian Centre for Public and Population Health Research, University of Technology Sydney
- Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney
- Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine, University of Technology Sydney
- Burnet Institute
- Cancer Council Victoria
- Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, The University of Newcastle
- Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation, University of Technology Sydney
- Centre for Health Informatics, Macquarie University
- Centre for Health Services Research, The University of Queensland
- Centre for Health Systems and Safety Research, Macquarie University
- Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA), UNSW Sydney
- Centre for Healthcare Resilience and Implementation Science, Macquarie University
- Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, UNSW Sydney
- Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney
- Centre for Women's Health Research, The University of Newcastle
- College of Health and Medicine, Australian National University
- Faculty of Health, Southern Cross University
- Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute, Flinders University
- Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition (GLOBE), Deakin University
- Health Research Institute, University of Canberra
- Health Services and Practice Research Strength, University of Technology Sydney

- Hunter Medical Research Institute
- Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute
- Improving Palliative, Aged and Chronic Care through Clinical Research and Translation (IMPACCT), University of Technology Sydney
- Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research
- Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research, Monash University
- Macquarie University Centre for the Health Economy, Macquarie University
- Melbourne Centre for Behaviour Change at The University of Melbourne
- Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, Alfred Health
- Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics, The University of Sydney
- Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University
- Menzies School of Health Research
- National Ageing Research Institute
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, The University of Sydney
- National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney
- National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, UNSW Sydney
- Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA)
- Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, The University of Sydney
- Population Wellbeing and Environment Research Lab (PowerLab), University of Wollongong
- Prevention Research Collaboration, The University of Sydney
- Priority Research Centre for Health Behaviour, The University of Newcastle
- Psychiatry Research and Teaching Unit, School of Psychiatry, UNSW Sydney
- QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
- Research Unit, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
- School of Clinical Sciences at Monash Health, Monash University
- School of Medicine and Public Health, The University of Newcastle
- School of Medicine Sydney, The University of Notre Dame Australia
- School of Population & Global Health, The University of Western Australia
- School of Population Health, UNSW Sydney
- School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Monash University
- School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University
- Simpson Centre for Health Services Research, UNSW Sydney
- Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney
- Surgical Outcomes Research Centre, The University of Sydney
- Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery, The University of Sydney
- Sydney Dental School, The University of Sydney
- Sydney School of Public Health, The University of Sydney
- The Cancer Council NSW
- The Daffodil Centre, Cancer Council NSW and The University of Sydney
- The Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- The George Institute for Global Health
- The Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney
- The Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use, The University of Sydney
- The University of Newcastle
- The University of Notre Dame Australia
- The University of Sydney
- University Centre for Rural Health – North Coast, The University of Sydney, University of Wollongong, Western Sydney University, Southern Cross University
- University of New England
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Wollongong
- UNSW Sydney
- Western Sydney University

Financial details at a glance





As at 30 June 2024:

Summary of Financial Performance	2024	2023	2022
Revenue	12,389,159	13,980,561	14,147,046
Government stimulus grant			
Expenses	(12,989,452)	(14,087,994)	(14,711,500)
Underlying surplus / (deficit)	(600,293)	(107,433)	(564,454)
Property, plant and equipment (PPE) depreciation	(452,599)	(481,700)	(540,400)
Capital grants	446,503	287,500	274,954
Non-operating surplus / (deficit)	(6,096)	(194,200)	(265,446)
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(606,389)	(301,633)	(829,900)

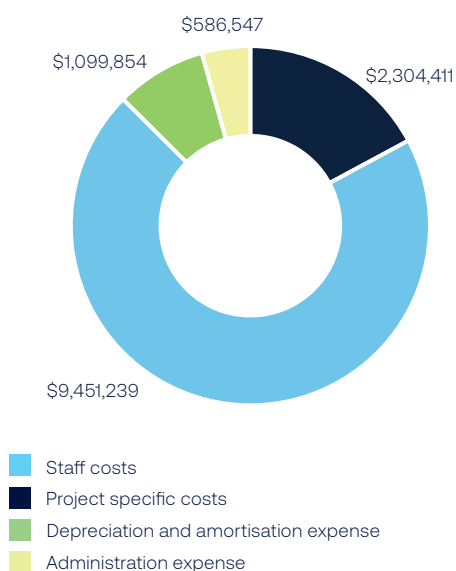
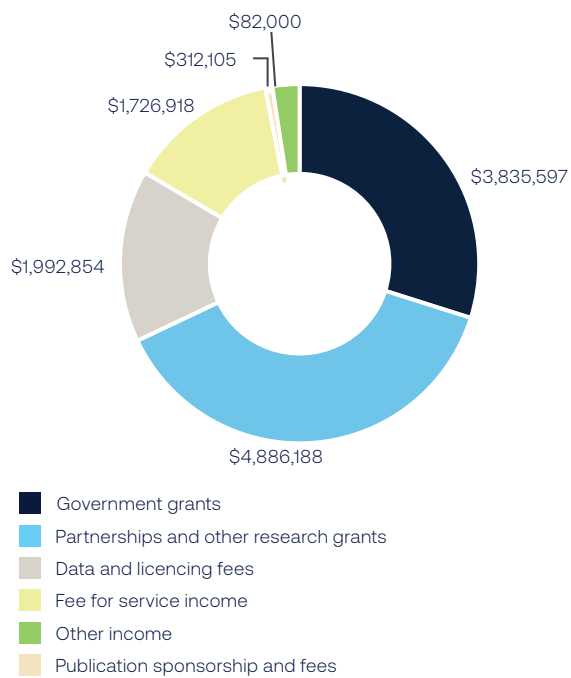
Summary of Financial Position	2024	2023	2022
Current assets	8,068,248	9,646,600	12,406,500
Non-current assets	2,256,243	2,815,800	3,633,000
Total assets	10,324,491	12,462,400	16,039,500
Current liabilities	8,154,414	9,121,400	11,619,900
Non-current liabilities	270,580	833,900	1,610,900
Total liabilities	8,424,994	9,955,300	13,230,800
Net assets	1,899,497	2,507,100	2,808,700
Retained surpluses	1,899,497	2,507,100	2,808,700

Statement of Cash Flows	2024	2023	2022
Net cash from operating activities	(917,381)	(909,500)	233,000
Net cash from investing activities	(509,587)	(386,000)	(243,400)
Net cash from financing activities	(703,021)	(749,000)	(724,500)
Net increase / decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(2,129,989)	(2,044,500)	(734,900)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	8,169,176	10,213,600	10,948,500
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6,039,187	8,169,100	10,213,600

The Summaries of Financial Performance, Financial Position and Cash Flow provided above have been extracted from the audited general purpose financial report of the Sax Institute.

These summaries should be read in conjunction with the full audited Annual Financial Report available on the Sax Institute website.

The Annual Financial Report (from which the summary financial information has been extracted) has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the Corporations Regulations 2001.

Figure 1—Sax Institute expenditure 2023-24**Figure 2**—Sax Institute income 2023-24**Figure 3**—Sax Institute income over time 2015-2024



Published by The Sax Institute

ACN 095 542 886

30C Wentworth Street
Glebe, NSW, 2037

P +61 2 9188 9500
E communications@saxinstitute.org.au
W www.saxinstitute.org.au

© The Sax Institute 2024



All material and work produced by The Sax Institute is protected by copyright. The Institute reserves the right to set terms and conditions for any use of this material.

This product, excluding the Institute's logo and associated logos, and any material owned by third parties, is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial Share Alike 4.0 International licence. Enquiries about any use of this material outside the scope of this licence are welcome and can be sent to: communications@saxinstitute.org.au

Publication date: December 2024