

28 October 2025

**Australian Academy of Science submission on the  
*Australian Centre for Disease Control Bill 2025 and Australian Centre for Disease Control  
(Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2025***

The Australian Academy of Science welcomes the introduction of legislation to establish the Australian Centre for Disease Control (ACDC) as an independent, statutory agency.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in local and international public health preparedness and cooperation. The ACDC is an important development in Australia's public health system to improve Australia's disease surveillance, public health threat preparedness and provide transparent, evidence-based advice. In a world where mis- and dis-information pose a serious continuing risk to society – especially in times of crisis – the ACDC must be established as a reliable, trusted source of information.

The Australian Centre for Disease Control Bill 2025 (ACDC Bill) and Australian Centre for Disease Control (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2025 will enable coordination between state and territory, national and international experiences, and will direct our preparedness for the next public health crisis.

The Academy recommends:

- Expanding the Director-General's engagement with scientific and research institutions to identify future priority areas in disease control, pandemics, and public health response, and ensure that the ACDC's advice is informed by the best available scientific information.
- Additional support for Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to coordinate data linkages and ensure data security.
- Including scientific expertise on the membership of the advisory board would ensure a robust group of experts to develop a strategy, and plan and prioritise research.

[The Director-General should be empowered to access expertise from the research community](#)

The ACDC Bill's functions would benefit from specific mechanisms to ensure scientific evidence systematically informs all aspects of public health advice, preparedness and emergency response.

The Director-General's (DG) role as a chief advisor to governments (federal, state and territory ministers) is vital in pandemic preparedness and coordination regarding public health matters. The DG's advice should be informed by the latest scientific information, including identifying future priority areas and emerging disease threats. To reinforce this in the legislation, the functions of the DG should include engagement with relevant academic researchers and health and medical research institutes. This could be added to the list at Section 11(h).

The Academy would support coordination between the ACDC, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Medical Research Future Fund, which could be enabled through the advisory group and DG's consultation with the research community. Given the CDC's data-driven approach to preparing for and responding to public health challenges, the CDC could inform research priorities and knowledge gaps and build capacity to translate research into practice.

### [Advisory Council membership should include scientific expertise outside of government](#)

The Academy welcomes the development of an Advisory Council and temporary expert advisory groups when required. In addition to public health expertise, members of the statutory and temporary advisory councils should include scientific expertise in a relevant area such as infectious diseases, virology, immunisation, or epidemiology.

The Advisory Council mechanism would also benefit from linkages with work across existing frameworks including the National Health and Medical Research Strategy and other bodies such as the NHMRC Health Research Impact Committee and National Clinical Evidence Taskforce.

### [Enabling data sharing between government agencies and researchers](#)

One of the main priorities of the ACDC is to use and share data to underpin its public health advice. Supporting a nationally coordinated approach to data and making data available to qualified researchers would support the ACDC's priorities to respond to health challenges. To ensure that public health data are safely available, key considerations for the ACDC should include establishing frameworks that ensure data accessibility while controlling access and developing clear mechanisms for researchers to access federal and state-held data.

Designating the ABS and AIHW as designated data service providers will place additional pressure on both agencies and should be matched with adequate resourcing to enable broader data sharing and use with the research sector and maintain data security.

Data use and sharing by the ACDC should be guided by the FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability) and CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) principles to protect Indigenous data governance. Together, the FAIR and CARE principles would ensure the best available data and science support decision-making while building trust.

### [Supporting public trust in public health advice](#)

In its operations, the ACDC will need to implement clear communication strategies and mechanisms to combat misinformation and disinformation in public health advice and support trust. The [Academy's previous collaboration](#) with the federal Department of Health on COVID-19 information resources, provides a proven model that could be expanded and included under the Director-General's remit.

To support this approach, there are examples from [Singapore](#) where the National University of Singapore's (NUS) School of Public Health who are working with academics, policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders in co-creating solutions for national health priorities. NUS are also working on addressing vaccine hesitation by tackling misinformation to build public trust, through virtual public forums and a [Public Health Ambassador Programme](#).

These programs are ensuring data are made available to researchers as required, with open access through invitations to relevant scientists and researchers, policy fellowships and research institutes.

To discuss or clarify any aspect of this submission, please contact Lauren Sullivan, Manager Policy, at [science.policy@science.org.au](mailto:science.policy@science.org.au).