



Centre for
**SOCIAL
PURPOSE
ORGANISATIONS**

TEN YEARS OF IMPACT:

A brief summary of the CSL Centenary Fellowships Evaluation

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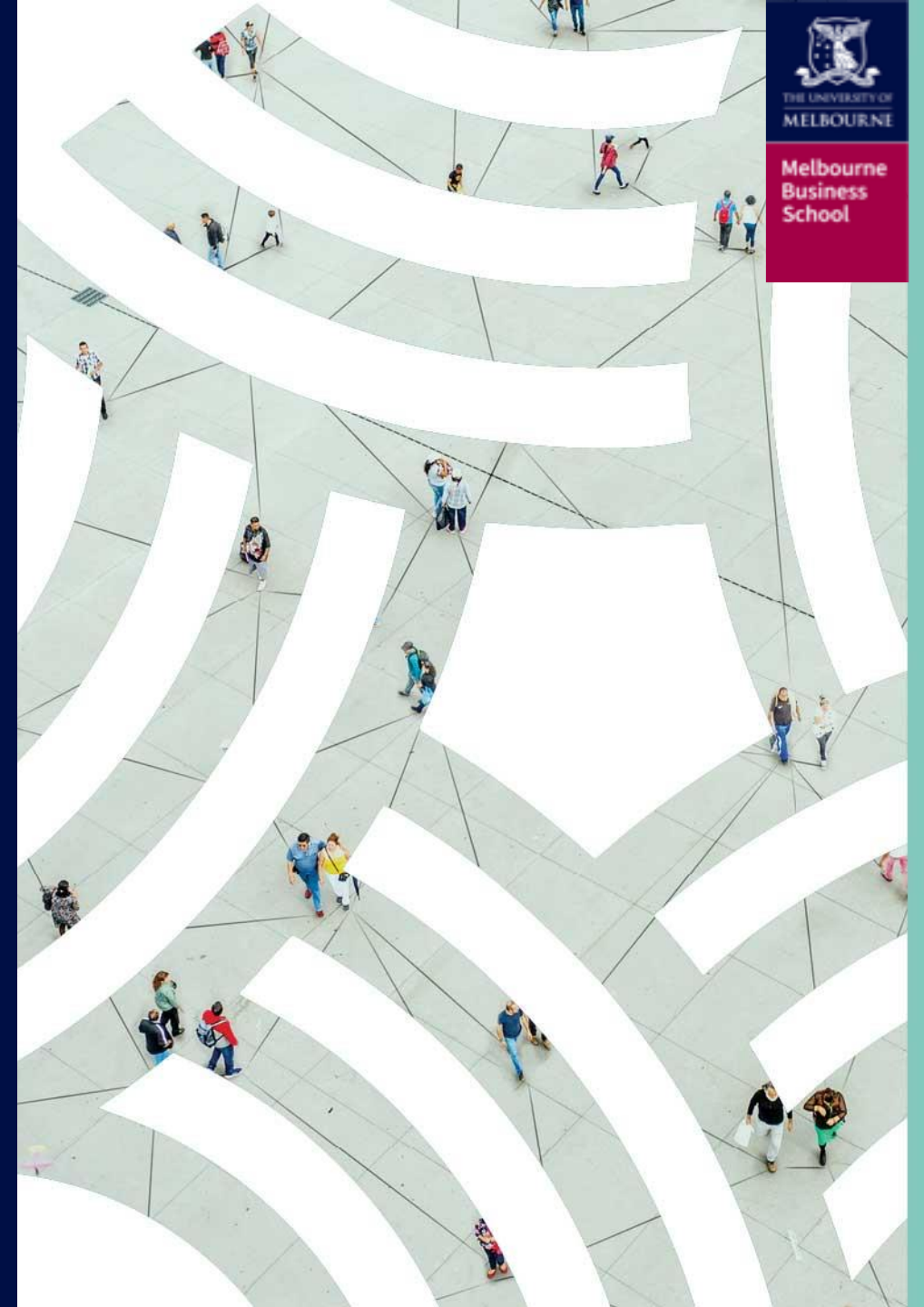
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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CSL CENTENARY FELLOWSHIPS

In 2016, CSL established the CSL Centenary Fellowships - a ten-year initiative to strengthen Australia's medical research community by supporting twenty exceptional early-to-mid career medical researchers.

This report summarises the findings of a detailed evaluation of the CSL Centenary Fellowships, conducted by the Melbourne Business School's Centre for Social Purpose Organisations. It is informed by extensive qualitative data, specifically: in-depth interviews with sixteen Fellows, three senior medical research community decision makers, and three CSL decision makers, supplemented by analysis of internal CSL documentation and publicly available information.

The evaluation found that the CSL Centenary Fellowships fully achieved its overarching aim and enabled a cohort of outstanding medical researchers to build and sustain thriving research careers in Australia.

Our analysis shows that three Fellowship design features underpinned the Fellow's success and the positive outcomes of the Program, namely: the **quantum** of funding provided; the **five-year** funding window; and the provision of **untied funding**. In addition, our evaluation found that the **prestige** associated with the CSL Centenary Fellowships created a reputational 'halo' that enabled Fellows to attract further funding, research talent, and institutional support.

Crucially, many outcomes are ongoing, with the Fellowships continuing to enable additional publications, collaborations, and commercialisation pathways.

CSL CENTENARY FELLOWSHIP FEATURES

Individual five-year Fellowships of AUD\$1.25 million each

Fellowships awarded to two 'rising stars' of Australian medical research per annum

Fellowships awarded annually from 2016 to 2026

Untied funding to be used at the discretion of each Centenary Fellow

Selection criteria were 'science first' with no requirement to align with CSL's commercial strategy

CSL holds no rights over the intellectual property of researchers' work

RESEARCHER & BROADER IMPACTS

At its core, the CSL Centenary Fellowships sought to strengthen the Australian medical research ecosystem by enabling twenty CSL Centenary Fellows to build flourishing medical research careers in Australia. The Fellowships were intended to overcome the paucity of appropriate (in both quantum and duration) funding options for early-to-mid-career medical researchers in Australia, and create significant, long-term career outcomes for each Fellow.

Our analysis shows that the Fellowships were a highly effective programmatic response to the challenges posed by the scarcity of appropriate early-to-mid career medical research funding and opportunities in Australia. We found that the CSL Centenary Fellowships enabled Fellows to build flourishing medical research careers and achieve six career-related outcomes, which have spill-over benefits for Australia more broadly.



Outcome One: Fellows deliver high- impact medical research in Australia.

New discoveries, knowledge and collaborations strengthen the Australian medical research community's collective output.



Outcome Two: Fellows build, grow and lead high- performing research labs and teams.

Expanding research teams increase Australia's research capacity and capability.



Outcome Three: Fellows publish in leading international journals.

Dissemination of high-quality research elevates the profile of Australian medical science.



Outcome Four: Fellows become leaders within their institutions.

Sharing expertise and developing emerging researchers strengthens the research ecosystem.



Outcome Five: Fellows secure further funding to advance their research programs.

Ongoing funding supports talent retention and strengthens Australia's research workforce.



Outcome Six: Fellows translate and commercialise research discoveries.

Research translation creates new opportunities within the Australian biotechnology sector.

IMPACTS ACROSS THE AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

For the Australian medical research community, the CSL Centenary Fellowships have strengthened the research capacity of individual research institutes and universities, helped create career opportunities for senior post-doctoral researchers and PhD students and enabled cross-disciplinary research collaborations. The Fellowships have helped build research capacity across the national medical research ecosystem.

The figure below provides a summary of the far-reaching impacts already achieved by the CSL Centenary Fellowships. Critically, our analysis shows that the Fellowship's impacts extend beyond each five-year funding window. Many research programs and collaborations seeded during the Fellowships will continue to evolve and mature resulting in new publications, further funding, and new opportunities for the commercialisation of scientific discoveries.



Outcome One:
Fellows deliver high- impact medical research in Australia.

20 Australian researchers with bolstered self-belief and the opportunity to undertake 'discovery science'



Outcome Two:
Fellows build, grow and lead high-performing research labs and teams.

20 medical research labs
81+ scientific staff
53+ current PhD students



Outcome Three:
Fellows publish in leading international journals.

644 academic papers (including conference proceedings) published by Fellows in leading journals between 2017 - 2025



Outcome Four:
Fellows become leaders within their institutions.

6 Australian states and territories
12 medical research institutes & 6 universities



Outcome Five:
Fellows secure further funding to advance their research programs.

Many Fellows accessed further funding from the NHMRC, their institutions and philanthropy



Outcome Six:
Fellows translate and commercialise research discoveries.

A number of Fellows have established and then secured financing for successful 'spin off' biotechnology start-ups

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As the CSL Centenary Fellowships reach their planned conclusion, this evaluation underscores both the program's impact and the broader context in which it has operated. In Australia's constrained and highly competitive medical research funding landscape, non-government investment remains limited but critically important in supporting emerging research talent.

Data gathered through this evaluation suggest challenges in government funding programs relating to low success rates and limited budgets. These structural challenges restrict Australia's ability to retain research talent and to sustain the kind of long-term, high-risk science that produces breakthroughs.

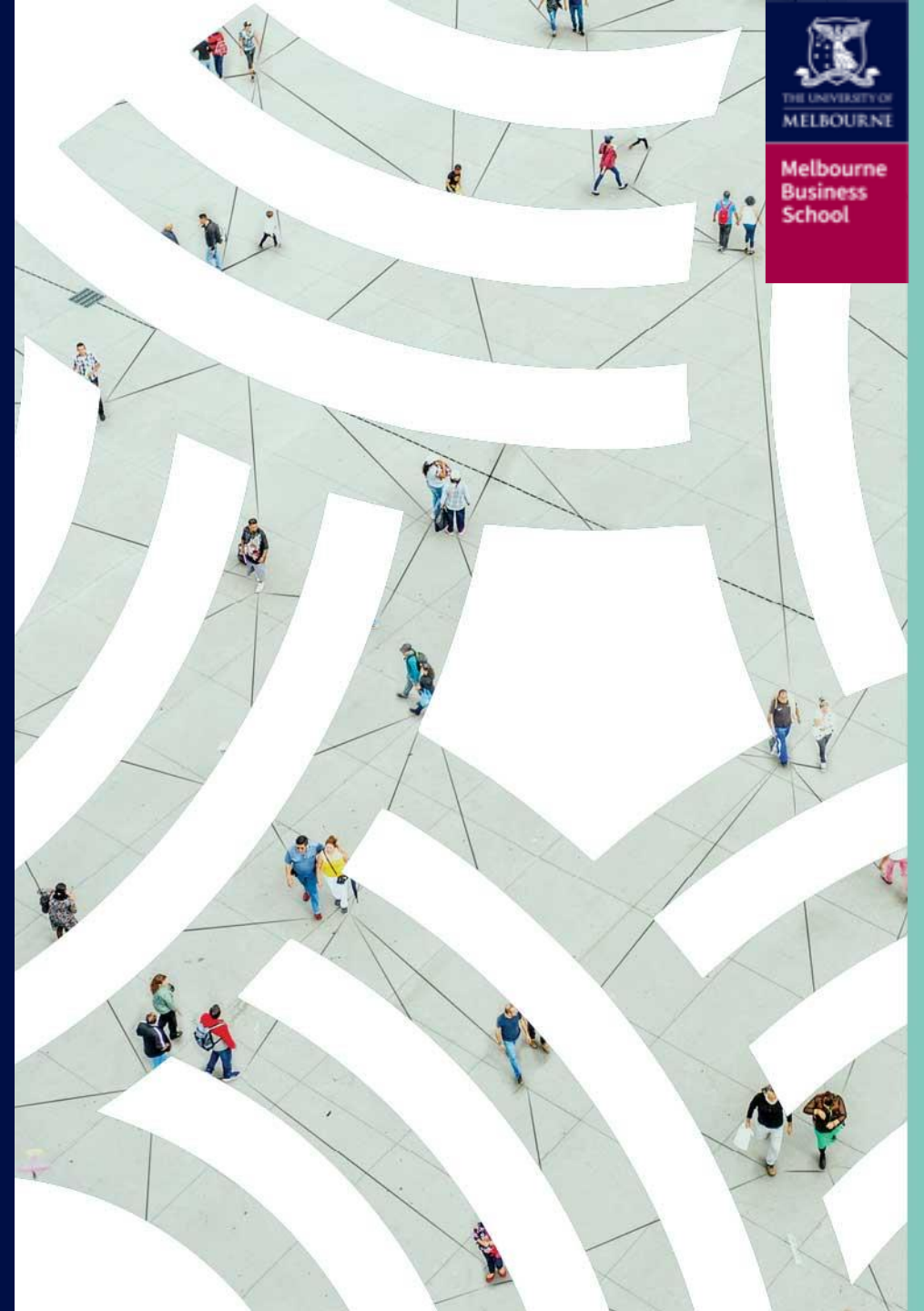
Within this context, the CSL Centenary Fellowships have played a vital counter-balancing role, enabling early-to-mid-career researchers to establish and grow their research labs and pursue ambitious research agendas that would otherwise be unattainable. In addition, the data collected for this evaluation also suggests that Australia's medical research ecosystem remains resource-constrained and that the structural challenges outlined above persist. As such, this presents an ongoing opportunity for private companies, such as CSL, along with philanthropy to contribute to building Australia's medical research and development ecosystem by providing the kind of systemic counter-balance that the CSL Centenary Fellowships did over the last decade.

Thank you

The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the 16 CSL Centenary Fellows who participated in this evaluation. Your insights informed and enriched this evaluation. We commend you for your outstanding achievements and contributions to science. We also want to thank the senior representatives from the broader Australian medical research community for their valuable contributions to the research. Finally, we want to thank the many people at CSL who helped to facilitate and support this report.



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