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## Welcome

Welcome to the DIU News Digest!

This inaugural edition brings together highlights, progress, and what's next for research at Austin. Rather than small snippets, we've grouped key updates so you can see the bigger picture in one place.

It's been a year of major change – and while that's meant some disruption, it's also created real momentum. We've cleared a significant backlog, strengthened our systems, and invested in new people dedicated to supporting your research.

Austin researchers continue to lead the way, with strong adoption of new processes and national collaborations that place us alongside other leading health services. Thank you for your adaptability and support as we've built the foundations for a more responsive, future-focused Discovery & Innovation Unit.

We're excited about the progress ahead, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Regards  
Heidi

Heidi Gaulke  
Director, Operations  
Discovery & Innovation Unit  
Austin Health

PS. Don't forget to fill out our one-question survey and tell us what you want to see on your Research Architect dashboard. More details below.

## A new look for Research Architect

Research Architect is getting a facelift! You'll soon see refreshed Austin Health branding on the portal and, more importantly, we're building a **researcher dashboard** to give you better visibility across your cases. Before finalising the design, we'd like to sense-check what matters most to you.

### Have your say

We invite you to complete a **one-question, anonymous survey** (less than three minutes) to help prioritise the features that will make the biggest difference to your workflow. Please submit your responses by Wednesday 17 September 2025.

[Take the survey now](#)

And a friendly reminder - don't forget to press 'Submit' on requests otherwise they'll get stuck sitting in draft and won't progress through the workflows.

## Our Austin email address is making a comeback!

Over the past year, the Discovery & Innovation Unit (DIU) has trialled new ways to streamline how researchers work with us, particularly in ethics and governance. One of these was shifting our contact email address to [research@victri.org.au](mailto:research@victri.org.au) in an effort to strengthen bonds with the Victorian Translational Research Institute. Your feedback was clear: it created confusion rather than efficiency.

We've acted, and we're bringing back our old email address. From Thursday 18 September, **research@austin.org.au is your single contact point** for any ethics or governance queries that can't be logged in Research Architect. This restores clarity, reinforces Austin Health's direct ownership of research governance, and makes it easier to know exactly where your queries belong. To clarify - it's the Discovery & Innovation Unit at Austin Health that manages all your research queries in the system called Research Architect. We're sorry for any confusion.

Messages sent to the VicTRI email address will still be forwarded to make the transition seamless.

There's been a bit of change within Research Architect lately, so let's recap ...

### Key points

- **research@austin.org.au is back:** use it only for queries that can't be logged in Research Architect.
- Research phone line (9496 4090) and PICF complaints contact ([feedback@austin.org.au](mailto:feedback@austin.org.au)) are unchanged.
- As this is an administrative change, amendments to PICF and CTN forms do not need to be resubmitted to DIU. [Download](#) a note to file.
- Please update your address books and expect correspondence from [research@austin.org.au](mailto:research@austin.org.au).

- Emails to [research@victri.org.au](mailto:research@victri.org.au) will auto-forward to [research@austin.org.au](mailto:research@austin.org.au).
- Research Architect will carry Austin branding (look only, functionality unchanged).
- New dashboard in development → [complete the survey](#) to shape it.
- In-system communication and PDF generation are coming soon.
- Remember to press *Submit* on requests to avoid them sitting in draft.

Thank you for your patience, we're confident these changes will make for a better user experience and ultimately – simpler systems for you.

## New faces in DIU

The Discovery & Innovation Unit is in a phase of growth and renewal.

In July, we farewelled **Renata Phyland**, who has taken on an exciting new role as Clinical Trials Manager at MACH and the University of Melbourne. Renata first joined Austin Health in 2019 and has been a valued leader across HREC coordination, operational support, and researcher guidance. Her calm approach and deep commitment to ethical research have left a lasting mark, and we wish her every success in her next chapter.

At the same time, we are strengthening our capacity to support you with the arrival of **three new team members**. Our new colleagues bring additional skills and fresh perspectives, helping us build the long-term capacity to work alongside you more effectively.

Team member	Experience	Focus
<b>Deputy Director, Research Governance &amp; Integrity – Kate Khamly</b>	<p>Kate brings substantial experience in clinical research leadership, most recently at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre where she led sponsor operations, research compliance, and policy development aligned with national standards.</p> <p>She holds an MBA and a Graduate Diploma in Clinical Trial Management, with a career spanning research nursing, operational leadership, and systems improvement.</p>	<p>Kate's appointment strengthens our focus on delivering safe, high-quality, and compliant research.</p> <p>She will work alongside our teams to support our continuing progress in governance, digital innovation, and national accreditation alignment.</p>
<b>Deputy Director, Research Strategy &amp; Capability – Dr Keely Bumsted O'Brien</b>	<p>Many of you have already worked closely with Keely in her current role as Learning &amp; Development Lead within the DIU.</p>	<p>Keely's extensive experience in research strategy and capability building, organisational learning and translational</p>

	In that time, she has developed our inaugural research capability framework, helped embed processes, and supported research system improvement across the unit.	readiness, and stakeholder engagement across health, academic, government, and community sectors, will help us set some strong foundations at Austin Health. Her new role will focus on research capability framework.
<b>Research Communications Manager – Kate Trescowthick</b>	<p>Some of you will know Kate through her work with VicTRI, where she has contributed to our precinct communications and laying the foundations for the VicTRI brand.</p> <p>Prior to that, she's held roles across health, education, finance and sport where she's focused on member engagement, stakeholder communications and marketing campaigns.</p>	Kate's focus will be on shaping our communications strategy, visibility, and voice - both internally and across the broader research community.

## ResearchFest 2025: Wheels in motion

Planning for ResearchFest 2025 is officially underway, and we're excited to share some early developments.

In consultation with respected members of the Austin Health research community, we're shaping a refreshed program that reflects both our legacy and our future. This year's theme, Data to Decisions: Research in the Age of AI, aligns with Austin Health's strategic spotlight on translational research and data for the next 12 months.

Centred across during Melbourne Cup Week (5-7 November) at the Melbourne Brain Centre, ResearchFest 2025 will feature the University of Melbourne Medical School Research Symposium which will be held on the first day of the program, strengthening our academic partnerships and broadening the scope of the event.

Planning is still in motion, and we're grateful to those who have already contributed ideas and energy. Abstracts for posters will open shortly and we look forward to sharing knowledge and lessons across our research community.

Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks. Please contact a member of the team below if you'd like to get involved.

## Signatories on research agreements

Did you know that research agreements are legally binding contracts?

With that in mind, only Chief Officers and the Director of Discovery & Innovation Unit (Heidi Gaulke, in the context of research related agreements) are authorised to sign contracts for Austin Health.

We appreciate the urgency with which you want to progress your projects, but we need to protect the organisation's legal obligations and ensure correct protocols are followed. Principal Investigators are not authorised to sign on behalf of Austin Health so please direct these requests to [research@austin.org.au](mailto:research@austin.org.au).

[See here for the Austin Health Delegation of Authority policy](#)

## Changes to SUSAR reporting

There has been some movement around the way in which we need to report suspected unexpected serious adverse reactions (SUSAR) at Austin Health.

The **National Clinical Guidelines Governance Framework** has introduced a [fact sheet](#) that provides guidance on how an incident arising from a clinical trial should be identified, reported, and managed in health service organisations such as Austin Health.

We are in the process of consolidating that advice and incorporating it into our own policies, here at Austin. We will have some contextualised guidelines appropriate for our own workplace and will share with you as soon as we can.

In the meantime, please refer to the Australian Commission on Safety in Quality and Health Care's [Incident Management Guide](#) for best practice. Should you have any immediate questions, please refer them to Kate Khamly, Deputy Director – Research Governance & Integrity, Discovery & Innovation Unit.

## Christmas closure

Mark your calendars - the Discovery and Innovation Unit is downing tools over the Christmas holiday break and closing up shop from Monday 22 December 2025 until Friday 2 January 2026.

Our last working day in the office will be Friday 19 December 2025 and we won't be back in until Monday 5 January 2026.

We know that the end of year can be a hectic time, trying to push through submissions and get approvals before the end of year, so please plan your applications accordingly. The last HREC for 2025 will be Monday 1 December with submissions for that meeting closing on Monday 10 November at 12pm.

The first HREC for 2026 will be in February - stay tuned for more dates as soon as they're confirmed.

Please reach out to the team if you have any concerns about timelines and your submissions.

[View all 2025 HREC dates](#)

## **Applications open for 2026 Austin Medical Research Foundation (AMRF) grant**

Austin Medical Research Foundation (AMRF) is inviting researchers to submit applications for funding in 2026. The Early Career Innovation Seeding Grant is on offer again this year to celebrate more than 50 years of research excellence. Find out more on [The Pulse](#).

Applications close by 5pm on Friday 19 September 2025.