



National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group Meeting 14 – 9 September 2026

Update from the Chair

The fourteenth National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group (NRIAG) meeting was held on Tuesday 9 September 2026.

The meeting commenced with updates from the Department of Education on NCRIS project reporting timelines and future funding arrangements, noting that planning for decisions beyond current project end dates of 30 June 2028 will need to commence no later than early 2027. Members discussed the importance of robust evaluation and monitoring approaches, including lessons from Australia's current EMBL membership review.

The Group received an update from the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) on implementation planning arising from Ambitious Australia, including progress toward establishment of the National Resilience and Science Council, Horizon Europe readiness activities and government work on AI infrastructure and standards development. Members stressed the importance of cross-portfolio involvement and noted growing challenges associated with ageing landmark infrastructure, including high-performance computing and the Australian Synchrotron.

The Department of Health and Aged Care provided briefings on the MRFF National Critical Research Infrastructure Initiative — a 10-year, \$600 million investment from 2024-25 — the MRFF Research Data Infrastructure Initiative — a 10-year, \$100 million investment from 2024-25 — and the recently published National Health and Medical Research Strategy 2026–2036. Members welcomed the Strategy's focus on coordination and national capability, and emphasised the importance of alignment between MRFF investments, NCRIS infrastructure and broader national research infrastructure planning.

The focus of the meeting was the Group's review of the 2026 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap Exposure Draft. Members commended the Expert Working Group and department for producing a mature and comprehensive draft and provided detailed feedback across a range of themes, including industry engagement and co-

investment pathways, digital research infrastructure, AI and sovereign computing capability, workforce as a critical enabling element, research security and resilience, the role of states and territories, and continued recognition of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences infrastructure alongside STEM capability. Members gave in principle endorsement for the release of the Exposure Draft for public consultation, subject to final editorial refinements.

The Group discussed planned consultation activities through September and October, which will include engagement with universities, industry groups, CRCs, Centres of Excellence, learned academies, states and territories and targeted stakeholder workshops. Members also noted that several member terms expire in December 2026, with renewal planning to be informed by Roadmap implementation needs.

The next NRIAG meeting will be held on 9 November 2026, with a focus on the final Roadmap.