

Australia invests \$8.5 M to continue long-term women's health study

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This funding boost complements the Australian Government's commitment to provide ongoing funding for this important project



The government is funding the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH), the nation's largest health survey, for another three years.

Partners in the ALSWH, the University of Queensland and the University of Newcastle, will receive \$8.58 million over the next three years. This funding boost complements the Australian Government's commitment to provide ongoing funding for this important project.

Since 1996, the government has funded the ALSWH to enable it to continuously collect important data on women's health status and trends from across the nation.

The Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, said, "The new funding will allow the study to continue to fulfil this important function at a time where improvements in the women's health space are being prioritised in response to the National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030."

The Minister for Women, Marise Payne, said, "The views of everyday women have never been more valuable. Having such a robust and internationally renowned mechanism for informing national policy on women's health is incredibly important.

"The study follows more than 57,000 women who are broadly representative of the entire Australian population, spanning four generations.

"The three original cohorts were women born in the years 1921-26, 1945-51 and 1973-78. A new cohort of more than 17,000 women born in the years 1989-95—who were then aged 18 to 23 years old — was added in 2013.

"As well as continuing the study, the additional funding will finance a project to improve the representation of women from South East Asia, North East Asia, and Southern Asia. This will focus on women in the two younger cohorts, who are currently

aged 25 to 31 years old and 42 to 47 years old.”

ALSWH's methodology is internationally renowned and assesses:

- Physical and emotional health—including wellbeing, major diagnoses, symptoms.
- Use of health services—GP, specialist and other visits, access, satisfaction.
- Health behaviours and risk factors—diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol, other drugs.
- Time use—including paid and unpaid work, family roles and leisure.
- Socio-demographic factors—location, education, employment, family composition.
- Life stages and key events—such as childbirth, divorce, widowhood.

Data from the study is also made available for national and international research use. Since the study began, it has been used in more than 800 scientific publications.

During 2020, the ALSWH has conducted a series of surveys and reports on women's experiences of COVID-19. They include information on living arrangements during the pandemic, involvement in paid work and home-schooling, and general health and wellbeing.

This information will be beneficial in assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on Australian women.