

# PTA Review

*The latest pathology technology news, views, and announcements*

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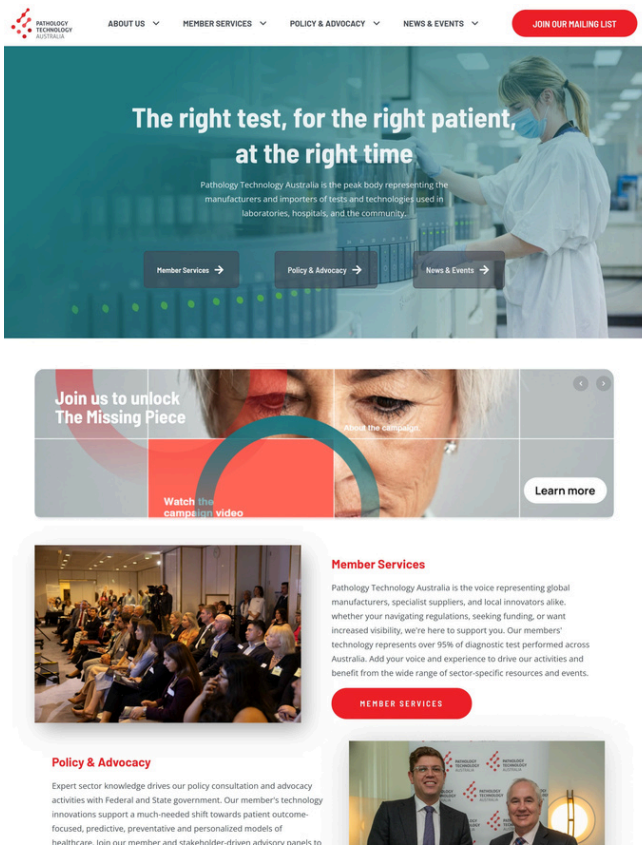
Our first newsletter for 2025 is aptly all about the theme of change.

The recent change of government in the US and its rapidly unfolding policy agenda will have rippling effects across the globe. From freezing NIH and USAID programs, intention to withdraw from the World Health Organisation, and a slew of domestic decisions with a decidedly “anti-science” bent – we are witnessing the stark reality of the significant impact a country’s government can have on the health of its population and that of the world.

Closer to home, we too are facing an election and the stakes for our healthcare system couldn’t be higher. This edition we unpack our key advocacy pillars asking what can we do now, during this election period, and on to the next administration. We’re advocating for value-based health. A recognition of the need to develop true sovereign capability for critical areas of healthcare, and the need to harness expert advice from the stakeholders running the frontlines of our straining system.

We’re making changes within PTA also – check out our [revamped website](#). We’ve made it even easier to stay up to date with all sector-relevant activities and information. Plus, we’ve also expanded the self-paced learning options on our [PTA Academy website](#). Planning is also underway for our second pathology technology in healthcare congress – PTA-C/26. Mark your calendars for May 27/28 – 2026, Sydney, and make sure you [stay connected](#) for all the updates.

# The New PTA Website is LIVE!



If you haven't visited our new website, please drop onto [www.pathologytechnology.org.au](http://www.pathologytechnology.org.au)

The site has an up-to-date look and a more intuitive menu layout. You can navigate to the Missing Piece microsite, featuring patients and their carer's stories, directly from the landing page. These are very powerful examples of the way pathology technology touches lives in so many ways.

Easily learn about the activities, events, and services PTA provide, including the PTA Academy training courses on offer. Plus read up on the central advocacy planks we are pursuing.

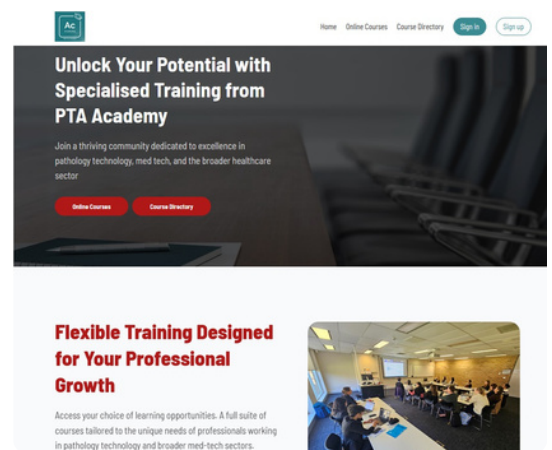
Please send us your feedback on your interactions with the site.

## The PTA-Academy Learning Management System on the new website

Do you want to know more about the in vitro diagnostic (IVD) sector? Maybe you are planning a job in diagnostics, or your current job interacts with the IVD world and you need to know more. Check out KnowIVD for everything you didn't know you needed to know. This course is broken into four modules, each exploring a key theme. You can take individual modules or save upfront by signing up to the whole course. Each module will take around 2 hours to complete.

Seeking to know more about the basics of registering an IVD with the TGA? Our online introductory course is the perfect first step. Our course convenor draws on the experience of past TGA management to deliver expert training and hot tips. This course is a great lead into our face-to-face Intermediate TGA training program and our highly regarded deep dive discussions at Advanced levels.

Find your way to the Academy page from the PTA landing page or go direct to [Courses](#).



# PTA-Congress 2026

Buoyed by the success of our PTA-C/24 we are now into the planning phase for PTA-C/26. Past delegates raved about the opportunity to connect with more than 180 people from the broader base of healthcare professionals, service providers, industry and, importantly, the patient healthcare organisations.

PTA-C has a unique format where three key topics in healthcare are given an in-depth examination through plenary lecture, panel discussion and workshops. This is a very interactive congress where input and opinion are captured at every opportunity. PTA-C/24 facilitated the production of the PTA-C/24 Consensus paper, a concise, data-driven roadmap for how to shift the needle on critical challenges across our health system.

For PTA-C/26 we will follow the same format and examine three new topics to advance the future of healthcare in Australia.

Are you keen to stamp your mark and help shape the next forum for discussions? We are calling for people who wish to be involved in the organisation of this congress.

Please email Chami at [ea@pathologytechnology.org.au](mailto:ea@pathologytechnology.org.au) with your expression of interest.



# Will 2025 bring the changes we need for healthcare?

## – PTA Advocacy Pillars

There's no doubt that our sector is critical for the health of Australians. Pathology informs roughly 70% of all medical diagnosis, treatment and patient management decisions. All cancer and contagion diagnoses depend on pathology, as do a growing range of personalised and targeted treatments.

The provision of pathology services are almost entirely government funded, either through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), or through the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) funding to States and Territories. This means the funding decisions of government remain the biggest barrier to entry for new technology into our healthcare system.

Progressive economies around the world are adopting technologies such as genomics, point of care testing, and digital health systems to improve health outcomes and reduce the burden of disease on their economies. Here in Australia, there are existing and beneficial tests, TGA approved for years, yet are either partially- or not funded at all, thus out of reach to most Australians.

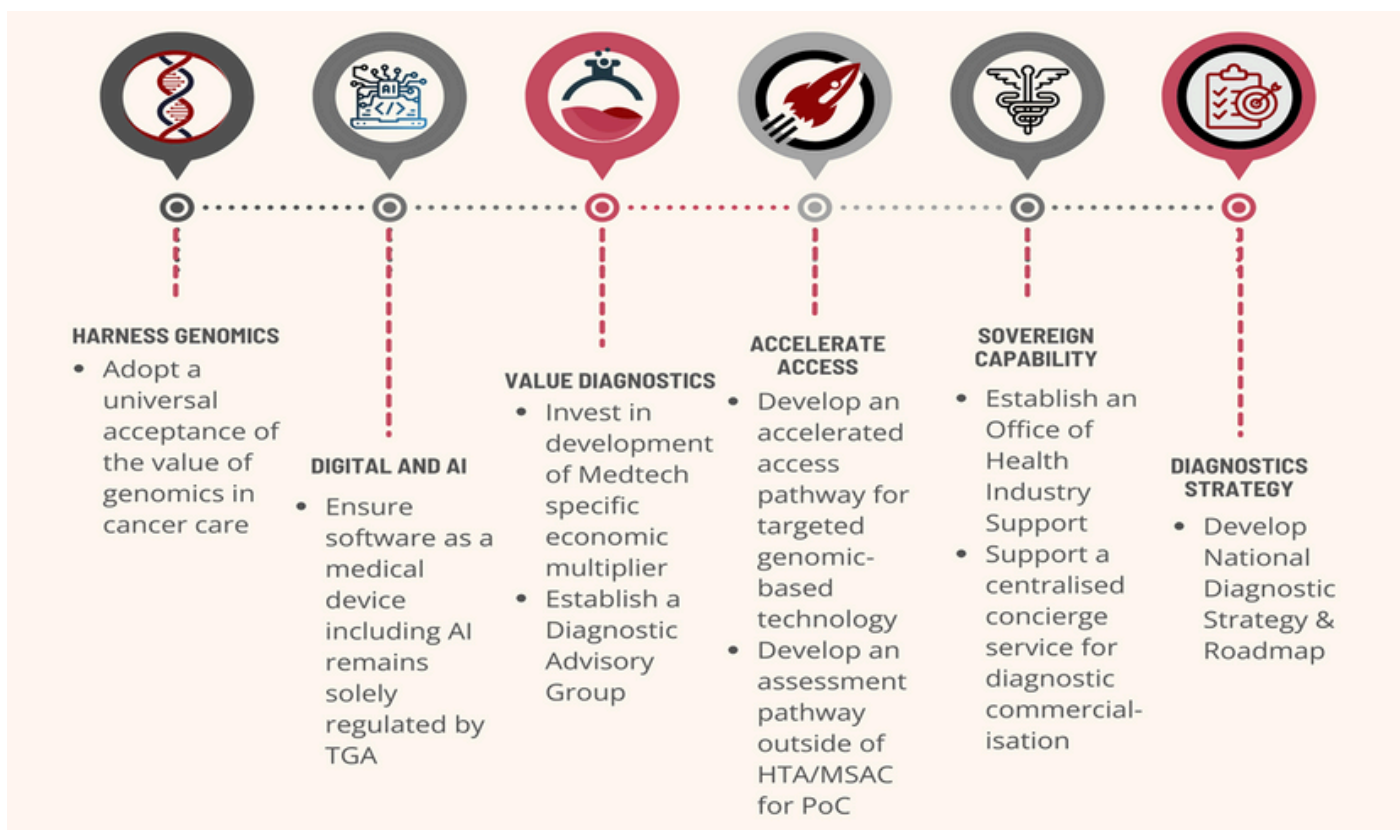
Sadly, Australia is lagging years, and in some cases decades behind other like economies. It is time to recognise the value of investing in pathology technology-driven solutions to address our most pressing healthcare challenges.



You can view this challenge across six dimensions, as depicted in the diagram over page:

- **Genomics** is a major contributor to a more predictive, preventative and personalised healthcare system, and we are just scratching the surface of this important suite of tools.
- **Digital and AI** are essential enablers, but we need to establish new ways to value the benefits such technologies deliver.
- **Valuing diagnostics** through universal recognition of the potential multi-factorial impact of a thriving technology sector.
- **Delays of 8-10 years** when navigating our MBS funding systems are out of step with the rapid pace of technology development.
- **Australian patients** are the biggest losers when we are one of the world's best innovators but one of the worst at commercialising the innovation here.
- **A clear diagnostic strategy** will help "pull" important technology developments through funding and regulatory pathways.

## PTA Advocacy Pillars cont.



PTA's five key advocacy pillars address current challenges and illuminate a path forward. Utilising a broader health economic lens encompassing value-based health, recognising critical sovereign capability, and providing a clear healthcare vision, pathology technology can drive the change we need.

### 1. Adopting Point of Care Testing (POCT) technology for universal access to healthcare.

- POCT is complementary to laboratory testing and provides access to important information when lab tests cannot be accessed in a time consistent with high quality medical care.
- Current methods for evaluating and funding POCT are not keeping up with global trends, meaning as many as 7 million Australians may be missing vital diagnosis and treatment in a timely manner.
- Reducing barriers to clinically proven POCT by adopting similar practices used in like economies will help reduce the time to reimbursement which is currently 8-23 yrs.

### 2. Harness genomics for predictive, preventative and precision health.

- Australia lags well behind comparable economies in the adoption of genomic testing in healthcare. Not just for cancer detection and personalised treatment, but in pharmacogenomics, newborn screening, detection and management of contagions, and disorders stemming from somatic mutation.
- Development of accelerated pathways for funding genomic tests of high medical value are needed, guided by a broad-based expert panel.
- Rapid decisions on conditional funding while building the evidence base is now a standard approach in the UK and should be adopted here.

## PTA Advocacy Pillars cont.

### 3. Digitisation to drive productivity.

- Broad-scale automation of pathology technology has driven laboratory efficiency for 25 years but is now reaching a plateau. The next major productivity gain will be delivered by software, and particularly AI.
- Software as a medical device and especially AI, must immediately be excluded from any National AI Guardrails, in favour of regulation solely by the regulatory expertise within the TGA. Canada has adopted this approach.
- The role of AI in healthcare must be well communicated at all levels in the community and properly funded. Funding outside the traditional Medicare pathways for digital and AI infrastructure should be considered.

### 4. Apply broad health economic metrics to value-based healthcare.

- Currently billions of dollars are being forgone in the healthcare system when high medical value, TGA-approved pathology tests are not funded by Medicare in a timely manner, or at all. This is often accompanied by inconvenience to patients and family members, and poorer health outcomes.
- Short-term benefits will be delivered to patients and the economy by funding TGA approved tests that have been the standard of care in comparable economies.
- Development of a National Diagnostics Strategy and Roadmap will identify national health goals and work in a coordinated way to deliver these.

### 5. Drive sovereign capability to de-risk healthcare.

- We import 97% of our pathology technology needs.
- Despite government initiatives, such as the NRF, Made in Australia, and Buy Australian, we remain a manufacturing backwater, particularly in health, where we are highly exposed to the vagaries of global supply chains.
- One of the major barriers to success is that Australia is rarely, if ever, the first customer, and most often preferences cheaper imported technology. This is likely to remain the case for a large proportion of technology, but where we have developed clear expertise, such as in genomic, POCT and digital technology, we need Australia to be the first customer to capitalise on these local sectors.
- Development of an accurate, Australian based economic multiplier factor will provide the evidence base and justification for buying Australian. Our paper-based economic multiplier for purchasing Australian pathology technology shows a return to the economy of \$2.75 for every \$1 spent.

For more detail on these pillars and to learn more about the value-based health economics supporting this plan go to [www.pathologytechnology.org.au](http://www.pathologytechnology.org.au) or click on these links:

[Unleashing the Hidden Potential: Reframing Pathology Technology's Role in Australian Healthcare ADAPT-Report-2023\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](#)