Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

Medical Research Future Fund

Medical Research Future Fund – Clinician Researchers Initiative

2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	**15 February 2023**
Closing date for minimum data:	**5pm ACT local time** on **05 July 2023**
Application closing date and time:	**5pm ACT local time** on **02 August 2023**
Commonwealth policy entity:	**Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care**
Administering entity	**National Health and Medical Research Council**
Enquiries:	Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their MRFF Eligible Organisation's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice: Phone: 1800 500 983 Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au Questions should be submitted no later than 1:00pm ACT Local Time on **Wednesday 26 July 2023**.
Date guidelines released:	**8 February 2023**
Type of grant opportunity:	**Targeted Competitive**

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Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Clinician Researchers Initiative: 2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health Grant Opportunity process

The Medical Research Future Fund is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the Department of Health and Aged Care's Outcome 1. The Department of Health and Aged Care works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.*

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The lead organisation registers to become an MRFF Eligible Organisation

If the organisation through which you are applying (the lead organisation) is not already an MRFF Eligible Organisation (i.e. approved to submit MRFF grant applications and receive MRFF funding through NHMRC), the organisation should check its eligibility and then submit an MRFF Eligible Organisation certification form. The form is available on the NHMRC website, as well as a list of already approved MRFF Eligible Organisations. The lead organisation will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth if your application is successful.

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The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on GrantConnect.

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You complete and submit a grant application

You complete the application form for the grant opportunity in the NHMRC's Granting System (Sapphire). Your application must address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant. Your organisation's Research Administration Officer (RAO) then certifies and submits the application form.

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We assess all grant applications

We review all applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. Then a grant assessment committee assesses eligible applications against the technical assessment criteria (weighted) and the non-technical assessment criterion (non-weighted).

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We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the recommendations of the grant assessment committee.

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Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.

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We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application via Sapphire.

We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with the MRFF Eligible Organisation through which you applied, if your application is successful. The grant agreement may have specific conditions based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.

Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant through the relevant MRFF Eligible Organisation, monitor your progress and make payments.

Evaluation of the grant opportunity

We evaluate your specific grant activity, the Initiative as a whole, and the MRFF. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1. About the Medical Research Future Fund

1.1 Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

The MRFF, established under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (MRFF Act), provides grants of financial assistance to support health and medical research and innovation to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians. It operates as an endowment fund with the capital preserved in perpetuity. The MRFF reached maturity at $20 billion in July 2020. The MRFF provides a long-term sustainable source of funding for endeavours that aim to improve health outcomes, quality of life and health system sustainability.

This MRFF investment is guided by the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2021-26* (the Strategy) and related set of *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2022-2024* (the Priorities), developed by the independent and expert Australian Medical Research Advisory Board following extensive national public consultation.

1.2 About the Clinician Researchers Initiative

The Clinician Researchers Initiative (the Initiative) aims to support:

- the next generation of talented Australian health professionals drive medical research, make new discoveries and ensure implementation of best practice care for their patients.
- health care professionals to undertake research that will improve clinical care and practice, including through engagement with patients.
- clinicians to focus on developing and refining their research skills and to build research capacity.

Further information on the rationale of the Initiative is available on the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

The MRFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy (the Evaluation Strategy) provides an overarching framework for assessing the performance of the MRFF and is publicly available on the MRFF website.

Applicants to this grant opportunity are expected to describe how their proposed project aligns with the objectives and outcomes of the Clinician Researchers Initiative and the Measures of Success as described in the Evaluation Strategy. These will be key assessment criteria for funding. Projects funded from this grant opportunity will be monitored and evaluated against the Evaluation Strategy.

For further details see sections 5 and 6.

There will be other grant opportunities as part of this Initiative and we will publish the opening and closing dates and any other relevant information on the NHMRC website and GrantConnect.

We administer the MRFF according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs).

1.3 About the 2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health Grant Opportunity

These guidelines contain information for the 2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health Grant Opportunity.

Health research frequently addresses questions derived from clinical practice. When clinicians are involved in research there are many benefits including: increased clinical relevance of research questions, gaining access to clinical settings for research, bringing clinical expertise and insider perspectives to the research, having researchers who are trusted by participants which may encourage their participation, and having researchers who are motivated to disseminate applicable findings and continue their commitment to the research.[1]

The objectives and intended outcomes of this grant opportunity are aligned with the following *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2022-2024*:

- Health and Medical Researcher Capacity and Capability
- Comparative Effectiveness Research
- Primary Care Research.

Streams 1 and 2: Applied Research in Health

Consistent with the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*, the objective of Streams 1 and 2 of this grant opportunity is to provide grants of financial assistance to support medical research projects:

- led by clinician researchers who are specialist general practitioners or specialists in any other specialty (see below)
- that validate and implement new approaches for improving the quality of patient care, and
- address health issues in a Priority Population/s.

For the purpose of this grant opportunity, Priority Populations are defined as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, older people experiencing diseases of ageing, people with rare or currently untreatable diseases/conditions, people in remote/rural communities, people with a disability, individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ people, youth, people with mental illness, people in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances.

Applicants should propose a clinician researcher-led research project that:

- addresses a clearly defined health care priority identified through a clinical researchers' clinical practice
- has the potential to improve clinical practice or health system effectiveness and therefore patient outcomes
- is embedded within health services (e.g. community-based care, hospitals, general practices); however, it can also be coordinated across networks (e.g., Primary Health Networks, Local Health Networks) and thus able to provide immediate benefit to patients
- where possible, builds clinician researcher capacity and capability for specialist general practitioners and/or specialists in any other specialty by including:
    - support through direct research costs for specialist general practitioners and/or specialists in any other specialty to undertake PhDs or research masters degrees that contribute to the proposed research
    - early career researchers who are specialist general practitioners and/or specialists in any other specialty as part of the Chief Investigator team.

Applications must be made to one of the following Streams:

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[1] Williams CS et al. (2022) A global view of the aspiring physician-scientist. Elife. 2022 Sep 13;11:e79738. doi: 10.7554/eLife.79738

- **Stream 1** (Targeted Call for Research): Teams led by a specialist general practitioner
- **Stream 2** (Targeted Call for Research): Teams led by a specialist in any other speciality.

Applications to Streams 1 and 2 of this grant opportunity must meet the requirements for the Chief Investigator team specified in section 3.3. Multidisciplinary research teams, which include researchers from more than one discipline, are encouraged but the Chief Investigator A and a minimum proportion of Chief Investigator team members must be specialist general practitioners (for Stream 1) or specialists in any other specialty (for Stream 2).

Successful applicants will also be required to work with the Health and Medical Research Office and the successful applicant from Stream 3 to build evidence that supports effective adoption of evidence-based practice into health care.

Stream 3 (Targeted Call for Research): Adoption of evidence-based practice into health care

Consistent with the MRFF Act, the objective of Stream 3 of this grant opportunity is to provide a grant of financial assistance to support a medical research project that prospectively evaluates projects funded through Streams 1 and 2 to generate knowledge that improves understanding of the factors that promote the adoption, impact and sustainability of evidence-based practice in health care.

Applications to Stream 3 of this grant opportunity must meet the requirements for the Chief Investigator team specified in section 3.3. Multidisciplinary research teams, which includes researchers from more than one discipline, are encouraged but the Chief Investigator A must be a clinician researcher.

Successful applicants will be required to work with the Health and Medical Research Office and the successful applicants from Streams 1 and 2 to build evidence that supports effective adoption of evidence-based practice into health care.

This grant opportunity is intended to support projects that progress research that addresses a specific health need.

To be competitive for funding, applicants must propose to conduct research that delivers against the above objectives and those of the Clinician Researchers Initiative. Applicants are encouraged to propose novel and/or innovative research and describe how the outcomes of the research will be translated into health benefits for Australians.

Applications to this grant opportunity must propose research that addresses one of the three Streams of research. An application may only be submitted to one of the above three Streams only. Applicants must specify the Stream to which they are applying in their application.

The intended outcome of the research funded by this grant opportunity is to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians by:

- **Streams 1 and 2** (Targeted Calls for Research): supporting specialist general practitioners and/or specialists in any other specialty to improve the quality of health care, practice and systems by undertaking applied research in health care that:
    - improves outcomes for their patients
    - addresses an identified health priority in clinical practice
    - improves the effectiveness of health services by improving safety, quality and/or efficiency
    - builds the capacity of clinician-researchers to undertake research that improves the quality-of-care patients receive.

- **Stream 3** (Targeted Call for Research): generating evidence that will support the effective implementation of evidence-based practice in health care.

If applicants propose research that is not relevant to the desired outcomes they will be considered against the relevant assessment criteria and found to be uncompetitive. MRFF Eligible Organisations are requested to ensure they only submit applications that address the desired outcomes.

This document sets out:

- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how we consider and assess applications
- how we notify applicants and enter into grant agreements with grantees
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees' performance, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the grant opportunity.

The NHMRC is responsible for administering this grant opportunity on behalf of the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Impact of COVID-19

The MRFF acknowledges the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the health and medical research sector, including the ability of researchers to submit applications and undertake research. You will be asked to consider these impacts in your risk management plan. This information will be taken into account in the assessment of your application (see sections 5 and 6.4).

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an application. We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at section 13.

1.4 Encouraging Partnerships

Applicants are encouraged to seek strategic partnerships involving organisations whose decisions and actions affect Australians' health, health policy and health care delivery in ways that improve the health of Australians. Organisations that are capable of implementing policy and service delivery and would normally not be able to access funding through the MRFF are highly valued as partners.

Partnerships and co-investment are encouraged in order to maximise impact of investment, provide opportunities for more mature sites/agencies to build the capacity of emerging sites/agencies, reduce duplication of activities, and reduce potential respondent administrative burden on participating communities. Partnerships are also encouraged to ensure the proposed research is of relevance to consumers and delivery of services, and to support translation of research outcomes into practice.

Partner organisations may include:

- medical research institutes, i.e. organisations that conduct medical research as a primary purpose, and are also registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission
- universities
- corporate Commonwealth entities, i.e. Commonwealth entities that are bodies corporate
- corporations, i.e. Australian public companies, Australian private companies and other incorporated entities
- those working in federal, state, territory or local government in the health portfolio or in other areas affecting health, such as economic policy, urban planning, education or transport

- those working in the private sector such as employers, private health insurance providers or private hospitals
- those commercial entities with an interest in this area, for example biotechnology companies
- non-government organisations and charities
- education institutions
- state education departments
- community organisations such as consumer groups
- healthcare providers
- professional groups.

In some instances, a body of a type listed above may be eligible to apply for MRFF funding in its own right, for example in the case of commercial entities or non-government organisations that are corporations. The above list recognises the desirability of entering into partnerships as a means of advancing the outcomes of the MRFF and is not intended to imply that the types of bodies listed are ineligible to seek MRFF funding.

Partnerships with an overseas partner organisation are acceptable, provided the objectives of the grant opportunity are fully met and all overseas expenditure is eligible (see section 4). However, you cannot use the grant to support research projects undertaken outside of Australia (although funding can be sought to support the Australian-based components of multinational clinical trials).

While partnerships are encouraged, they may not necessarily be relevant for all projects. Where relevant, partner funding contributions will contribute to the assessment of project impact and overall value and risk, but are not a requirement (see section 5).

2. Grant amount and grant period

2.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of $200 million for the Clinician Researchers Initiative. For this grant opportunity, up to $45.5 million of funding is available over 4 years from 2023-24 for the three Streams listed in section 1.3.

Funds will be provided to the MRFF Eligible Organisation according to the available funding indicated in Table 1; however, funds can be expended across the life of the grant (grant period). See below and section 2.2.

Up to $18.5 million in dedicated funding is available for each of Streams 1 and 2, and a further $8 million is available to fund additional applications across both Streams as indicated below. For each Stream, applications will be funded based on rank to a maximum of $18.5 million, after which the remaining applications across both Streams will be pooled into a combined ranked merit list and any residual funds from both Streams, as well as the $8 million remaining for Streams 1 and 2, will be allocated until the total funding available for Streams 1 and 2 is reached. For Stream 3, the top ranked application only will be funded.

For this grant opportunity, an application may be submitted to one of the above three Streams only. Applicants must specify the Stream to which they are applying in their application.

The types of grants that are available under this grant opportunity are:

- Targeted Call for Research grants

Applicants are encouraged to design a research project that best addresses the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity and propose an appropriate budget.

The amounts available for a single grant in each Stream are as follows:

- **Stream 1**: There is no minimum grant amount and the maximum amount available for a single grant is $1.5 million.
- **Stream 2**: There is no minimum grant amount and the maximum amount available for a single grant is $1.5 million.
- **Stream 3**: There is no minimum grant amount and the maximum amount available for a single grant is $0.5 million.

Table 1. Available funding over the grant period ($ million - GST exclusive)

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Stream 1	2.5	6.0	8.0	2.0	N/A
Stream 2	2.5	6.0	8.0	2.0	N/A
Streams 1 and 2	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	N/A
Stream 3	0.5	No funding available	No funding available	No funding available	No funding available

2.2 Grant period

The maximum grant period that can be applied for in each Stream is as follows:

- **Stream 1**: 4 years
- **Stream 2**: 4 years
- **Stream 3**: 5 years.

3. Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

We cannot provide a grant if you receive funding from another source for the same purpose (see section 9).

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible your organisation must be an MRFF Eligible Organisation approved by NHMRC.

Information on becoming an MRFF Eligible Organisation can be found on the NHMRC website.

Joint applications are encouraged, provided you have a lead organisation who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply.

This eligibility criterion derives from provisions set out in section 24 of the MRFF Act and cannot be waived.

3.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

Your application will be ruled ineligible if:

- the MRFF Eligible Organisation through which you are applying, or a participating organisation on your application, is included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme'
- persons named on the application are the subject of a decision by the NHMRC Chief Executive Officer or Delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding opportunities, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they meet other eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect action taken by NHMRC in response to research misconduct allegations or findings, or a Probity Event. See the NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

3.3 Chief Investigators

Applicants must nominate a Chief Investigator A (CIA) who will take the lead role in completing the application, conducting the research, and reporting as required under the grant agreement.

A person must not be named as a Chief Investigator (CI) on more than one application submitted to a Stream of this grant opportunity (i.e. a person may be named as a CI on a maximum of one application per Stream). If a CI is named on more than one application submitted to a Stream of this grant opportunity, both applications will be considered ineligible.

To facilitate collaborative research teams with the required capacity and capability to undertake the proposed research, up to 15 CIs may be included as members of the research team.

It is generally required that, at the time of application submission, the CIA is an Australian citizen or is a permanent resident in Australia. Where the CIA is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, they must have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the grant (see section 6.4). The CIA must be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.

Researchers who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents in Australia are eligible to apply as a CI, but not as CIA (see also section 6).

For the purposes of Streams 1 and 2 of this grant opportunity:

- an early career researcher is defined as a researcher within 5 years of their PhD award date, excluding career disruptions.
- a clinician researcher is defined as an individual who holds a current professional registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, or with the National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professions, or is a registered art therapist or registered sonographer.
- a specialist in any other speciality excludes general practitioners.

For applications to Stream 1 and 2, the Chief Investigator A must be a clinician researcher that is (for applications to Stream 1) a specialist general practitioner or (for applications to Stream 2) a specialist in any other specialty, and:

- 50% or more of all Chief Investigators must be clinician researchers if the Chief Investigator team comprises 2 to 6 members, or

- 66% or more of all Chief Investigators must be clinician researchers if the Chief Investigator teams comprises 7 to 15 members.

To be eligible, applicants to Streams 1 and 2 of this grant opportunity must meet the above definition(s) for the relevant Stream on the application closing date for this grant opportunity.

For the purposes of Stream 3 of this grant opportunity, a clinician researcher is defined as a specialist general practitioner or specialist in any other specialty that has current professional registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. For applications to Stream 3, the Chief Investigator A must meet this definition on the application closing date for this grant opportunity.

For all Streams, Chief Investigator teams comprising a single Chief Investigator are not eligible for funding.

See also sections 1.3 and 6.

3.4 Additional eligibility requirements

Your application may also be ineligible and excluded from further consideration if it contravenes other requirements as set out in these grant guidelines. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- its aims are inconsistent with the object of the MRFF Act to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians
- the amount of funding requested is not within the minimum and maximum amounts available for the relevant Stream as specified in section 2.1
- minimum data describing your application is not entered in Sapphire by the specified date
- the application is not certified and submitted in Sapphire by the RAO of an approved MRFF Eligible Organisation by the advertised closing date and time
- the Grant Proposal does not comply with formatting requirements and page limits
- the proposed research duplicates research previously or currently being undertaken. We may compare the research proposed in applications with grants previously or currently funded by the MRFF, NHMRC or other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council) and published research (see sections 4.7, 7.2 and 7.3)
- the application fails to accurately declare the source, duration and level of funding already held by the research team for research in the particular area of the application
- the application includes any incomplete, false or misleading information.

If a decision to exclude an application from further consideration is made, we will provide the decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO in writing. The MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision in writing.

4. What the grant money can be used for

4.1 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible, activities in your Grant Proposal must clearly demonstrate their criticality in meeting the objectives of the 2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health Grant Opportunity under Section 1.3. You can only spend grant funds to pursue the research activities described in your Grant

Proposal. You can use the grant to pay costs that arise directly from these activities. The following categories must be used in your proposed budget:

- Equipment
- Personnel (Personnel Support Packages)
- Other Direct Research Costs (DRCs).

Rules apply to each category of expenditure. Applicants are required to justify the budget requested for each year of the proposed research. Your budget, including your justification of the proposed expenditure, will be part of the overall value and risk assessment (see sections 5.4 and 6.4).

4.2 Equipment

You can request funding to pay for equipment costing over $10,000 that is essential to the research. The total equipment requested cannot exceed $80,000. Individual items of equipment costing less than $10,000 must be requested within DRCs (see below).

Applicants must clearly outline the total value of all items of equipment for each year, why the equipment is required for the proposed research and why the equipment cannot be provided by the organisation.

For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the MRFF Eligible Organisation submitting the application, to be available to the Australian Government on request.

The MRFF Eligible Organisation must be prepared to meet all service and repair costs in relation to equipment funded.

Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where these are an integral component of a piece of laboratory equipment or are of a nature essential for work in the research field, for example, a computer used for the manipulation of extensively large datasets (i.e. requiring special hardware).

4.3 Personnel

Salary contributions for research staff (CIs and Professional Research Persons) are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The level of PSP requested in an application must match the roles and responsibilities of the position and the percentage of the PSP requested must reflect the required time commitment. Applicants must fully justify all requests for PSPs.

Table 2. Personnel Support Packages

Personnel Support Packages – for funding commencing in 2024		
Level	**Description**	**$ per annum**
PSP1	Technical support - non-graduate personnel Note: A PSP1 at 50% may be claimed for postgraduate students supported on NHMRC research grants	60,018
PSP2	Junior graduate research assistant; or junior graduate nurse, midwife or allied health professional; or junior data manager/data analyst	74,943

Personnel Support Packages – for funding commencing in 2024		
Level	**Description**	**$ per annum**
PSP3	Experienced graduate research assistant/junior postdoctoral research officer; or experienced graduate nurse, midwife or allied health professional; or experienced data manager/analyst	82,408
PSP4	Experienced postdoctoral researcher or clinician without specialist qualifications (i.e., a researcher who may be considered as a named investigator on the research application)	97,334
PSP5	Senior experienced postdoctoral researcher (i.e., a researcher who would normally be considered as a named investigator on the research application and is more than 10 years post-doctoral).	104,797

Chief Investigators

CIs, including the CIA, may draw a salary if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the grant period. CIs based overseas are not able to draw a salary, but salary support is available for research support staff based overseas (see section 4.1). Requested salaries must be based on PSPs.

Applicants can receive up to 100% salary across NHMRC and MRFF grants. Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to 100%, if allowed in the grant guidelines for the respective grant opportunity.

Associate Investigators

An Associate Investigator (AI) is an individual who provides intellectual input to the research and whose participation reasonably warrants recognition. AIs are ineligible to draw a salary from this grant opportunity. Up to 15 AIs may be named in an application.

4.4 Other Direct Research Costs

For the purposes of this grant opportunity, other Direct Research Costs (DRCs) are costs that are integral to achieving the approved research objectives of a grant where the recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria. Such costs must directly address the research objectives of the grant, relate to the approved research plan and require the associated budget to have been properly justified. DRCs may include the following:

- personnel costs related to contract staff and limited external persons (not Chief Investigators or additional personnel). The basis for the costing must be included.
- clinical services that are over and above standard care
- Medicare costs (out of pocket medical expenses)
- reimbursement of reasonable costs associated with randomised control trials (RCTs)
- reasonable imaging and diagnostic costs (MRI, PET, CT, ultrasound, genotyping, biochemical analysis)

- equipment costing less than $10,000 that is unique to the project and is essential for the project to proceed
- purchases of services directly required for the successful conduct of the project (including services from organisational facilities)
- specialised computing requirements that are essential to meeting project-specific needs.

Publication costs cannot be requested in your application but may be listed as a direct research cost in your financial acquittal.

The above list is not comprehensive. Where a research cost is not included in the above list you should refer to the definition in the first paragraph of this section. If you are still unsure, clarification should be sought from NHMRC. DRCs will be critically scrutinised during the assessment of applications and during on-site compliance monitoring visits.

4.5 Accessing existing research infrastructure

Applicants are encouraged to utilise existing research infrastructure to support their research wherever possible so as to reduce duplication and achieve the best return on grant funding. DRCs can be requested to support access to research facilities and infrastructure.

Applicants are encouraged to consider utilising research infrastructure projects such as those funded by the Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). The NCRIS projects encompass a variety of infrastructure relevant to health research such as the Translating Health Discovery (THD) project and the Population Health Research Network (PHRN) project. Further information, including access and pricing, is available on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website.

Your approach to accessing research facilities or infrastructure may impact the assessment of the suitability and value of the requested budget. For information on how to include information on research facilities within your application refer to section 6.4.

4.6 Travel and overseas expenditure

Applicants may request funding for a component of their research to be undertaken overseas if the equipment/resources required for that component are not available in Australia and the component is critical to the successful completion of the grant.

Eligible overseas activities expenditure is generally limited to 10 per cent of total eligible project expenditure.

Eligible travel and overseas expenditure may include:

- domestic travel limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct agreed project and collaboration activities in Australia
- domestic travel for third parties (i.e. certifiers, tradesperson), where the travel is essential to the successful completion of the grant activity
- overseas travel (where it is formally documented within your grant application and formally approved by the relevant MRFF Eligible Organisation, or where subsequently requested, documented and agreed by the Delegate) as being essential to the conduct of the project, ahead of the travel being taken, will be limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation.

Eligible air transportation is limited to the economy class fare for each sector travelled. Where non-economy class air transport is used:

- only the equivalent of an economy fare for that sector is eligible expenditure
- the grantee will be required to provide evidence showing what an economy air fare cost was at the time of travel
- grant funding only up to the economy air fare cost at the time of travel amount can be used.

When considering an application for overseas travel, the Delegate will undertake a Value with Relevant Money assessment to determine whether the cost of overseas expenditure is eligible. This may depend on:

- the proportion of total grant funding that you will spend on overseas expenditure
- the proportion of the service providers total fee that will be spent on overseas expenditure
- how the overseas expenditure is likely to aid the project in meeting the program objectives.

4.7 What the grant money cannot be used for

Indirect costs of research

You cannot use grant funds to pay the indirect costs of research.

Indirect costs of research are organisation overhead costs that benefit and support research. They can include the operations and maintenance of buildings, provision of facilities and libraries, hazardous waste disposal, regulatory and research compliance and administration of research services. Although they are necessary for the conduct of research, and may be incurred in the course of research, they are costs that do not directly address the approved research objectives of a grant.

Costs that cannot be paid with grant funds include, but are not limited to:

- airline club memberships
- computers, computer networks, peripherals and software for communicating, writing and undertaking simple analyses
- communications costs (mobiles, telephone calls)
- conference attendance and associated travel
- entertainment and hospitality costs
- ethics approval costs
- furniture
- health insurance, travel insurance, foreign currency, airport and related travel taxes, passports and visas
- organisational overheads and administrative costs
- non-project related staff training and development
- overseas travel (except as provided for in section 4.6)
- patent costs
- personal membership of professional organisations and groups
- personal subscriptions (e.g. private journal subscriptions)
- physical space and all associated administrative, laboratory and office services
- purchase of reprints

- research infrastructure: facilities necessary for the research endeavour that a responsible Organisation would be expected to supply as a prerequisite to its engagement in research.

Other ineligible expenditure

You cannot use grant funds to cover retrospective costs or to support research activities undertaken outside of Australia (although funding can be sought to support the Australian-based components of multinational clinical trials). See sections 4.6 and 9.1.

A grant for a particular research activity cannot be provided to you if you receive funding from another government source for the same research activity. You can apply for grants under any Commonwealth program but, if your applications are successful, you must choose either the grant from this Program or the other Commonwealth grant.

Where you have submitted the same application to NHMRC and MRFF grant opportunities and have received an offer of funding from one of these sources, NHMRC and the Department of Health and Aged Care reserve the right to withhold any further offer of funding for the application.

Where it appears that an applicant has submitted similar applications for research funding and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant is required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research aims of the two research activities. If we do not consider the two research activities to be sufficiently different, an offer of funding for one of the applications may be withheld or withdrawn at the discretion of the Minister or the Delegate, or you will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants (see section 9).

For grants funded under the Clinician Researchers Initiative, you cannot use the grant to fund extensions of funding for ongoing clinical trials/research projects, as the Initiative and associated grant opportunities aim to support new clinical trials/research projects where recruitment has not yet commenced within Australia.

5. The assessment criteria

Grants funded under this grant opportunity are intended to support projects that progress research that addresses a specific health need.

Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria described below. You must address all assessment criteria in your application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each technical criterion and against the non-weighted (non-technical) assessment criterion.

The application form requests information that directly relates to the assessment criteria below. You should provide evidence to support your responses to each criterion and your requested budget. Size limits apply to all responses.

Funding will only be awarded to applications that score satisfactorily against all criteria.

5.1 Assessment Criterion 1 - Project impact (40% weighting)

Project Impact is the extent to which the project's research outputs will contribute to meaningful advances in health outcomes, practice and/or policy, consistent with the objectives and outcomes described in section 1.3. The assessment of Project Impact will also consider the project's contribution to the objective of the Initiative as described in section 1.2 and your statement against the MRFF Measures of Success.

For applications to Streams 1 and 2, your response to this criterion should ensure that you:

- describe how the project builds upon existing knowledge to progress the area of research and how the research outcomes will contribute to meaningful advances in health outcomes, practice and/or policy in Australia.
- demonstrate the involvement of consumers (including people with relevant lived experience and their carers), the community, health providers and/or other end users (e.g. health professionals, health services, and coordination mechanisms such as Primary Health Networks) in the project and how their needs, priorities, views and values have informed the research question and its conceptualisation, development and planned translation and implementation.
- demonstrate the involvement of academic, industry, state/territory, and/or other partners in the project and how their needs and views have informed its conceptualisation, development and planned translation and implementation.

As all projects in Streams 1 and 2 specifically focus on the health of priority populations (defined as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, older people experiencing diseases of ageing, people with rare or currently untreatable diseases/conditions, people in remote/rural communities, people with a disability, individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ people, youth, people with mental illness, people in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances), applications to these Streams should also:

- describe how the anticipated outputs will contribute to meaningful advances in health outcomes, practice and/or policy for the priority population
- demonstrate how the proposed research focuses on interventions that will be acceptable (e.g. culturally appropriate) to the priority population
- demonstrate leadership by, and involvement of, the priority population in the project, and how their needs, views and values have informed its conceptualisation, development and planned implementation.

For applications to Stream 3, your response to this criterion should ensure that you:

- describe how your evaluation of clinician researcher-led projects will support the adoption, impact and sustainability of research and evidence-based practice in health care
- articulate how your research will deliver health care outcomes that are a priority for the Australian public, including details of community engagement and involvement
- describe how your proposed project is engaging with partners (e.g., health service delivery, government, policy) to achieve the objectives of the grant opportunity and translate the research outcomes into practice, as quickly as possible.

Further instructions are in section 6.4.

5.2 Assessment Criterion 2 - Project methodology (30% weighting)

Project Methodology is a description of the design and conduct of the proposed research in the form of a project plan. The assessment of Project Methodology will consider the scientific quality and feasibility of the project plan and its ability to deliver on the project's intended outcomes. Projects are expected to be original and build on (rather than duplicate) research that has already been undertaken.

For applications to Streams 1 and 2, your response to this criterion should ensure you clearly articulate:

- the research question and the proposed approach for addressing it, including (as appropriate) tools and techniques, participants (e.g. diversity of participants), interventions, controls, statistical approaches, and strategies for data collection and use

- how consumers will be involved in the proposed research, including their contributions throughout the life of the project
- arrangements for project governance and oversight to support its successful delivery.
- appropriate milestones, performance indicators and timeframes.

As all projects in Streams 1 and 2 specifically focus on the health of priority populations, applications to these Streams should also articulate how the proposed methodology includes strong and meaningful leadership and involvement of the priority population, including its people, communities and organisations.

If your project plan includes the conduct of a clinical trial, your response should also:

- provide details of the trial design
- specify and justify recruitment targets (including targets for ensuring diversity, e.g. by gender) and sample sizes
- articulate how the clinical trial design will support advancement of robust clinical trial methodologies and/or protocols
- describe how consumers have been involved in the trial design (e.g. its conception, protocol and schedule, participant information, consent forms or videos).

For applications to Stream 3, your response to this criterion should ensure that you clearly articulate:

- the research question and the proposed approach for addressing it, including (as appropriate) tools and techniques, participants (e.g. diversity of participants), interventions, controls, statistical approaches, and strategies for data collection and use
- arrangements for project governance and oversight to support its successful delivery
- appropriate milestones, performance indicators and timeframes.

All grantees will be required to report on project progress at 12 month intervals. Further instructions are in section 6.4.

5.3 Assessment Criterion 3 - Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30% weighting)

Capacity, Capability and Resources is the relevant skills, knowledge, experience and resources the research team and any partners are contributing to the project. The assessment of Capacity, Capability and Resources will consider the overall composition of the research team, the contribution of individual researchers to the project, and the involvement of partners in the successful delivery of the project.

For all Streams, in your response to this criterion, you should ensure that you demonstrate:

- the research team has an appropriate mix of skills (scientific, project management, etc) to undertake the proposed research
- the research team includes individuals that bring diverse experiences and expertise (e.g. across disciplines, genders, cultures, lived experience relevant to the research question, career stages and research sectors)
- the research team has the skills, experience and capacity to involve and support consumers (including those with lived experience) in the proposed research, and ensure that this is done appropriately and effectively
- the commitment of partners to the project and how they will support (through financial and in-kind contributions) its successful delivery.

As all projects in Streams 1 and 2 specifically focus on the health of priority populations, applications to these Streams should also demonstrate that the research team includes leadership by the priority population, and that the research team has experience in delivering research that has positively impacted health policies and programs of relevance to the priority population.

For all Streams, each Chief Investigator should provide an example from the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary) of how their research has contributed to meaningful advances in health outcomes, practice and/or policy through the translation or implementation of research findings.

Further instructions are in section 6.4.

Relative to Opportunity

For this grant opportunity, the policy is that assessment processes will accurately assess an applicant's track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including consideration as to whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant. In alignment with NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review, particularly the principles of fairness and transparency, the following additional principles further support this objective:

- Research opportunity: Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct
- Fair access: Researchers should have access to funding support available through NHMRC grant programs consistent with their experience and career stage
- Career diversity: Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside of academia should not be disadvantaged. We recognise that time spent in sectors such as industry may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

The above principles frame our approach to the assessment of a researcher's track record during expert review of grant applications. We expect that those who provide expert assessment will give clear and explicit attention to these principles to identify the highest quality research and researchers to be funded. We recognise that life circumstances can be very varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity and Career Disruption considerations during expert assessment.

Circumstances considered may include:

- amount of time spent as an active researcher
- available resources, including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities
- building relationships of trust with priority populations (e.g. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities) over long periods and subsequent impact on track record and productivity
- clinical, administrative or teaching workload
- relocation of an applicant and their research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity
- for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants, community and cultural obligations
- restrictions on publication of research undertaken in other sectors
- the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question
- research outputs and productivity noting time employed in other sectors. For example, there might be a reduction in publications when employed in sectors such as industry
- carer responsibilities (that do not come under Career Disruption below)
- calamities, such as pandemics, bushfires or cyclones.

Career Disruption

A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to pregnancy, major illness/injury or carer responsibilities.

Interruptions must involve either a continuous absence from work for periods of 90 calendar days or more and/or a long-term partial return to work that has been formalised with the applicant's employer.
The period of career disruption may be used to determine an applicant's eligibility for a grant opportunity or to allow additional track record information to be considered during assessment. See also *Relative to Opportunity* above.

Circumstances not meeting the requirements for consideration under career disruption may be considered under *Relative to Opportunity*.

5.4 Assessment Criterion 4 - Overall Value and Risk of the Project (non-weighted)

Overall Value and Risk is the extent to which the project's research outputs will meaningfully contribute to objective/s and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity, the Initiative, and the MRFF more broadly. Your response to this criterion will consist of your Measures of Success statement, proposed budget, and risk management plan submitted with your application.

For all Streams, the assessment of Overall Value and Risk will consider:

- the relative contribution of the outcomes or results you have identified in your Measures of Success statement to the intended outcomes of the grant opportunity, the goal and aims of the Initiative, and the MRFF
- the appropriateness of the requested budget (including the value and type of any contributions from partners) to support successful delivery of the project, including whether it is sufficiently detailed and justified and represents Value with Relevant Money
- the appropriateness of the risk management plan, including strategies for identifying, documenting, monitoring and reporting on key risks to the completion of the project.

Refer section 6.4 and to the Rating *Scale for Overall Value and Risk* for further information.

5.5 Consumer and community involvement

The Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Statement's purpose is to guide research institutions, researchers, consumers and community members in the active involvement of consumers and community members in all aspects of health and medical research. NHMRC and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement. Further information on the Statement is available on NHMRC's website.

Researchers are actively encouraged to involve consumers at all stages and levels of their proposed research, including in defining the research question and through the life of the proposed research and its translation.

6. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines.

These documents may be found at GrantConnect. Any alterations or addenda[2] will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity.

Applications must be submitted electronically using Sapphire. Electronic submission requires the MRFF Eligible Organisation and CIs named in an application to register for an account. New user requests can be submitted via the system login page.

If an organisation wishing to apply is not yet an approved MRFF Eligible Organisation, the organisation must complete an MRFF Eligible Organisation certification form and receive approval before the organisation will receive a Sapphire account. It is important that the organisation submits their MRFF Eligible Organisation certification form as soon as possible, so there is enough time for the certification process to be completed in Sapphire before the minimum data due date (see section 3.1).

Your application will consist of:

- a Profile Report containing information drawn from each CI's Profile in Sapphire
- an Application Report containing information that you entered directly into the Application Form in Sapphire
- a Grant Proposal (including a Risk Management Plan and a Measures of Success statement). You will upload this PDF file into Sapphire (see section 6.4)
- a Declaration of Applicant Interests. You will upload this PDF file into Sapphire (see section 6.4 and 12.1)
- letter/s of support from partner organisation/s (where relevant). These PDF files will be uploaded into Sapphire (see section 6.4)
- letter/s from research facilities (where relevant). These PDF files will be uploaded into Sapphire (see section 6.4).

Detailed instructions on completing your application are in section 6.4. Your MRFF Eligible Organisation is required to certify your application as correct and complete prior to submitting it to NHMRC. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Examples of false or misleading information in an application include, but are not limited to:

- providing a dishonest statement regarding time commitments to the research
- providing incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding
- providing a fictitious record of your achievements
- falsifying claims in publication records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

If we believe that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional we may refer the matter for investigation and take action under the grant guidelines, the grant agreement or, for this grant opportunity, the NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

[2] Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

6.1 Joint (consortia) applications

In some cases, the organisation that will administer your grant may differ from the organisation in which you will actually conduct the proposed research. For example, many universities administer research being conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. You are required to list participating organisations in your application and specify the percentage of the research effort being undertaken within these organisations.

Prior to submission your MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO is required to assure us that arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all organisations associated with the application.

6.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

Minimum data describing your application must be submitted by the due date shown below. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted.

Applications must be submitted to NHMRC by the closing date below. Late applications will not be accepted.

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case by case basis and must be submitted by email to help@nhmrc.gov.au on or before the close date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or cyclones, or
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple applicants, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family[3], is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions, if granted, will be for a maximum of seven calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent assessment processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed.

Requests for extension submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

The expected completion date of your research must be nominated in your application and must not extend beyond the grant period specified in section 2.2.

Table 3. Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Applications open	15 February 2023
Minimum data due	5pm ACT local time on 05 July 2023
Applications close	5pm ACT local time on 02 August 2023
Assessment of applications	October-November 2023
Approval of outcomes of selection process	December 2023

[3] Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).

Activity	Timeframe
Announcement of outcomes	December 2023-January 2024
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	On announcement
Acceptance of grant offer	To be specified within the grant schedule (generally within one month of formal offers)
Grant activity commences	To be specified within the grant schedule (within a reasonable timeframe following execution of the grant schedule)
End date of grant activity	For Targeted Call for Research grants (Stream 1): within 4 years of execution of the grant schedule For Targeted Call for Research grants (Stream 2): within 4 years of execution of the grant schedule For Targeted Call for Research grants (Stream 3): within 5 years of execution of the grant schedule

6.3 Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their MRFF Eligible Organisation's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:

Phone: 1800 500 983

Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after the date and time indicated on the cover page of these grant guidelines.

Any alterations or addenda to the grant guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

6.4 Completing the grant application

Using Sapphire

Applications must be submitted electronically using Sapphire. Electronic submission requires approved MRFF Eligible Organisations and CIs on an application to register for an account.

Sapphire Tutorials and FAQs can be found here:

Tutorials: https://healthandmedicalresearch.gov.au/tutorials.html#

FAQ: https://healthandmedicalresearch.gov.au/help.html

If you have any technical difficulties, please contact your RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre on 1800 500 983 or by email to help@nhmrc.gov.au.

Starting your application in Sapphire

Applicants must create a new application for this grant opportunity in Sapphire. The following advice is provided to assist you to complete specific sections of the application.

Minimum data

You must submit minimum data in Sapphire by the applicable due date and time.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in your application not proceeding.

Minimum data are indicated in Sapphire by a blue flag and are comprised of:

- Application Title (minimum of 10 characters)
- Application Details:
- MRFF Eligible Organisation
- Stream applied for (one per application)
- Priority Population (yes/no)
- Project Synopsis (see *Project Synopsis* below) (minimum of 100 characters)
- Privacy Agreement
- Research Classification:
- Broad Research Area
- Fields of Research
- Peer Review Areas (at least three subjects must be selected)
- Research Keywords (five keywords must be selected)
- Research Team:
- Chief Investigator A (a complete CIA Role, Name and Email).

Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Please note you will also need to complete the Privacy Agreement in order to save your minimum data. Your RAO is not required to certify the minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission.

Profile requirements

Instructions for entering Profile information in Sapphire are provided in the relevant Sapphire user guides. All mandatory sections of your CIs’ profiles must be completed.

It is important that CIs update their Profile in Sapphire prior to certification of the application by your RAO. Changes made to your CV after RAO certification will not appear in the submitted application.

The following components of your CIs’ Profile will be incorporated into your application:

My Grants (during the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary))

This section is auto-populated in Sapphire. If any NHMRC or MRFF grants are missing from this section, please contact NHMRC’s Research Help Centre.

Other Funding (during the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary))

Provide sufficient details about other funding you have received (excluding funding from NHMRC or the MRFF).

Career Disruptions (during the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary))

For guidance on what constitutes a career disruption see section 5. If applicable, you (or members of your CI Team) should use this opportunity to declare any career disruptions that may be relevant to your career history.

If you have had an extended career disruption within the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary), it is advised that you briefly explain this in your application and nominate additional research achievements from the most recent year/s without a career disruption.

For example, if during a 5 year period you have taken six (6) months of parental/carer's leave and then returned to work at 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for three (3) years before resuming at a full-time level, you will have worked an equivalent of 3 FTE over that 5 year period.

You should therefore:

1. provide the details of your career disruption/s in your Profile in Sapphire
2. consider including publication/s that predate the assessable period of this grant opportunity by the claimed FTE (two (2) years in the above example) in your 'top 5' publications (see below))
3. consider including research achievements that predate the assessable period of this grant opportunity by the claimed FTE (2 years in the above example) in section D2 - Chief Investigator capability and capacity of the Grant Proposal (see section 5). Please preface these items in D2 with the following sentence: *The following have been included in accordance with sections 5 and 6.4 of the grant guidelines (career disruption)*.

When providing the details for your career disruption/s in Sapphire, please select the nature of the career disruption from the drop down menu.

- Impact

Provide a brief explanation on the impact the career disruption/s has had on your research and research achievements and associated productivity relative to stage of career. Applicants should not describe the nature of the career disruption in this field. Note that this information will be provided to expert assessors. Maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks.

- Additional research outputs

The Additional Research Outputs section of your Sapphire Profile does not need to be completed for this grant opportunity (refer to Publications and section D2 of the Grant Proposal).

- Dates

You are required to nominate the periods in the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary) where you have had a disruption (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

Relative to Opportunity (during the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary))

If applicable, you (or members of your CI Team) should use this section to provide details on any relative to opportunity considerations and the effect they have had on your research and research achievements. For guidance on what constitutes 'relative to opportunity' see section 5.

Project Synopsis

A Synopsis of your application is required in the Sapphire form as part of the minimum data requirements. This information will inform the selection of assessors with suitable expertise to review your application, and for communication with various audiences regarding how the grants selected for funding will achieve the outcomes sought from this grant opportunity.

Applicants proposing clinical research, including clinical trials, should ensure that the Project Synopsis is written in plain English, incorporates Participant, Intervention, Comparator and Outcome, and concludes by stating why the research is important.

Publications – 'Top 5'

For each CI, nominate up to five (5) publications from the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary) (taking into account Career Disruptions) in the free text fields provided. For each publication, sufficient information should be provided in an appropriate format for an assessor to identify the publication (maximum 200 characters including spaces and line breaks). Web links can be used to reference publications where there is no practical alternative (see section 6.4).

Provide an explanation of how the publications illustrate your capability to contribute to the proposed research (maximum 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks). Metrics (but not journal-based metrics) may be included in your explanation.

The Grant Proposal

You will upload your Grant Proposal into Sapphire as a PDF file. A pre-formatted Microsoft Word template for the Grant Proposal can be downloaded from the grant opportunity webpage on GrantConnect.

Applicants must use this template to complete their Grant Proposal. Mandatory naming, size and formatting requirements apply.

Table 4. Formatting Requirements for the Grant Proposal

Formatting Requirements for the Grant Proposal	
File format	The Grant Proposal must be saved and uploaded in Portable Document Format (PDF)
File size	The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named as follows: *CIA Surname_ grant opportunity name_document type.pdf* e.g. Smith_2023 Clinician Researchers Applied Research in Health_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Page limits	Page limits are specified for each component of the Grant Proposal
Font	NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12 point Times New Roman. Applicants must ensure the font is readable.
Header	Application ID and CIA surname must be included in the header

Line spacing	Single
Language	English
Web links	Web links are not permitted except in citations of materials only available online. The full URL must be provided and the style must allow identification from a printed version of the application.

Applications that fail to comply with the formatting requirements or the specified page limits may be excluded from consideration. Applicants and MRFF Eligible Organisations are advised to retain a copy of the PDF file. If printing the PDF file for the purposes of checking formatting and page length, ensure that page scaling is set to 'None' in the print settings.

Your Grant Proposal must include the following components, and no other components:

Table 5. Grant Proposal Components

	Component	Page Limit
A	Project impact	3 pages
B	Project methodology	5 pages
C	Milestones and Performance Indicators	2 pages
D	Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project	
	1. Team capacity and capability relevant to this application	1 page
	2. Chief Investigator capacity and capability	1 page per CI
E	Overall Value and Risk of your project	
	1. Risk Management Plan	2 pages
	2. Partner Funding	1 page
F	Measures of Success statement	1 page
G	References	1 page
H	Additional eligibility requirements	1 page

A brief description of each component is provided below.

A. Project impact (maximum three A4 pages)

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 1 – Project impact. Applicants are requested to address all relevant aspects of the criterion listed in section 5.1, including those that relate to priority populations, where applicable.

B. Project methodology (maximum five A4 pages)

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 2 – Project methodology. Please provide sufficient information to justify the design and conduct of the proposed research as specified in section 5.1, including details that relate to priority populations, where applicable.

C. Milestones and Performance Indicators (maximum two A4 pages)

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 2 – Project methodology. Applicants are requested to provide a table of milestones and performance indicators and corresponding dates. The approach should be specific to the proposed research and allow for effective monitoring of progress at 12 month intervals. Applicants should note that relevant milestones for research involving the conduct of a clinical trial may include, but are not limited to, receipt of ethics approval for first trial site and all trial sites, enrolment of first participant, recruitment numbers per month, reporting to Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC) sites, budget targets, placement of data in a repository, close out and publication.

Applicants should indicate how the milestones and performance indicators take into account potential disruptions to the research due to COVID-19 restrictions.

D. Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 3– Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project. Provide details of any relative to opportunity and career disruption considerations, where relevant.

1. Team Capacity and Capability relevant to this application (maximum one A4 page)

Applicants are requested to provide a summary of the research team's overall capacity and capability as specified in section 5.1, including those that relate to priority populations, where applicable.

Information about Associate Investigators must not be included as contributing to team capacity and capability.

2. Chief Investigator Capacity and Capability (maximum one A4 page per CI)

CIs should use this section to highlight their research achievements. Each CI should provide an example/s from the assessable period of this grant opportunity (see Glossary) (taking into account Career Disruptions) on the impact of previous research.

Some examples of research impact may include:

- development of new knowledge within an internationally recognised field of research
- improvement to health in the Australian population and/or in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- improvement to health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice
- development of a service delivery or system change, prevention or intervention program, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice
- change in policy that has impacted social well-being, equality or social inclusion or impacted the social well-being of the end-user, public and community.

E. Overall Value and Risk of your project

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 4 – Overall Value and Risk of your project. Your response to the criteria must consist of the following:

1. A Risk Management Plan (maximum two A4 pages)

Please provide a Risk Management Plan that addresses key risks in relation to your project and how you propose to address, manage, mitigate, monitor and report those risks including risks related to COVID-19 restrictions. Risk themes for consideration in developing your risk management plan are provided in the below table (the list is not exhaustive).

Risk Themes	Types of Risk
People	People capability Recruitment Project management Stakeholders Safety
Information	Intervention or procedures for gathering research data Data integrity / accuracy Data disclosure / unauthorised access
Governance	Accountability Assurance processes Litigation Reporting
Delivery	Scientific design / research integrity Budget / financial Innovation Resources Project failure Performance measures Poor practice / incorrect analysis
Regulatory	Legislation Ethics Policy

STEP 1: Provide a tabulated list of the key risks in the following format:

Risk theme	Risk	How risk is mitigated / managed

STEP 2: You must also explain how you propose to monitor and report risks (both those identified in your submitted risk management plan and those which may arise during your project):

- describe your proposed approach for monitoring risks (e.g. timing of review, what risk ratings you propose to use in monitoring, whose responsibility)

- describe how you plan to report on risks (e.g. what you will report, what process, to who and at what point).

The risk management plan (incorporating **STEPS 1 and 2**) must be no longer than two A4 pages in length.

2. Partner Funding (maximum one A4 page)

Applicants should provide a tabulated list of any contributions (either funding or in-kind) from partner organisations in the following format:

Name of partner organisation	Type of contribution	Value of contribution

Note that applicants are required to submit a letter of support from each partner organisation as part of their application. See *Letters of support from Partner Organisations* below.

F. Measures of Success statement (maximum one A4 page)

This section should be used to address Assessment Criterion 1 – Project Impact and Assessment Criterion 4 - Overall Value and Risk of your project. Your response must provide a tabulated description of how the research activities will contribute to one or more of the Measures of Success described in the Evaluation Strategy and appropriate outcome/s or result/s against which your progress will be evaluated in the following format:

Measure of success	How the project will contribute towards the measure of success	Description of outcome or result against which the contribution will be evaluated

The statement must be no longer than one A4 page in length. Grantees will be required to report against the outcome/s or result/s at 12 month intervals.

G. References (maximum one A4 page)

Provide a list of all references cited in the application using a recognised citation style. Only include references to cited work.

H. Additional eligibility requirements (maximum one A4 page)

For Applicants to Streams 1 and 2

To be considered for funding, you must provide information demonstrating compliance with the eligibility requirements specified in section 3.3 in the following format:

Chief Investigators (List CIA and all CIs below)	**Title**	**First Name**	**Surname**	**PhD award date**	**Career Disruption claimed? (Yes/No)**	**Years post-PhD (adjusted for Career Disruption/s)**	**Registration Number**	**Registering/ Accrediting Entity**
CIA								
CI								
CI								
…								
The percentage of all Chief Investigators that meet the definition of a clinician researcher as specified in section 3.3 is: _____ %								

For Applicants to Stream 3

To be considered for funding, you must provide information demonstrating compliance with the eligibility requirements specified in section 3.3 in the following format:

CIA	**Title**	**First Name**	**Surname**	**AHPRA Registration Number**	**Registering/ Accrediting Entity**

Letters of support from Partner Organisations

Information on any partner organisation(s) contributing to your grant must be entered into the 'Partner Organisation(s)' section within the application form in Sapphire. Provide the name and address of the partner organisation and the details of an authorised officer within the organisation. The authorised officer must be a person occupying a position with responsibility for the Partner's participation in the research who has the authorisation to expend the partner's money or resources.

A letter of support should be uploaded for each partner organisation listed in your application. Note that letters of support are not required from named individuals in the application (i.e. Chief Investigators or Associate Investigators), the MRFF Eligible Organisation submitting the application, or any Participating Institutions listed in the application (see section 6.1).

The letter must be on the partner organisation's letterhead and be signed by the authorised officer (see above). Please note that applicants should not sign the letter of support unless they are a representative of the partner organisation and have the authorisation to expend the partner's money or resources.

Each letter of support should be no more than two A4 pages in length and must include:

- application number and title
- a brief description of the partner organisation
- the authorised officer's role within the organisation
- where relevant, the organisation's lead researcher for the study (name, position held and a brief background)
- where relevant, a list of participating clinical trial site/s (including locations) that are the responsibility of the partner research organisation
- information on the financial and/or in-kind support for the proposed research that are the responsibility of the partner organisation
- consent for the Australian Government to identify the partner organisation in media releases, on websites and in future grant opportunity documentation
- where available, a weblink to the partner organisation's most recent annual report - the full URL must be provided and the style must allow identification from a printed version of the grant application. If an annual report is not available, the Letter of Support should explain why this is the case.

Letters of support should comply with the formatting requirements for the Grant Proposal (see section 6.4) with exceptions to provide for the use of organisational letterheads and a weblink to the annual report. It is important that the title of the file is in the following format: *CIA Surname_grant opportunity name_LoS_organisation name (or acronym).pdf*

Declaration of Applicant Interests

Your declaration of applicant interests will take the form of a single PDF file that complies with the formatting requirements for the Grant Proposal specified in section 6.4. It is important that the name of the file is in the following format: *CIA Surname_grant opportunity name_Declaration of Interests.pdf*

The declaration should be uploaded into Sapphire.

For further details see section 12.2.

Direct Research Costs

Enter details of the proposed research budget into Sapphire, keeping in mind the level and duration of funding available under this grant opportunity. Details on permitted uses of funds and setting of budgets can be found in section 4. All components of your budget requests are to be included in 'Direct Research Costs'. Note that the proposed value entered for each budget component should reflect the funding being sought from the MRFF for that component (i.e. the value of any partner contributions should not be included).

Requests for Equipment, PSPs and DRCs must be included in your budget. For each item you must enter:

- the item type
- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- a justification for the particular item requested.

Applicants may request funding for services from research facilities required to undertake the Grant Proposal. These services may include, but are not limited to, biospecimens or data from biobanks, pathology services, clinical registries, the Australian Twin Registry, Cell Bank Australia, the Trans-Tasman Radio Oncology Group or clinical trial services.

Provide details of the costs of using the services of research facilities within 'Other Research Costs' in Sapphire and ensure they are fully justified. Applicants should consult with research facilities to ensure that the services they require can be provided and that the charges included in the research budget reflects their charges. Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration must be uploaded into Sapphire in 'Third Party Research Facilities'. It is important that the name of the file is in the following format: *CIA Surname_grant opportunity name_Research Facilities.pdf*.

Submitting the application

Prior to submitting the application the CIA and RAO must ensure that:

- all CIs have provided written agreement to the CIA for the final application to be certified
- all personnel have provided written agreement to their being named in the application, to participate in the manner described in the application and to the use of their personal information as described in the *NHMRC Privacy Policy*.

Once all Profile details, application form details and PDF documents have been entered/uploaded into Sapphire, the application can be certified and submitted.

Certification is required by both the CIA and MRFF Eligible Organisation. Please review the application to ensure it is accurate and complete and meets all eligibility requirements.

The CIA must provide the RAO with evidence that the application is complete. This written evidence should be retained by the MRFF Eligible Organisation and must be provided to us on request. The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA prior to submitting an application:

- all required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct
- all eligibility and other application requirements have been met
- all personnel contributing to the research activity have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement of the Ethical Conduct of Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies
- that the application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements, in accordance with section 3.

and if funded,

- the research will be carried out in strict accordance with the grant guidelines, grant agreement and schedule, and
- the research may be used to inform evaluations of the grant opportunity and the Program.

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the MRFF Eligible Organisation prior to submitting an application:

- reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements detailed in the grant guidelines

- where the CIA is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the grant and will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant period
- the appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the entirety of the grant period
- approval of the research activity by relevant organisational committees and approval bodies, particularly in relation to ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the grant, or the research activities that require their approval
- arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all organisations associated with the application
- the application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the MRFF Eligible Organisation, noting that under section 136.1 of *the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the MRFF Eligible Organisation to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.

The MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO must certify and submit grant applications. Once an application has been submitted and the application period has closed, the application is considered final and no changes may be made.

7. The grant selection process

7.1 Assessment of grant applications

NHMRC will assess the eligibility of your application at any stage following the close of applications. NHMRC may request further information in order to assess whether the eligibility requirements have been met. MRFF Eligible Organisations will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants.

If eligible, we will then assess your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria
- whether it provides Value with Relevant Money.[4]

Scoring of the technical assessment criteria will be done in accordance with the Assessment Criteria Scoring Matrix provided with these grant guidelines. Rating of the non-technical (Overall Value and Risk of your project) assessment criterion will be done in accordance with the Rating Scale for Assessment Criteria 4 - Overall Value and Risk of your project provided with these grant guidelines.

To be awarded MRFF funding for a Targeted Call for Research grant, applications must receive a score of 4 or higher against each of the weighted technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3), and a rating of 'Good' or 'Excellent' for the non-weighted assessment criterion (criterion 4).

[4] See glossary for an explanation of 'Value with Relevant Money'.

7.2 Who will assess applications?

Applications will undergo rigorous assessment, whereby they are subject to scrutiny and evaluation by individuals with relevant experience and expertise appropriate to the grant opportunity such as scientific experts, consumers, industry experts and health service providers. Assessors will be selected on the basis that they will bring experience and expertise in a range of areas including:

- trans-disciplinary
- academia
- clinical
- health services delivery
- translation research
- consumer and patients
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health
- Industry and commercialisation expertise.

Gender balance will also be considered, along with geographic representation. We strive to include at least one international representative to ensure MRFF funded research is internationally competitive.

When developing your application, you should take into account the nature of expert assessment: assessors will be selected taking into account the experience and expertise appropriate to the grant opportunity and may draw, as appropriate, from their breadth of knowledge relevant to the grant opportunity when assessing applications. Issues not relevant to the assessment criteria will not be considered.

Australian and/or international expert assessors will be selected and applicants should therefore construct applications with the knowledge that the full application may be provided to Australian and international expert assessors.

Assessors are required to declare material personal interests (financial or non-financial) and material personal associations in accordance with NHMRC policy on the declaration and management of conflicts of interest.

Expert assessors will score your application against the technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3) and the non-technical assessment criterion (criterion 4). NHMRC may collate the scores against the technical assessment criteria provided by expert assessors to identify applications to be considered for funding and less meritorious applications, which may then be removed from further consideration. A grant assessment committee may meet to discuss the application and finalise assessment scores.

NHMRC may seek additional advice on any application.

NHMRC will forward the outcomes of the assessment process to the Department of Health and Aged Care. NHMRC may also provide copies of all application information to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Applicants must not make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment such as a member of the grant assessment committee. Doing so may constitute a breach of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018* and result in the application being excluded from consideration.

7.3 Who will approve grants?

NHMRC will provide the outcomes of the assessment process to the Department of Health and Aged Care. This information will consist of a combined score against each of the individual technical assessment criteria, a weighted combined score against the technical assessment criteria and a separate rating against the non-technical assessment criterion.

The Minister or the Delegate will approve grants drawing on the outcomes of NHMRC's assessment process. The Delegate may take into consideration applicant interests declared pursuant to section 12.1.

The Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of grants
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

The Delegate must not approve funding if it reasonably considers that the funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or the application does not represent Value with Relevant Money (see section 7.1).

8. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by NHMRC via Sapphire. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the grant, including the timing of any public communications you make regarding being awarded a grant.

8.1 Feedback on your application

All applicants will be provided with feedback on the outcome of the application, which may consist of individual scores and an overall score against the technical assessment criteria, and a rating against the non-technical assessment criterion.

9. Successful grant applications

Successful applicants are expected to contribute to assessment processes for future MRFF grant opportunities which require expert assessment.

A grant cannot be provided to you if you receive funding from another source for the same purpose. You can apply for grants under any program but, if your applications are successful, you must choose either the grant from this Program or the other grant.

Where you have submitted the same application to other grant opportunities and have received an offer of funding from one of these sources, NHMRC and the Department of Health and Aged Care reserve the right to withhold any further offer of funding for the application.

Where it appears that an applicant has submitted similar applications for research/project funding and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant is required to provide a written report clearly identifying how the proposed research objectives/outcomes and expenditure in the applications are different. If the applications are not sufficiently different, NHMRC and the Department of Health and

Aged Care reserve the right to withhold or withdraw an offer of funding at the discretion of the Minister or the Delegate, or you will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

9.1 The grant agreement

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The grant agreement will consist of a schedule underneath the Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and the MRFF Eligible Organisation through which you applied. A sample Funding Agreement and schedule are available on NHMRC's website.

We must execute a grant agreement with the MRFF Eligible Organisation before we can make any payments. Execute means both the MRFF Eligible Organisation and the Program Delegate have signed the grant agreement. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed. You must not start any research activities until a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Minister or the Delegate. We will identify these in the offer of grant funding.

If the MRFF Eligible Organisation enters an agreement under this grant opportunity, you cannot receive other grants for the same research activity from other Commonwealth, State or Territory granting programs.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within a specified time period. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. We will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Minister or the Delegate.

Where a grantee fails to meet the obligations of the grant agreement, the Commonwealth may suspend grant payments and take action to recover grant funds.

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation should not make financial commitments until a Funding Agreement and schedule have been executed by the Commonwealth and your MRFF Eligible Organisation continues to meet its undertakings, including:

- where the CIA is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, having the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant and being based in Australia for the duration of the grant period
- the appropriate facilities and salary support being available for the entirety of the grant period
- approval of the research activity by relevant organisational committees and approval bodies, particularly in relation to ethics and biosafety, being sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval, and
- arrangements for the management of the grant having been agreed between all organisations associated with the research.

If the above undertakings are not being met your MRFF Eligible Organisation must notify NHMRC. Payment of the grant may be suspended until NHMRC and the Department of Health and Aged Care has considered a request from your MRFF Eligible Organisation to vary the grant conditions.

Commonwealth commercialisation clauses

The Grant Agreement relating to projects funded under this Grant Opportunity may include the Commonwealth commercialisation clauses.

These commercialisation clauses seek to ensure that the Commonwealth has an early opportunity to enter into arrangements with any counter party to commercialisation agreements to permit the Commonwealth's purchase of any resulting commercialised products on commercial terms which are no less favourable than terms offered to any other party.

Further, commercialisation agreements relating to the commercialisation of Intellectual Property arising from research funded under this Grant Opportunity (where such Intellectual Property is created, developed, funded, derived or otherwise brought about as part of, a result of or as contemplated by project research activities) must be provided to the Department of Health and Aged Care for review before the Eligible Organisation administering the grant executes or otherwise becomes bound by the agreement. The Department of Health and Aged Care will review such commercialisation agreements to ensure they comply with the terms set out in the Commonwealth commercialisation clauses.

Where a grant is awarded under this Grant Opportunity a commercialisation plan will also be required for review by the Department of Health and Aged Care, as specified within the Grant Agreement at award.

The Department of Health and Aged Care will identify which projects will be subject to the commercialisation clauses in the Grant Agreement based on information provided in the application.

9.2 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws and regulations in undertaking your project. You must also comply with any specific legislation/policies/industry standards within the grant agreement, such as:

- The MRFF Act [1]
- Working with Vulnerable People registration
- State/Territory legislation in relation to working with children
- Ethics and research practices.

9.3 How we pay the grant

The schedule to the Funding Agreement will state the:

- grant amount approved by the Commonwealth
- proportion of the approved grant amount that will be paid in each financial year during the term of the grant.

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation is responsible for paying any extra eligible expenses that are incurred.

All amounts referred to in these grant guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise. MRFF Eligible Organisations are responsible for all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving funds.

Payments will depend on satisfactory progress being made against milestones and performance indicators. The Commonwealth will review your progress reports to confirm that the milestones and

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2015A00116

performance indicators have been achieved. Where milestones and performance indicators have not been achieved grant payments may be suspended.

Expenditure against approved activities will be monitored over the duration of the grant period. Grant funding will be dependent on meeting any conditions and agreed milestones.

10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 days after the date of effect[5] as required by Section 5.3 of the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*. The following information may also be published in a manner that allows it to be searched and viewed in a variety of ways:

- Application identity number
- MRFF Initiative and Grant Opportunity from which the grant was funded
- Funded Organisation
- Organisation Type (as per Section 24 of the MRFF Act)
- State/Territory
- Project Title
- Media Summary
- Chief Investigator name/s
- Partner Organisations (if relevant)
- Selection Process
- Approved grant amount
- Broad Research Area
- Research Keywords.

11. How we monitor your grant activity

11.1 Keeping us informed

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO should let us know if anything is likely to affect your organisation or impact successful delivery of your project.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

Your RAO must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

[5] See glossary

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement you must contact us immediately.

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

11.2 Reporting

Your MRFF Eligible Organisation is required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an organisation fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, the Commonwealth may take action under the provisions of the grant agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. The reporting requirements of your grant will be outlined in your grant schedule. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed milestones and MRFF Measures of Success
- risks arising and how these are being managed
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds, and
- information about your research that supports evaluation of the MRFF.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

11.2.1 Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include details of your progress towards completion of agreed activities, including any risks arising and how these are being managed to ensure outcomes
- include evidence to demonstrate progress against the outcome/s and result/s identified in your Measures of Success statement (see section 6.4)
- show the total expenditure incurred within the reporting period
- include details of research outputs (see section 11.7)
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities), and
- include information about your grant that supports evaluation of the MRFF.

We may withhold grant payments pending receipt of a satisfactory progress report. You must discuss any activity, milestone or reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

11.2.2 Annual financial reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by the Commonwealth. At the completion of the grant, a financial statement is also required to verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

11.2.3 End of project report

When you complete the grant activity, you must submit an end of project report.

End of project reports must:

- include evidence of completion of agreed activities (including, but not limited to, evidence of project impact)
- include evidence to support achievement of the outcome/s and result/s identified in your Measures of Success statement (see section 6.4)
- identify the total expenditure incurred
- report on any underspends
- include details of research outputs (see section 11.7)
- be submitted by the report due date, and
- include information about your grant that supports evaluation of the MRFF.

11.2.4 Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the grant activity, or to support evaluation of the MRFF.

11.3 Audited financial acquittal report

At the completion of the grant, we may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant funding in accordance with the grant agreement. The report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure.

11.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your schedule, including:

- changing milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the grant
- changing grant activities.

The Program does not allow for:

- an increase of grant funds.

For further details refer to the MRFF Variations policy.

NHMRC can provide you with advice on how to make your request in Sapphire.

If a delay in the grant causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the schedule. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough Program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the Program policy objective, grant guidelines and any other relevant policies
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of Program funds.

11.5 Registration of clinical trials

Clinical trials supported through MRFF grant opportunities must be registered in the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) within three months of HREC approval and prior to recruitment of the first participant. Information on how to register your clinical trial in the ANZCTR is available at www.anzctr.org.au. Your ANZCTR Trial ID must be provided along with other details of your grant in your progress and final reports (see section 11.2).

11.6 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

11.7 Dissemination of research outcomes

MRFF Eligible Organisations and CIs must ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to protect patient privacy, intellectual property and commercially confidential information.

Authors should endeavour to retain all necessary rights to enable the authors to publish and share their publications in any format at any time, and use the Creative Commons Attribution licence, CC-BY, where possible, when publishing their article.

Except where publication may compromise the MRFF Eligible Organisation's obligations with respect to patient privacy, intellectual property and/or commercially confidential information, grantees are required to comply with the following:

- if a clinical trial, register the trial (including the protocol) with ANZCTR within three months of HREC approval and prior to recruitment of the first participant (see section 11.5). You must include the MRFF grant number and an acknowledgement of MRFF funding in the ANZCTR registration details (see section 11.9)
- list any resulting patents in Source IP (sourceip.csiro.au), referencing the MRFF grant number in the description (see section 11.9)
- within 12 months of the date of publication, ensure that all peer-reviewed research outputs arising from MRFF supported research:
    - are openly accessible in an institutional repository or other acceptable location (e.g. publisher website, subject-specific repository)
    - are linked to author ORCID iD(s), and
    - acknowledge MRFF grant support (in whole or in part) and the MRFF grant number in all relevant publications (see section 11.9).

Grantees are expected to include details of research outputs (including clinical trial registration information, patents, and publications) in their grant reports (see section 11.2). Grantees are also strongly encouraged to publish de-identified research data and associated metadata in an open access repository or a public database and in accordance with best practice.

11.8 Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose, and for the purpose of evaluation of the Initiative and the MRFF more broadly. We may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the Program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to two years after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

11.9 Acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a grant funded under the Program, including in a brochure or publication, and/or disseminate the outcomes of your research as described in section 11.7, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following, where *MRFXXXXXXX* is the unique grant ID:

'Research reported in this publication was supported by the Medical Research Future Fund under grant number *MRFXXXXXXX*'

If you erect signage in relation to the grant, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the grant.

12. Probity

We will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published grant guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

12.1 Enquiries and feedback

All applicants will be provided with feedback on the outcome of their application (see section 8).

Applicants or grantees seeking to lodge a formal complaint should do so via the MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO, in writing, within 28 days of the relevant decision or action.

Each complaint should be directed to the Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints.

If you do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled your complaint, you may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

12.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or Program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if our staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the Program/grant opportunity.

As part of your application, we will ask you to declare any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

See section 6.4 for instructions on uploading a Declaration of Applicant Interests with your application in Sapphire.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform NHMRC in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are handled as set out *in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7))* of *the Public Service Act 1999* (Cth). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

12.3 Privacy, confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC is the Administering Entity for this grant opportunity. NHMRC will receive applications and manage the assessment process. NHMRC will forward all application material and assessment scores to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

The Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) requires entities bound by *the Australian Privacy Principles to have a privacy policy*. NHMRC's *Privacy Policy* is available on the NHMRC website. The privacy policy outlines the personal information handling practices at the NHMRC.

NHMRC may disclose your personal information to assessors from overseas countries, where there is a need, and in accordance with *the Privacy Act* and the NHMRC's *Privacy Policy*.

Grantees are required by the grant agreement to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including *the Australian Privacy Principles*, and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors engaged by the grantee to assist with the grant.

NHMRC may share information provided to it by applicants with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian

laws, including the *Public Service Act 1999*, *Public Service Regulations 1999*, *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, *Crimes Act 1914*, and the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

12.4 When we may disclose confidential information

We may disclose confidential information:

- to the committee and our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the Program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister
- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed,
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

12.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Coordinator

National Health and Medical Research Council

GPO Box 1421

CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email: foi@nhmrc.gov.au

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Administering entity	When an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes. NHMRC is the Administrating entity for this grant opportunity.
Application form	The document or computerised submission system that applicants use to apply for funding under the Program/grant opportunity.
Assessable period of this grant opportunity	The assessable period of this grant opportunity is 1 January 2018 to application submission date.
Assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
Assessment Criterion 4 – Overall Value and Risk Rating Scale	A document accompanying the grant guidelines that provides example benchmarks against Assessment Criterion 4– *Overall Value and Risk* to assist assessors when scoring applications.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth entity	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)	Establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
Completion date	The expected date by which the grant activity must be completed and the grant funding spent.
Date of effect	Can be the date on which a grant agreement/schedule is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
Decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.

Term	Definition
Delegate	An Australian Government official in the Department of Health and Aged Care or the NHMRC with responsibility for the grant opportunity.
Eligibility criteria	Refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a grant that are eligible for funding support as set out in section 4.
Eligible application	An application or proposal for services or grant funding under the program that the Delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these grant guidelines.
Eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in section 4.
Grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake.
Grant agreement	Sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement and specifies the details of the grant. For MRFF grants administered by NHMRC, this will comprise a schedule underneath the Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and the MRFF Eligible Organisation.
Grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Australian Government to grantees under the Program.
Grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. A grant opportunity is aimed at achieving government policy outcomes under a Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
GrantConnect	The Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.
Grantee	The individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
Minister	The Australian Government Minister for Health and Aged Care.
MRFF Eligible Organisation	An organisation that meets the eligibility requirements for receiving and administering MRFF funding and has been approved as an MRFF Eligible Organisation by NHMRC.

Term	Definition
Personal information	Has the same meaning as in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) which is: Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable: a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
Priority population	Means Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, older people experiencing diseases of ageing, people with rare or currently untreatable diseases/conditions, people in remote/rural communities, people with a disability, individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ people, youth, people with mental illness, people in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances.
Project	A project described in an application for grant funding under this grant opportunity.
Research Administration Officer	The officer nominated by a MRFF Eligible Organisation as its contact person for the purpose of grant applications and grant agreements.
Selection process	The method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
Sapphire	NHMRC's online grant and application management system.
Value with relevant money	Value with relevant money in this document is a judgement based on the Grant Proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations. When administering a grant opportunity, the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal are considered including, but not limited to: - the quality of the Grant Proposal and activities - fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives - that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved - the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.