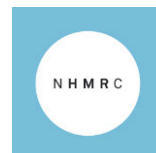




**Australian Government**  
**National Health and Medical Research Council**



Dr Masha Somi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Health and Medical Research Office  
Australian Government Department of Health

Dear Dr Somi

I am writing to you in your capacity as delegate under sections 15A, 26 and 27 of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (the Act) with authority to debit amounts from the MRFF Special Account and set out and enter into written agreements with grant recipients.

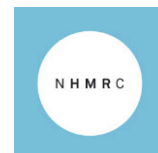
A Grant Assessment Committee (GACs) for applications submitted to the MRFF Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development grant opportunity met on 1 April 2020. s47E(d),  
s47E(c)

A ranked list of meritorious applications is enclosed along with an indicative funding recommendation.

The top ranked application comes to a total of \$1,965,398. Funding the top two highest ranked applications would come to a combined total of s47E(d).

A research integrity check has been undertaken on all of the Australian-based Chief and Associate Investigators named on applications in the attached list. We can confirm that these individuals have not, to NHMRC's knowledge, been the subject of recent findings of research misconduct or breaches of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, or recent unresolved formal notifications to NHMRC on research misconduct matters. Once the successful grants have been identified you may wish to ask NHMRC to undertake this check again to ensure any recent findings or notifications can be identified prior to any announcement being made.

You are now requested to advise us of the successful applicants for the MRFF Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development grant opportunity. NHMRC proposes to notify all applicants and Administering Institutions of their outcomes, under embargo, prior to public announcement.



Consistent with the agreement between our organisations on Postaward management of MRFF grants, the Department will manage the public announcement and media activities. NHMRC will make the formal offer of funding under the MRFF Head Agreement. To enable schedules to be prepared for the successful grants, we also await the Department's advice on:

- the payment schedule, and
- whether there is any specific grant reporting or reporting detail required that is not covered in the Head Agreement or Grant Guidelines.

I would also like to provide you with feedback from the assessment process.

The MRFF Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development grant opportunity was an urgent response for research, which placed considerable time pressure on applicants and expert assessors. The expedited timeline impacted the operation of the GACs with two international assessors resigning from the committee due to competing priorities.

Government restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 outbreak, including working from home policies, likely contributed to the instability of the videoconferencing technology at the GAC meeting. To maintain the connection of all GAC members the meeting reverted to an audio format, which was the planned fallback.

s47E(d), s47C

We will continue to monitor the application of this criterion across MRFF GACs and provide feedback where required to assist in your ongoing evaluation of the MRFF Programs.

s47E(d), s47C

The potential for conflicts of interest for GAC members who have commercial interests and/or are employed by companies that are working in the Coronavirus vaccine area was discussed. Members were assured that all GAC members had disclosed interests and declared conflicts of interest against each application. Members with high conflicts of interest declared against an application, identified prior to or at the meeting, did not participate in the discussion or scoring of those applications at the meeting.



Thank you again for the opportunity to assist the Department with this grant opportunity.

Yours sincerely

*[authorised for electronic transmission]*

s22

Research Translation Branch

3 April 2020

Enc.:

1. MRFF Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development grant opportunity outcomes.
2. Full application documentation for applications considered by the grant assessment committee.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE



Australian Government  
National Health and Medical Research Council



Dr Masha Somi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Health and Medical Research Office  
Australian Government Department of Health

Dear Masha,

I am writing to you in your capacity as delegate under sections 15A, 26 and 27 of the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (the Act) with authority to debit amounts from the MRFF Special Account and set out and enter into written agreements with grant recipients.

The Grant Assessment Committee (GAC) for Expressions of Interest (Eols) submitted to the *MRFF Coronavirus Research Response - 2020 COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate Research Grant Opportunity* met s47E(d), s47E(c).

Details of all Eols received have been provided to your office previously. All Eols were assessed in accordance with grant guidelines.

Please now find attached the outcomes of NHMRC's assessment of Eols submitted to this grant opportunity. The attachment includes the assessment outcomes for Eols that met the minimum threshold specified in the grant guidelines for Eols to be invited to submit a full application (i.e. Eols must receiving a rating of 'Met' or Strongly Met' against each of the three merit criterion).

You are now requested to advise NHMRC of the Eols to be invited to submit a full application. Applicants have been informed that NHMRC will provide advice on the outcome of the assessment of their Eol s47E(d), s47C. We therefore request your advice on Eols proceeding to full application by at the latest, 12 noon s47E(d), s47C.

s47E(d), s47C

Thank you again for the opportunity to assist the Department with this grant opportunity.

Yours sincerely

[Authorised for electronic distribution]

s22

s22

12 August 2020

Enclosed:

1. Att A - MRFF 2020 COVID-19 VCR Eol Assessment Outcomes

## MRFF Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development Grant Assessment Committee

*This report outlines the composition of the Grant Assessment Committee (GAC). A summary report will be provided at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 GAC meeting period.*

### Key Statistics

Total number of potential GAC Members invited	s47E(d)
Number of GAC Members appointed	s47E(d)
Number of potential international GAC Members invited and international organisations approached for nominations	s47E(d)
Number of GAC Members sourced from MRFF Expression of Interest - Grant Assessment Committee online portal	s47E(d)
Australian State and Territory and international representation	ACT: s47E(d) NSW: s47E(d) NT: s47E(d) QLD: s47E(d) SA: s47E(d) TAS: s47E(d) VIC: s47E(d) WA: s47E(d) INTERNATIONAL: s47E(d)
Gender balance	s47E(d) males s47E(d) s47E(d) females s47E(d)
Number of organisations represented by appointed members	s47E(d)

### Application of the MRFF Grant Assessment Committee Guiding Principles

Principles	Performance
<p>Ensure the committee has knowledge and expertise to assess the grant opportunity, including industry and commercialism expertise where appropriate to the grant opportunity. Core selection criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trans-disciplinary research</li> <li>academic researchers</li> <li>clinical expertise</li> <li>health services delivery and implementation</li> <li>research translation</li> <li>health services and implementation expertise</li> <li>consumers and patient groups advisor</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health expertise.</li> </ul>	<p>Member expertise has been matched to the applications received for this grant opportunity using the core selection criteria. The following core selection criteria met by the GAC membership are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trans-disciplinary research</li> <li>academic researchers</li> <li>clinical expertise</li> <li>health services delivery and implementation</li> <li>research translation</li> <li>health services and implementation expertise</li> <li>consumers and patient groups advisor</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health expertise.</li> </ul>
<p>Additional criteria defined for this grant opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry experience</li> <li>Fields of research</li> </ul>	<p>The following additional criteria met by the GAC membership are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry experience s47E(d)</li> <li>Non-Government Organisation s47E(d)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fields of research include public health, infectious diseases, clinical trials, immunology, commercialisation and intellectual property, animal models, virology, translation, vaccine development, ethics, Indigenous health, drug design and antivirals.</li></ul>
Ensure broad representation from rural, regional and remote areas.	GAC members include non-capital city representation.
Minimise (real or perceived) conflicts of interests.	<p>All applicants (i.e. domestic and international CIs and AIs) to the grant opportunity have been excluded from participating on the committee.</p> <p>For MRFF Missions, members of the Expert Advisory Panel have been excluded from participating on the committee.</p>
Consult with relevant peak bodies, agencies and NHMRC Principal Committees on composition of the GAC membership if specialist advice is required.	<p>Consultation was undertaken with the following committees, agencies or peak bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>s47E(d) [REDACTED]</li></ul>

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