



# Childhood Mental Health Research Plan Expert Advisory Panel

## Terms of reference

### Preamble

The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) [Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research initiative](#) is providing \$613 million over 10 years from 2022-23 to support research to improve patient care, translate new discoveries into clinical practice and encourage researchers to work together with consumers.

This initiative will provide \$50 million in funding to support the Government's priority of improving childhood mental health and psychological distress, including eating disorders, through the Childhood Mental Health Research Plan.

### Purpose of the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP)

The EAP will provide the Minister for Health and Aged Care advice on research investments required to meet the following objectives:

- generate knowledge on the determinants and protective factors for optimal mental health and wellbeing in children
- generate knowledge to improve access to, and delivery of, evidence-based treatments and to reduce mental illness and psychological distress in children
- address inequities in childhood mental health and psychological distress outcomes
- inform implementation of current and future policies and programs in child mental health.

In developing advice, the EAP is to consider priority populations, including but not limited to people living in rural, regional and remote communities, First Nations, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people.

## **Key deliverables**

The EAP will provide advice on priorities for research investment by developing the MRFF Childhood Mental Health Research Plan covering children aged 0 to 15 years, outlining the short (1-2 years) and medium (3-4 years) term priorities.

In doing so, the EAP will consider the outcomes of the National Mental Health Research Strategy, the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Australian Eating Disorders Research and Translation Strategy 2021-2031, and national (including state and territory based) and international knowledge and experiences.

The EAP should also consider existing Australian Government investments in childhood mental health, including the MRFF Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission and the child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing prevalence study to be designed and conducted between 2022-23 to 2025-26.

## **Membership**

The EAP will consist of up to 12 members including the Chair and an international member.

The international member will be a researcher with expertise in childhood mental health, who understands the Australian system and relevant activities occurring internationally. At least one member will be a member with lived experience.

All other members will have research or clinical expertise or experience in childhood mental health or health service delivery with a focus on primary care and health system implementation.

An [Australian Medical Research Advisory Board \(AMRAB\)](#) representative will be selected to attend EAP meetings to support the strategic alignment of MRFF Childhood Mental Health Research Plan priorities with the MRFF more broadly.

## **Term**

Members will be selected and appointed by the Minister for Health and Aged Care for a 6-month term, to establish the MRFF Childhood Mental Health Research Plan by July 2023.

## **Member applications for MRFF funding**

Members will be ineligible to apply for funding from the Childhood Mental Health Research Plan grant opportunities that open during the term of the EAP and for one (1) year following the cessation of the EAP. Members will be able to apply for MRFF grant opportunities outside of the Childhood Mental Health Research Plan during this time.

## **Logistical Arrangements**

- EAP meetings will be held on an as required basis and at the discretion of the Chair.

- It is expected that 3-6 meetings will be required to draft the Childhood Mental Health Research Plan.
- If a member is unable to attend, proxies will not be permitted.
- If required, arrangements will be made to seek agreement to items utilising out-of-session arrangements.
- Papers for meetings will be provided to EAP members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
- The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care will be the Secretariat for the EAP. For non-urgent inquiries the following email address can be utilised: [MRFF@health.gov.au](mailto:MRFF@health.gov.au).

## Quorum

- Five members of the EAP are required to be in attendance at any meeting for a quorum to be achieved.
- If the Chair is unavailable to attend a scheduled meeting, the AMRAB member, or an identified deputy chair will assume this role.

## Declarations of Interest

Members must abide by the [MRFF Declaration of Interest Policy Statement](#). The Statement, and supporting documents, enables members to be aware of their obligation to disclose any relevant interests that they may have, and to ensure that they effectively and consistently manage any conflicts of interest. All interests will be published on the MRFF website.

## Remuneration

Remuneration is provided for EAP members, with details outlined in the Member's Instrument of Appointment.

## Implementation of the MRFF Research Plan

The EAP will provide the MRFF Childhood Mental Health Research Plan to the Minister for Health and Aged Care for approval.

The Health and Medical Research Office will use the Research Plan to design grant opportunities that address the priorities for investment.

- Grant opportunity guidelines will be published on GrantConnect ([www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)).
- Grant administration services will be managed by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Applications received under each grant opportunity will be evaluated competitively through independent Grant Assessment Committees comprising Australian and international assessors with relevant expertise and experience.

Following recommendations from the Grant Assessment Committees, the Government will announce the successful recipients.

