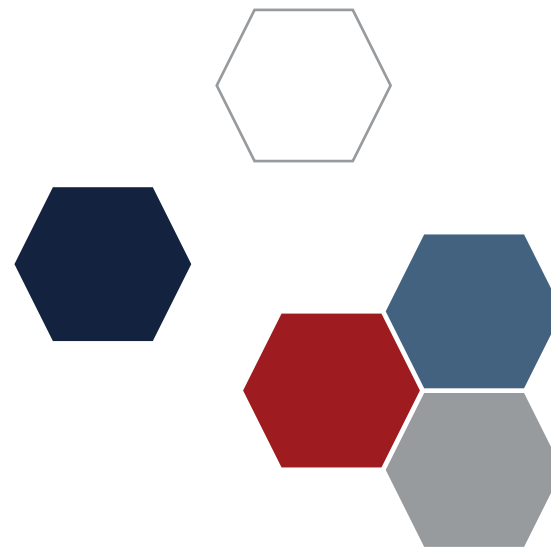




Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Medical Research
Future Fund



Medical Research Future Fund

Indigenous Health Research Fund
Consultation on the draft 2026 grant opportunity

Webinar 10th November 2025

Introduction

Welcome to the webinar for the consultation on the Indigenous Health Research Fund's 2026 draft grant opportunity

Draft grant opportunity guidelines and assessment criteria are available from:

consultations.health.gov.au

- You will be muted during this webinar – this is to minimise background noise
- All questions can be sent via the interactive Q&A input
- Questions will be answered at the end of the presentation

Consultation page
QR Code



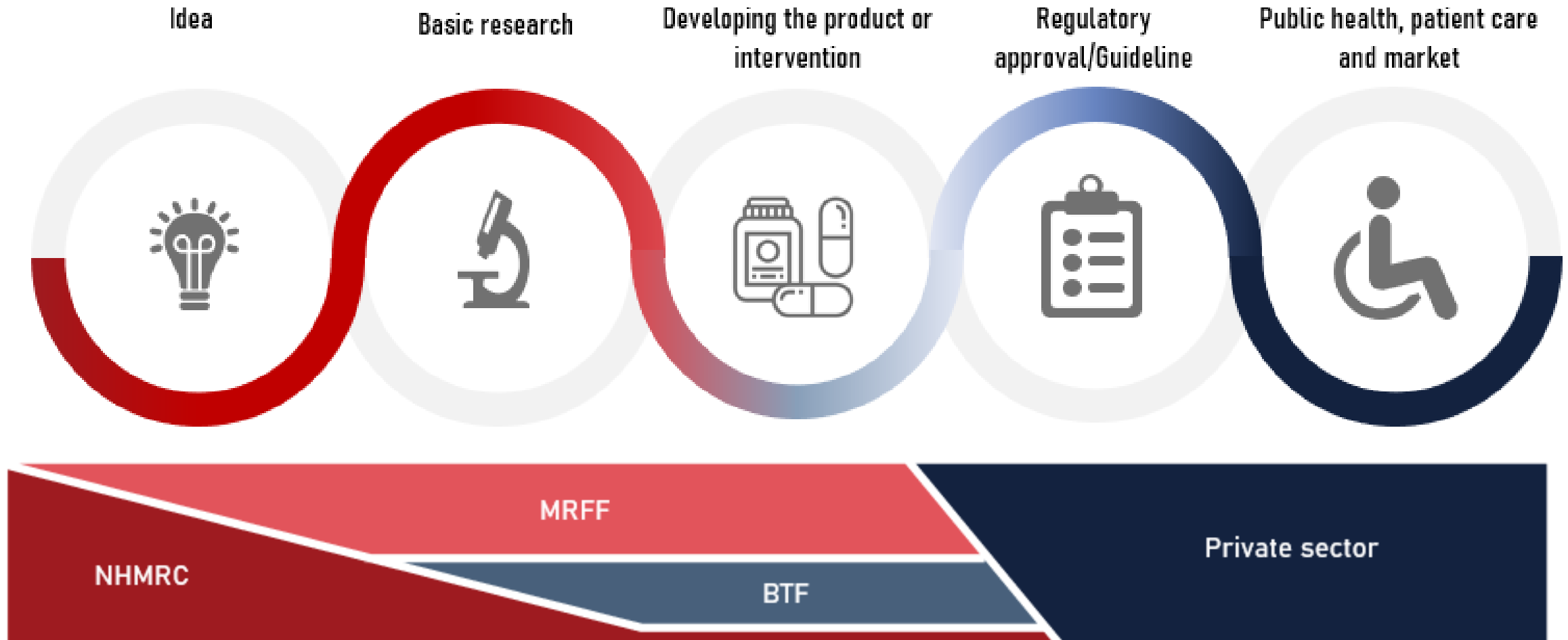
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 - Purpose of the grant opportunity
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- **Open Discussion – Questions & Answers**

Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Background

- Established in 2015, the MRFF is a long-term investment supporting Australian health and medical research
- The MRFF aims to transform health and medical research and innovation to improve lives, build the economy and contribute to our health system's sustainability
- Complementary Government funding of health and medical research in Australia:
 - **MRFF** – funds priority driven research with a focus on research translation and commercialisation
 - **NHMRC** – focus on investigator-driven research to address a wide range of health needs and to build foundational research capacity

Where does the MRFF focus its funding?



Key features of the MRFF



MRFF 3rd 10-year Investment Plan

- The \$6.5 billion MRFF 3rd 10-year Investment Plan (2024-25 to 2033-34) provides funding for 22 initiatives to continue supporting lifesaving research, job creation, local industry, and growing Australia’s reputation as a world leader in medical research
- The plan is underpinned by four key themes – patients, researchers, research translation and research missions

 Patients	This theme aims to bring benefits to patients, including supporting life-changing clinical trials, funding innovative treatments and advanced health care and medical technologies
 Research Missions	MRFF Research Missions (Missions) are large programs of work that bring together key researchers, health professionals, stakeholders, industry partners and patients to tackle big health challenges
 Researchers	This theme aims to support Australian researchers, including to help build their skills and capacity, support their research in priority areas and assist them to develop and bring new research discoveries to the market
 Research Translation	This theme aims to translate research outcomes into practice by building the evidence base to support the adoption of best practice care in to health care delivery

MRFF investment in First Nations health research

\$441 million

in funding awarded

209

grants with a First Nations
health focus across

15

MRFF initiatives

10.1% of total MRFF funding

Examples of grants

- **\$1.97 million – University of Melbourne - Professor Sandra Eades**
 - Premature risk meets system failure: understanding, detecting and managing cardiovascular disease risk among Indigenous Australian children, adolescents and young adults
- **\$4.99 million - Institute for Urban Indigenous Health Ltd - Mr Adrian Carson**
 - Birthing in Our Community: gold standard Indigenous maternal infant health

MRFF Indigenous Health Research Fund (IHRF)

- One of the 22 MRFF initiatives as listed in the MRFF’s 3rd 10-year investment plan
- \$160 million over 11 years from 2018–19 to 2028–29 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care



Medical Research Future Fund
3rd 10-year Investment Plan
2024-25 to 2033-34

OVERVIEW

The Australian Government has committed \$6.5 billion for health and medical research through the 3rd 10-year Investment Plan for the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). The 3rd 10-year Investment Plan provides funding for 22 initiatives between 2024-25 and 2033-34, to continue to support lifesaving research, create jobs, strengthen the local industry base for commercialising research and innovation, and further grow Australia’s reputation as a world leader in medical research.

Commitments made through prior 10-year Investment Plans will remain available for expenditure as part of the 3rd 10-year Investment Plan.

The 3rd 10-year Investment Plan provides funding for the MRFF to respond to new and growing health needs and priorities, while continuing to fund activities that will stimulate health and medical research across the entire research, translation and commercialisation pipeline.

CONTEXT

The 3rd 10-year Investment Plan gives researchers, industry and consumers certainty and direction so that they can address areas of unmet need, excel in collaborative and transformative research, and harness resources across the research system.

The MRFF activities are based on national priorities identified by the independent, expert Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB) following a national consultation process. Activities put consumers at the core and focus on translating research into practice so that all Australians can benefit.

FUNDING THEMES AND INITIATIVES

MRFF funding is directed into 4 themes:

	Patients	This theme aims to bring benefits to patients, including supporting life-changing clinical trials, funding innovative treatments and advanced health care and medical technologies
	Research Missions	MRFF Research Missions (Missions) are large programs of work that bring together key researchers, health professionals, stakeholders, industry partners and patients to tackle big health challenges
	Researchers	This theme aims to support Australian researchers, including to help build their skills and capacity, support their research in priority areas and assist them to develop and bring new research discoveries to the market
	Research Translation	This theme aims to translate research outcomes into practice by building the evidence base to support the adoption of best practice care into health care delivery

There are 22 initiatives under these themes, funded over 10 years to harness innovation, provide vital infrastructure, improve patient outcomes, and generate jobs and economic growth.

Today’s research is tomorrow’s health care. There is no better way to ensure Australians receive the highest quality health care than by investing in Australian medical research.

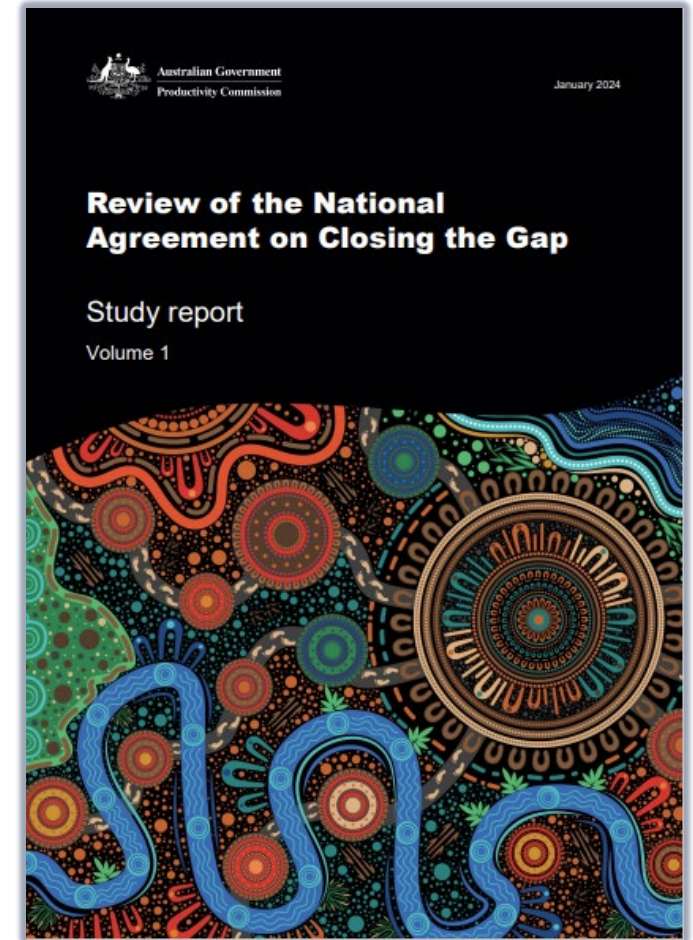
IHRF funding awarded to date

- The IHRF has awarded \$131.45 million for 69 projects through 7 grant opportunities
- IHRF grant opportunities were informed by the priorities for investment in the IHRF Roadmap and Implementation Plan
- Roadmap and Implementation Plan were developed by the IHRF's Expert Advisory Panel



Productivity Commission's Review

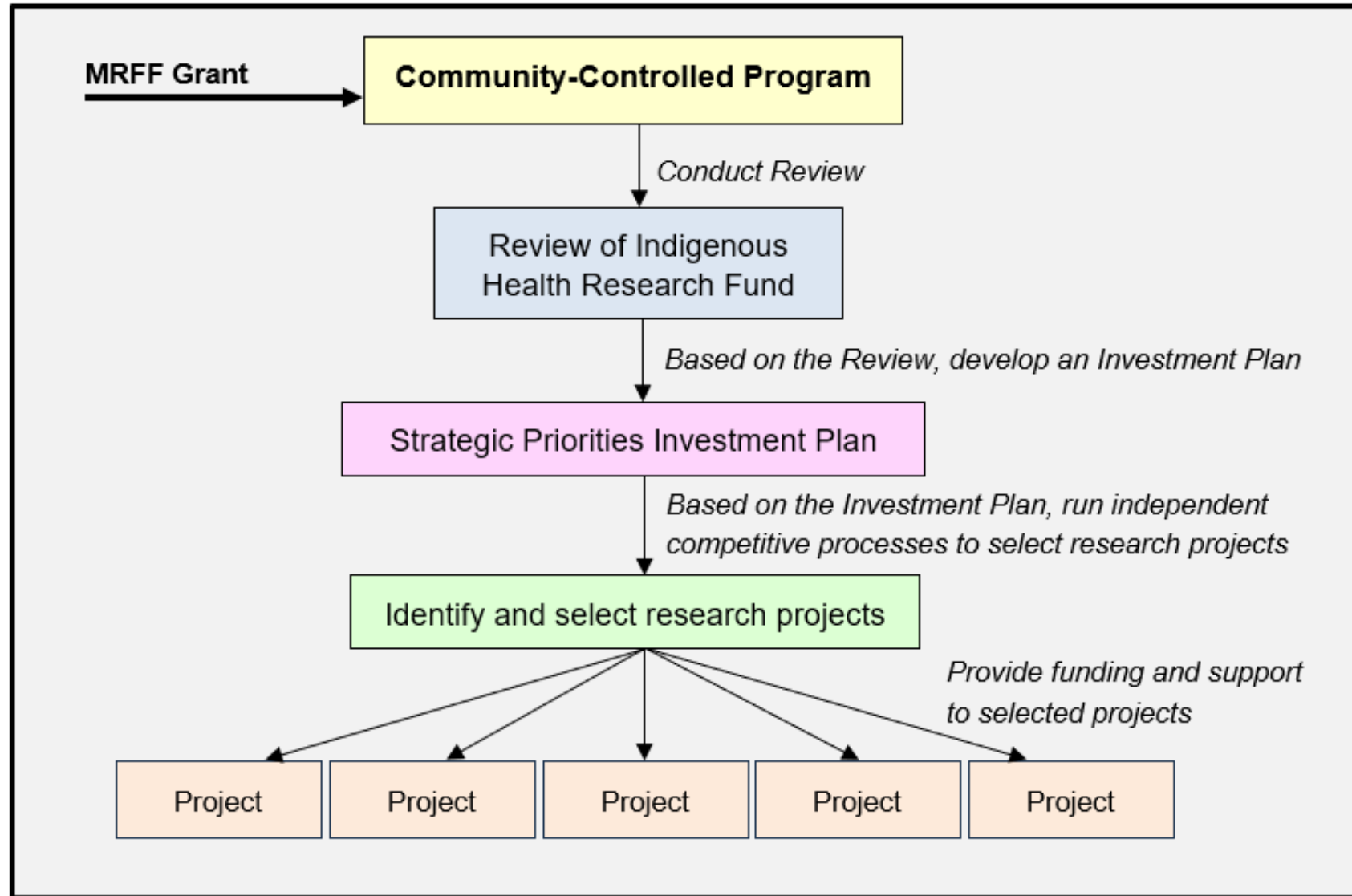
- Productivity Commission's first review of progress on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Report released 7 February 2024
- Key message is that fundamental changes are required to deliver on the Agreement
- A key avenue to make progress is to put the principles of self-determination into practice for government programs



Purpose of the IHRF's next grant opportunity

- In alignment with the report's recommendations, the IHRF's grant opportunity will award **\$28.5 million through a competitive process to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled program** to:
 - Conduct a review to assess progress of the IHRF towards its vision and priorities
 - Informed by this review, develop a Strategic Priorities Investment Plan to guide research investment
 - Run one, or more, open and competitive processes, to identify and select Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health and medical research projects
 - Partner with the successful projects to provide funding and support to ensure their success in tackling health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Purpose of the IHRF's next grant opportunity



Funding pathways

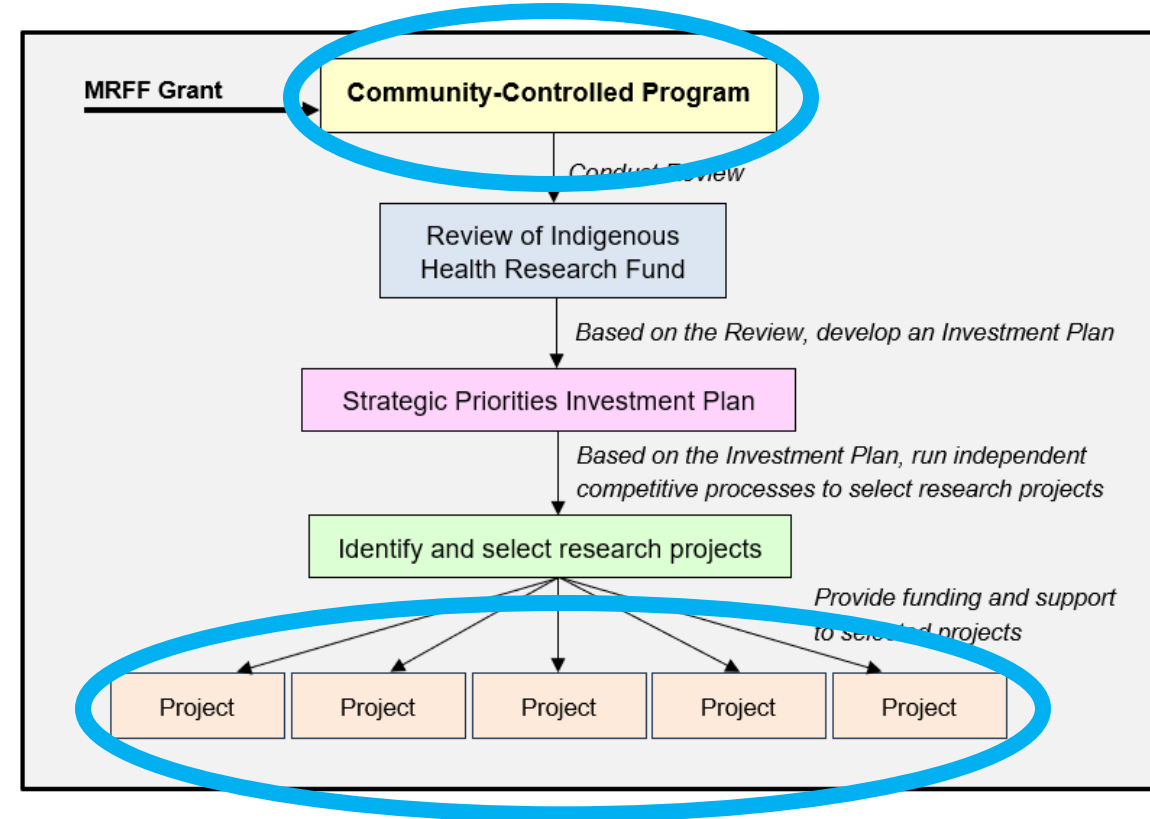
Two ways funding will be distributed

\$28.5 million from MRFF to run the program

OR

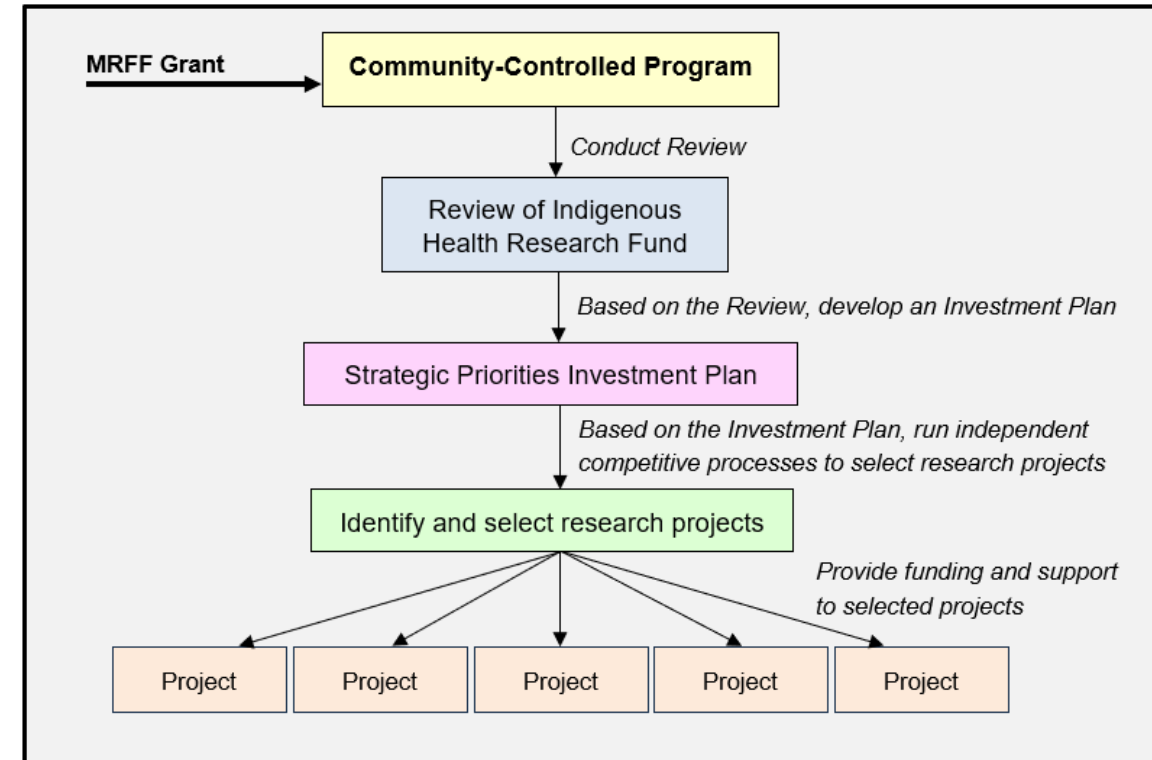
Funding through the program to selected research projects

- Projects will be chosen to meet the needs of the community
- This will allow for tailored and culturally safe selection processes
- May enable funding to go to smaller Community-Controlled Organisations, and First Nations businesses that would not normally apply to the MRFF
- Projects will get additional support, not just funding, through the program
- Will help develop capability and capacity in the sector



Program details

- Applications from consortiums are encouraged
- 7 year grant length
- Applicants are to determine the timing and budget for each activity
 - The vast majority of funding is to be used to support the research projects
- Program can fund its own research projects as long as they have been selected through an independent competitive process



Working Group

- A Working Group of the NHMRC-MRFF Indigenous Advisory Group advised the department on the design of the draft grant opportunity that is now out for consultation
- **Professor Yvette Roe**, Chair of Working Group
- Members:
 - Dr Brooke Conley**
 - Mr Adam Heterick**
 - Dr Julee McDonagh**
 - Professor Maree Toombs**



To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, Working Group members are ineligible to apply to the grant opportunity

Advice provided

- Working Group advised on:
 - Key sections of the **grant opportunity guidelines** (objectives, outcome, assessment criteria, and additional glossary definitions)
- Scoring Assessment Matrix**



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council



Medical Research Future Fund – Indigenous Health Research Fund

2026 Empowering Community-Controlled Research Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date: **Quarter 1 2026 (Exact date to be determined)**
Closing date for minimum date: **5pm ACT local time on To be determined**
Application closing date and time: **5pm ACT local time on To be determined**
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:
Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au
Questions should be submitted no later than 1.00pm ACT Local Time on To be determined.**
Date guidelines released: **To be determined**
Type of grant opportunity: **Targeted Competitive**

Guidelines

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MRFF Scoring Matrix for the Technical Assessment Criteria

This scoring matrix is used as a guide when scoring an application against the technical assessment criteria. While the scoring matrix provides assessors with benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, it is *not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met*. The scoring matrix employs a 'best fit' approach. Assessors will refer to this scoring matrix to ensure thorough, equitable and transparent assessment of applications.

Assessment Criterion 1: Project Impact

SCORE						
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
The proposed program: - comprehensively and convincingly addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity and will deliver against the desired outcomes - is informed by an exemplary analysis of existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives - demonstrates exceptional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - clearly articulates that the project will comprehensively support research that is extremely valuable to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates broad and meaningful involvement of relevant partners that will support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the	The proposed program: - strongly addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity and will deliver against the desired outcomes - is informed by a thorough analysis of existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives - demonstrates very strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - clearly articulates that the project will comprehensively support research that is highly valuable to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates meaningful involvement of relevant partners that will support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the community - will significantly improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	The proposed program: - addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity with a few very minor concerns and is expected to deliver against the desired outcomes - is informed by a good analysis of existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives, with a few very minor concerns - demonstrates strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - articulates that the project will comprehensively support research that is valuable to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates good involvement of relevant partners that will support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the community - will improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people - outcomes in the Measures of	The proposed program: - addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity with minor concerns and is expected to deliver against the desired outcomes - is generally informed by existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives, with minor concerns - demonstrates adequate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - articulates that the project will support research that is valuable to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates sufficient involvement of relevant partners that are expected to support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the community - is expected to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people - outcomes in the Measures of	The proposed program: - does not convincingly address the objectives of the grant opportunity or is unclear in its approach to doing so - is informed by a limited analysis of existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives, with significant or major concerns - does not clearly demonstrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - does not convincingly articulate that the project will support research that is of value to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates narrow or otherwise limited involvement of relevant partners that may support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the	The proposed program: - does not address the objectives of the grant opportunity or is unclear in its approach to doing so - is not well-informed by existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives, and raises several major concerns - does not demonstrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance of the project - barely articulates that the project will support research that is of value to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - demonstrates minimal involvement of relevant partners, which are unlikely to support implementation of findings into culturally appropriate activities that are acceptable to the community - is unlikely to improve	The proposed program: - does not address the objectives of the grant opportunity - is not informed by existing and ongoing priority setting frameworks and relevant initiatives - does not demonstrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Control and Indigenous Governance in any aspect of the of the project - does not articulate that the project will support research that is of value to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and contribute to the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - does not demonstrate meaningful involvement of relevant partners - will not improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people - outcomes in the

1
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Scoring Matrix

Key themes

- Genuinely Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Community-Controlled** and uplifts community-control in the projects it supports
- Genuinely **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander led**
- Has an **Indigenous Governance** that
 - integrates and respects **Indigenous Knowledge Systems**
 - asserts **Indigenous Data Sovereignty**
 - drives **Indigenous Knowledge Translation**
- Includes and supports **community-based researchers** and **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holders**

Key themes continued

- **Diversity of projects** are supported by the program that will **accelerate positive impact**
- Projects are **collaborative**, form **partnerships**, and **share learnings**
- Build the **next generation of researchers** including those in community-controlled organisations
- The program is **evaluated** to guide future similar programs

Consultation hub survey questions

Question 1: The aim is to help empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled research ***to accelerate positive impact on health outcomes*** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, does the design of the grant opportunity achieve this?

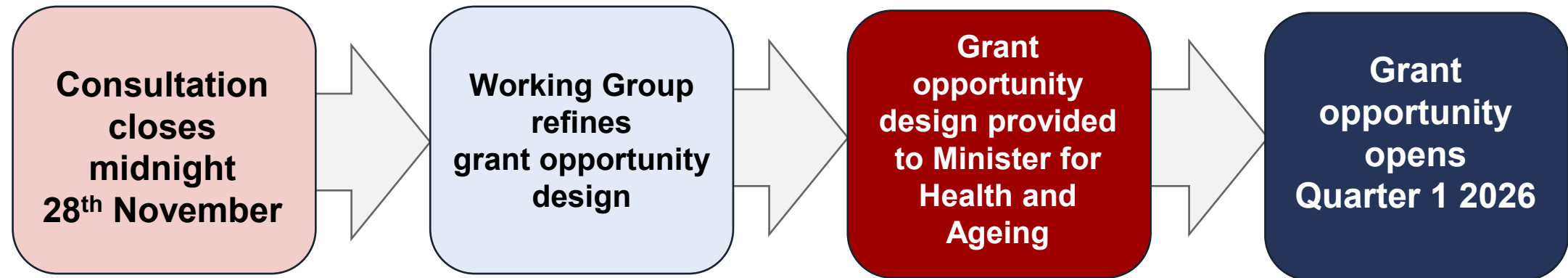
Question 2: Are the ***objectives and outcomes appropriate*** or how could these be improved?

Question 3: Is the ***wording of the assessment criteria*** and scoring matrix appropriate or how could these be improved?

Question 4: Do you have other comments or suggestions on the draft grant opportunity?



Next steps



Applying to the opportunity and other ways to be involved

- To apply to the grant opportunity when it opens, ensure the lead organisation on the application is an **MRFF Eligible Organisation**.
 - Collaborative applications are encouraged.
- Express interest in being on the **Grant Assessment Committee** that assesses applications
 - Want to ensure there is **diversity of expertise**, including **community-based researchers** and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **knowledge holders**

Consultation page has links on how to apply to be an MRFF Eligible Organisation and express interest in being on the Grant Assessment Committee

Consultation – open discussion

- Please type questions in the Q&A box provided on the screen
- Questions and feedback will be collated for the presenters to note or discuss
- Feedback can be made through the Consultation Hub on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's website (consultations.health.gov.au)

Direct link QR Code



- **Direct link:**

<https://consultations.health.gov.au/health-economics-and-research-division/mrff-ihrf-go>

- **Reminder - online submissions close midnight 28 November 2025
(late submissions cannot be accepted)**

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**Check out the grant
opportunity forecast**

health.gov.au/our-work/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-grant-opportunities-calendar



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**Send any questions
to**

MRFF@health.gov.au

health.gov.au/MRFF

Thank you & Comments