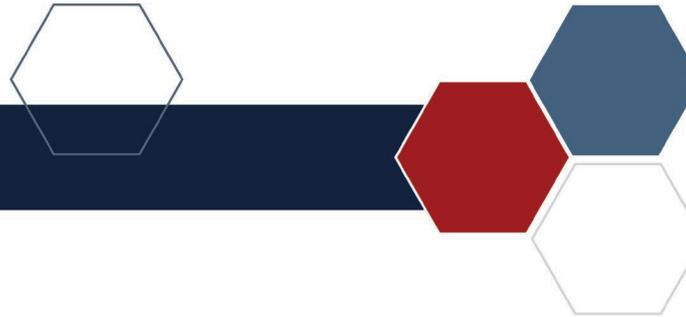


Medical Research Future Fund



Responses to Medical Research Future Fund Webinar Questions (21 July 2021)

Themes	Responses
<p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you provide information on the number of applications for each scheme in the future? • At the moment Victoria dominates the receipt of MRFF money with far less money going to the smaller states. What are your comments on this funding geographical inequity? • The female:male ratio of successful grants - is this of all investigators or female-led vs male-led applications? • The MRFF opportunities successful applicant's data in the recent MRFF Financial Assistance Report, including gender diversity, age diversity, and broad research areas, was only from a subset of MRFF Grants administered by the NHMRC, but not all NHMRC-administered grants. 1) Which NHMRC-administered grants were not included in this analysis and why? 2) Will future analysis include all MRFF grants, not just NHMRC-administered grants? • Would the MRFF consider releasing all MRFF outcomes in a flat file format (excel spreadsheet) like NHMRC does? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department will continue exploring options for analysis of MRFF data, including statistics such as success rates and also to include as many MRFF grant opportunities as possible. • Grant opportunities through the MRFF are open to eligible applicants from all states and territories. A key component of MRFF grant opportunities is collaboration, with many research proposals including partnerships across multiple states and territories. • The success rate by gender is based on applications from all male and female chief investigators • Details of MRFF grant recipients are available both excel and PDF format here.
<p>Grant Assessment Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can people self-nominate for BGH assessment committees? (not the NHMRC ones) • How is the quality/depth of consumer/end user engagement evaluated in reviews of MRFF proposals? What is the role of consumers in the review panels? • What level of time commitment is required to be a member of the GAC? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While you cannot directly self-nominate for Business Grants Hub managed MRFF Grant Assessment Committees, the Department uses the NHMRC managed portal to identify potential candidates and shares these with Business Grants Hub. • Consumer involvement in grant assessment committees is tailored to the experiences and confidence of the individual. For example, consumers with experience and background in research and who are confident in

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	<p>understanding and assessing the science can be voting members of a Grant Assessment Committee. Consumers without this background and confidence are able to make comments on all applications that are assessed but however will not vote on each application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time commitment as a member of a grant assessment committee will vary depending on factors such as the number of grant applications to the Grant Opportunity and those that proceed to a Committee meeting.
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When are you going to update the snapshots? • When do we expect that the next 'batch' of MRFF grant opportunities will open? • How often will the grant recipient list be updated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We welcome feedback regarding the MRFF Website and will look to review the current MRFF Implementation Plan Snapshots. • MRFF Grant opportunities are published on the calendar when they become available. To keep up to date of upcoming opportunities, we recommend subscribing to the MRFF Newsletter and registering at GrantConnect. • The MRFF Grant Recipients list is updated regularly. You can view the list here.
<p>Grant Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the MRFF consider consolidating application / award process e.g. via a single grant portal? • The business.gov.au grant application portal often uses language and terminology that is not familiar to health and medical researchers. This can make it difficult to understand the information that is being requested. Is it possible for a more detailed document outlining the precise information expected in applications made via this portal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Australian Government approved Grant Hub has established and now maintains their own IT infrastructure to support the services they provide, including for the MRFF. The application / award process through the NHMRC is already a single grant portal. Business Grants Hub is in the process of updating their systems and is exploring streamlining processes.
<p>Grant Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms does the MRFF employ to optimise accuracy of determining CI eligibility on submissions across all administering bodies to ensure a CI can't unknowingly be named on a submission? • Will MRFF grant scores be released to applicants to give them feedback on their applications? • Are successful grants the mostly highly scored for scientific rigour and feasibility? Or are grants of lower scientific value funded? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Investigator (CI) eligibility is managed through a range of mechanisms depending on the Grants Hub. Through the NHMRC, there is a dashboard in Sapphire that will show Research Administration Officers if a CI appears on more than one application. We are working with Business Grants Hub to see if a similar system can be made available for Grant Opportunities they administer. We also encourage active communication between CI's within a project team to ensure they are only participating in a single application to get that assurance before making a formal submission of the application. • Feedback to applicants is provided by the Grant Hub administering the Grant Opportunity. At this time, the two Grant Hubs currently have different processes for doing so; however this is an area the Department is able to explore further with the Grant Hubs.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Grant Assessment Committees assess and score all applications against the four MRFF selection criteria - impact, methodology, capacity, capability and resources, and overall value and risk. The allocation of funding is based on the advice of the independent Grant Assessment Committee The Department encourages all health and medical researchers to nominate to participate in an MRFF Grant Assessment Committee, to access first-hand experience of the assessment process.
<p>Grant Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some applications seem to be quite repetitive, requiring the same or very similar information in multiple sections. Is this something that could be reviewed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of continued improvement processes, we are always looking to improve grant opportunity processes, including updating grant opportunity guidelines. The feedback provided will be considered as part of ongoing refinements to the grant opportunity guidelines.
<p>Research Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If we've noticed a research area gap in the application rounds, is there scope to suggest a topic/area? How much are new MRFF grant schemes that arise due to lobbying of MRFF by interest groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We welcome any feedback regarding grant opportunities, or research gaps/clinical need more broadly. These can be provided to mrff@health.gov.au MRFF grant schemes are developed in a range of different ways, including through the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy and Priorities.
<p>Conflict of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of advisory committees for the MRFF priorities also apply for MRFF grants in these areas and successful with that, isn't that a conflict of interest? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has published a MRFF Declaration of Interest Policy Statement and Guidelines which contain guidance for MRFF advisory panel or committee members on how to handle relevant interests. It defines conflict of interest, sets out the policy and contains guidance on how to manage any potential conflicts.