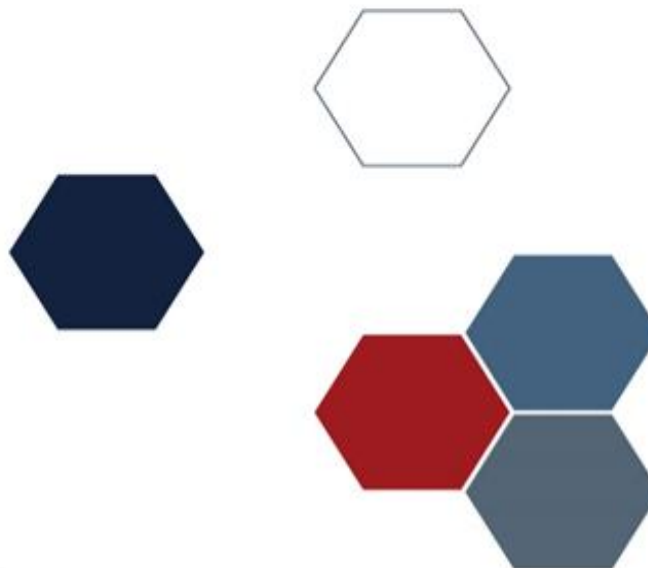




Australian Government



# Medical Research **Future Fund**

## **Webinar**

21 July 2021

**Dr Masha Somi**

Chief Executive Officer

Health and Medical Research Office



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# Medical Research Future Fund

## Today's presentation

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About the MRFF

How is the MRFF different?



Things to look out for as a researcher

MRFF Financial Assistance Report

Other information + stay connected





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# Medical Research Future Fund

## About the MRFF

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- Established under legislation (MRFF Act 2015)
- Object is to ‘improve the health and wellbeing of Australians’
- \$20 billion endowment fund
- Funding is to support **medical research and medical innovation**





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# Medical Research Future Fund

## About the MRFF

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- Two complementary Government streams for health and medical research in Australia
  - MRFF - awards funding for national **priority areas to address unmet medical needs** with a focus on **research translation and commercialisation** to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians
  - NHMRC - awards funding through a range of **investigator-initiated schemes** to **build capacity** and **advance health and medical knowledge**
- Complements other Government support to the Sector
  - Research Block Grants to Universities, Australian Research Council, Biomedical Translation Fund, National Critical Research Infrastructure Strategy, Cooperative Research Centres, COVID-19 additional funding





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## About the MRFF



**Medical Research  
Future Fund  
Act 2015**

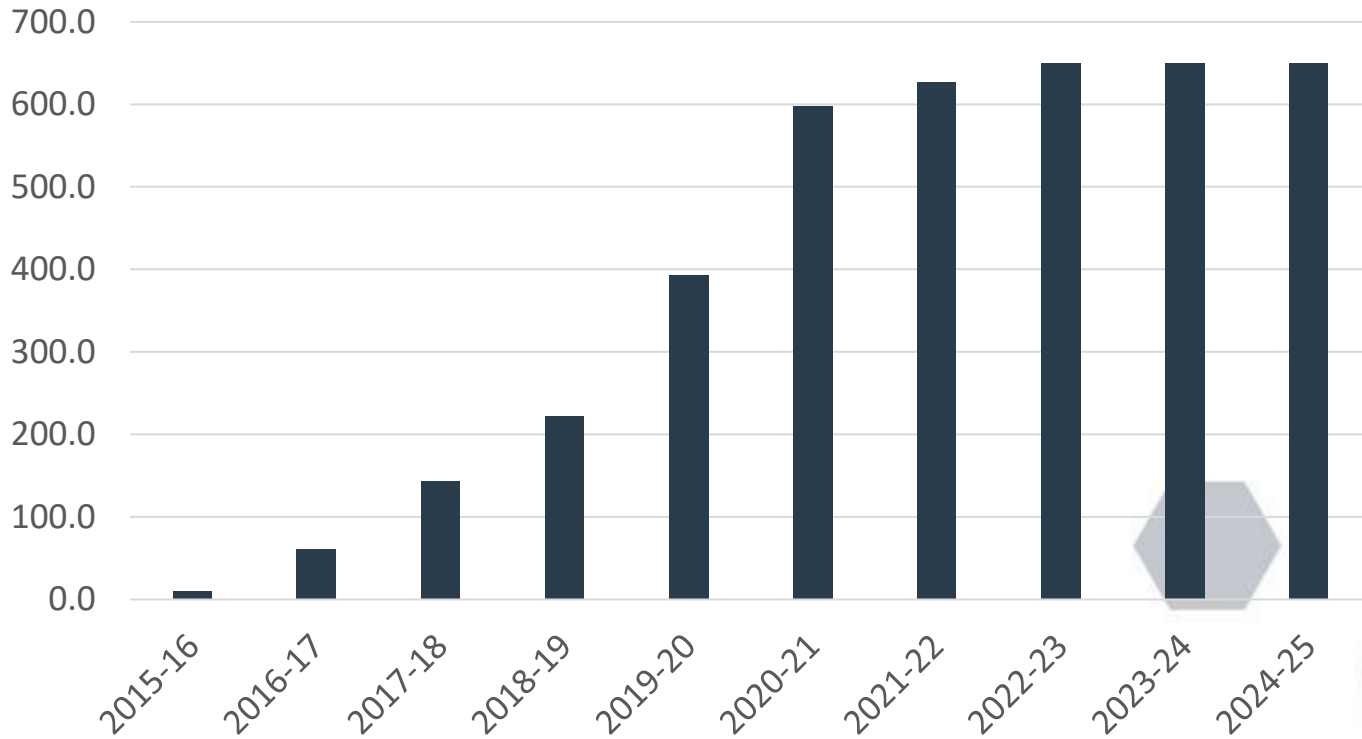




# Medical Research Future Fund

## About the MRFF

MRFF Budget (\$m)





# Medical Research Future Fund

## About the MRFF

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### • Patients

- Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research (\$633.0 m)
- Clinical Trials Activity (\$614.2 m)
- Global Health (\$28.4 m)

### • Researchers

- Frontier Health and Medical Research (\$570.0 m)
- Clinician Researchers (\$190.8 m)
- Researcher Exchange and Development within Industry (\$32.0 m)

### • Research Translation

- Preventive and Public Health Research (\$260.4 m)
- Primary Health Care Research (\$45.0 m)
- Rapid Applied Research Translation (\$218.0 m)
- Medical Research Commercialisation (\$311.3 m)
- National Critical Research Infrastructure (\$605.0 m)
- Research Data Infrastructure (\$80.0 m)

### • Research Missions

- Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care (\$185.0 m)
- Australian Brain Cancer (\$49.0 m)
- Cardiovascular Health (\$220.0 m)
- Genomics Health Futures (\$500.0 m)
- Indigenous Health Research Fund (\$160.0 m)
- Million Minds Mental Health Research (\$125.0 m)
- Stem Cell Therapies (\$150.0 m)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (\$50.0 m)





# Medical Research Future Fund

## How is the MRFF different?

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- Rapid and flexible disbursements to capitalise on our health and medical research strengths to respond to emerging issues (flexible)
- Focus on an area of unmet need or a technology with transformational potential (priority led)
- Bring together key researchers, health professionals, consumers, stakeholders, industry partners (outcome focused)
- Harness resources across the system (investment, leadership and collaboration)
- Use innovative research approaches (new grant models)







## How is the MRFF different – responsive to emerging issues

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- 2020 and 2021 Coronavirus Research Response (incl. 2021 COVID-19 Health Impacts and Vaccination Schedules, currently open)
- 2020 Bushfire Impact Grant Opportunity
- 2020 Silicosis Research Grant Opportunity





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## How is the MRFF different – addresses unmet need

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- 2020 Efficient Use of Existing Medicines (to support PBAC)
- 2020 Improving Diagnosis in Low Survival Cancers (low relative survival)
- Indigenous Health Research Fund (Indigenous-led research focused on community needs)
- 2019 and 2020 Australian Brain Cancer Mission Survivorship Grant Opportunities (need identified by consumers)



# Medical Research Future Fund

## How is the MRFF different – trying new approaches

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- **Bringing international perspectives** (reviews of MRFF Mission Roadmaps and Implementation Plans, Grant Assessment Committees)
- **Evaluation and impact measurement**
- **Supporting early to mid-career researchers**
- **Consultation** (AMRAB led Strategy and Priorities, MRFF Missions, Roundtables – Medicinal Cannabis, Ovarian Cancer, Early to Mid-Career Researchers)
- **Engage with peaks on policies and processes** (e.g. Declaration of Interests, MRFF Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Strategy, experiences applying for and assessing MRFF grants)





# Medical Research Future Fund

## How is the MRFF different – new approaches for funding

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- Different grant models (Frontiers, Incubator, Accelerator, Innovation)
- Selection Criteria focused on outcomes (Impact, Methodology, Capacity/Capability/ Resources, Overall Value and Risk)
- New approaches for funding focused on improving care and outcomes (Clinician Researchers, Rapid Applied Research Translation)
- Grant Assessment Committee structures (consumers, health services, clinicians, international)





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## How is the MRFF different – MRFF incubator grants

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- Support early stage research projects to
  - generate new approaches for addressing a critical/intractable health issue that is of value to the community, health service providers, and health system managers
  - explore the feasibility of new approaches and their potential impact on health care practice, policy, or system effectiveness
  - establish an evidence base for further research that focuses on implementing the proposed solution
- Small scale research projects (up to \$1M funding for up to 24 months)
- Multidisciplinary research (teams of diverse disciplines e.g. researchers, clinicians, health professionals)
- Several MRFF Missions first utilised this model in 2020
  - Cardiovascular Health, Stem Cell Therapies, Traumatic Brain Injury, Indigenous Health Research Fund





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## **Building on the strengths of the sector**

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- Complementing NHMRC and other funding to significantly expand support for health and medical research in Australia
- Expert advice informs priority setting (AMRAB, Council, advisory committees)
- Merit based (independent grant assessment, focus on quality of research and alignment to assessment criteria)





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## Things to look out for – MRFF grant opportunities

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- Each grant opportunity:
  - is different – look beyond the title to the objectives and outcomes (section 1.3), eligibility criteria (section 3) and selection criteria (section 5)
  - aligns with the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities that are in force (section 1.3)
  - must meet the objective of the MRFF Initiative it sits within (eg primary care must be a focus of grants under the Primary Health Care Research Initiative)
  - requires researchers to identify how they will contribute to the MRFF Measures of Success (section 5 – assessment criteria 1 and 4)





# Medical Research Future Fund

## Things to look out for – MRFF program structure

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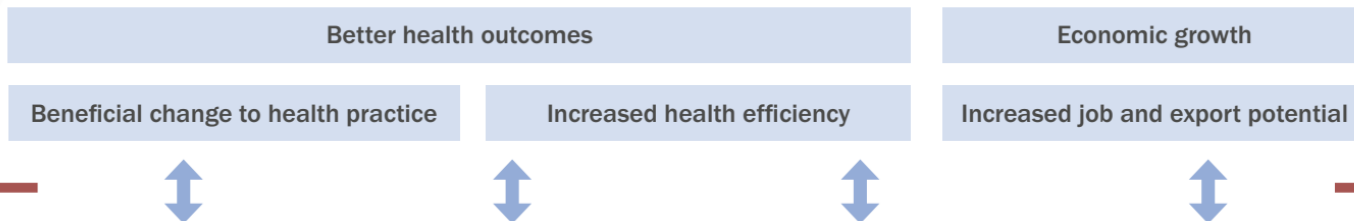


# Medical Research Future Fund

## Things to look out for – performance and evaluation

### Medical Research Future Fund outcomes

**Vision:** A health system fully informed by quality health and medical research  
**Aim:** To transform health and medical research and innovation to improve lives, build the economy and contribute to health system sustainability.



### Measures of success

Increased focus of research on areas of unmet need	More Australians access clinical trials	New health technologies are embedded in health practice	New health interventions are embedded in health practice
Research community has greater capacity and capability to undertake translational research	Health professionals adopt best practices faster	The community engages with and adopts new technologies and treatments	Increased commercialisation of health research outcomes





# Medical Research Future Fund

## Things to look out for – a few new things

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- Innovation grants
- Accelerator grants
- Department is systematically reviewing MRFF annual progress and final reports
- Establishing 'Eligible Organisations' at NHMRC
- Increasing Chief Investigator limits to 15 (up from 10)
- Including 'access clauses' in some grant agreements





# Medical Research Future Fund

## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

- MRFF Act (section 57A):

*'The Health Minister must, as soon as practicable after the most recent Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities cease to be in force, prepare a report on the financial assistance provided for medical research and medical innovation from the Medical Research Future Fund Special Account during the period the Priorities were in force.'*

- Two reports have been published
  - Report 1 covered the 2016-18 MRFF Priorities
  - Report 2 covered the 2018-20 MRFF Priorities





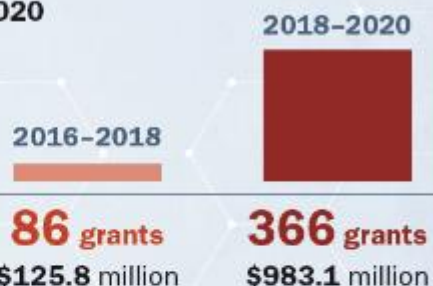
# Medical Research Future Fund


## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

### MRFF Initiatives

More initiatives and funding from  
8 November 2018 to 6 November 2020

Grant opportunities and  
funding have increased  
significantly



 **79** grant opportunities were  
open across 20 MRFF initiatives

 **366** successful  
grants were awarded

  
**\$983.1** million  
provided to the health and  
medical research sector in  
2018-2020



- Significant **increase in funding and grants** awarded through 2018-20, compared with 2016-2018.
- Around **25%** of total MRFF investment attributed to 95 successful grants in MRFF Missions.
- **COVID-19 response: 49** projects commenced under 16 grant opportunities with a combined value of \$58.1 million.

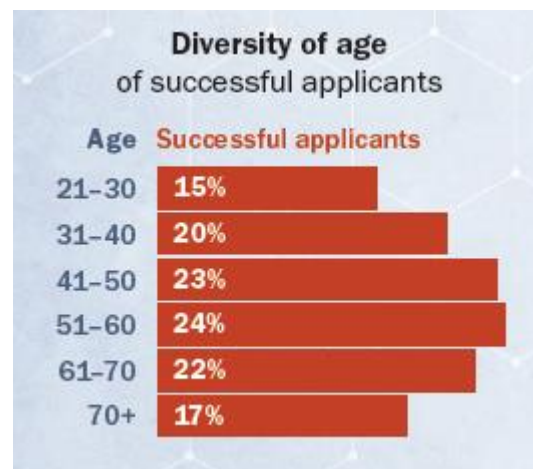




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## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

- Success by gender and age of chief investigators\*

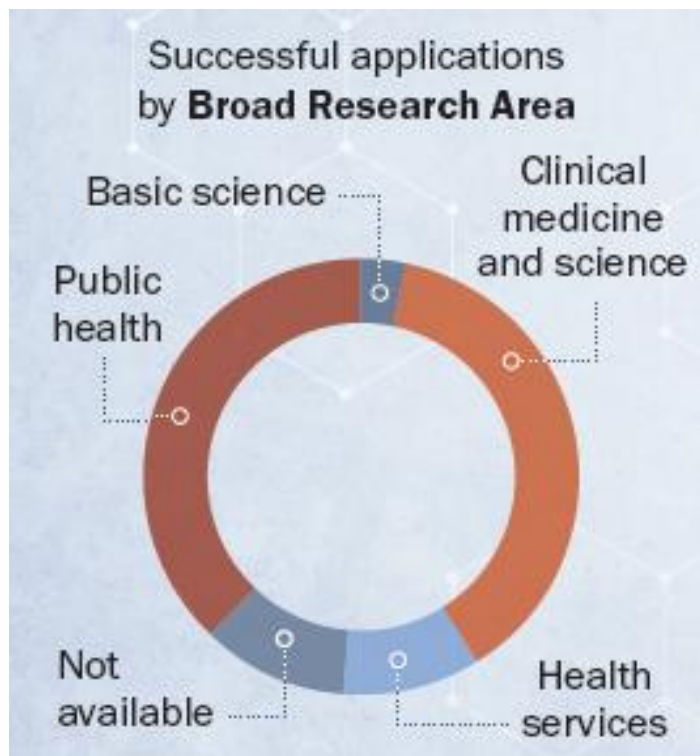




# Medical Research Future Fund

## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

- MRFF opportunities fund diverse research areas\*.

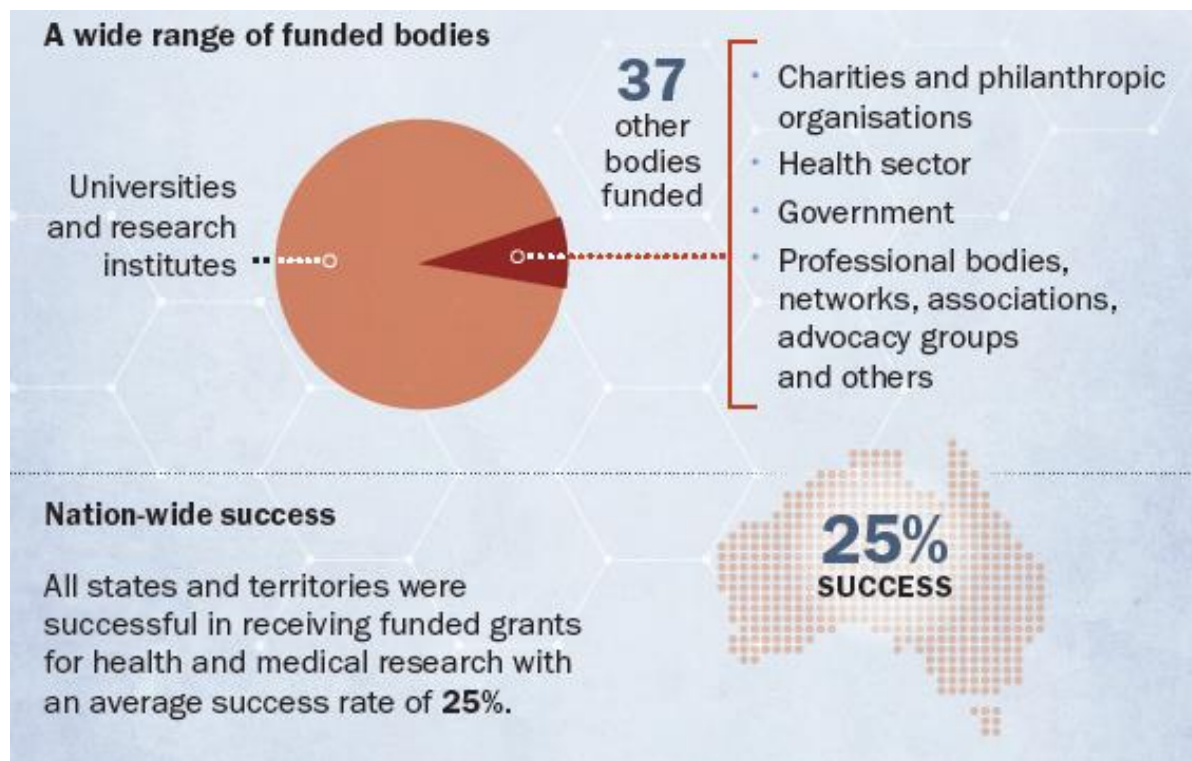


\*These data apply to 2017-2019 only and are from a subset of the MRFF that is administered by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)



## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

- A range of organisations have received MRFF grants\*

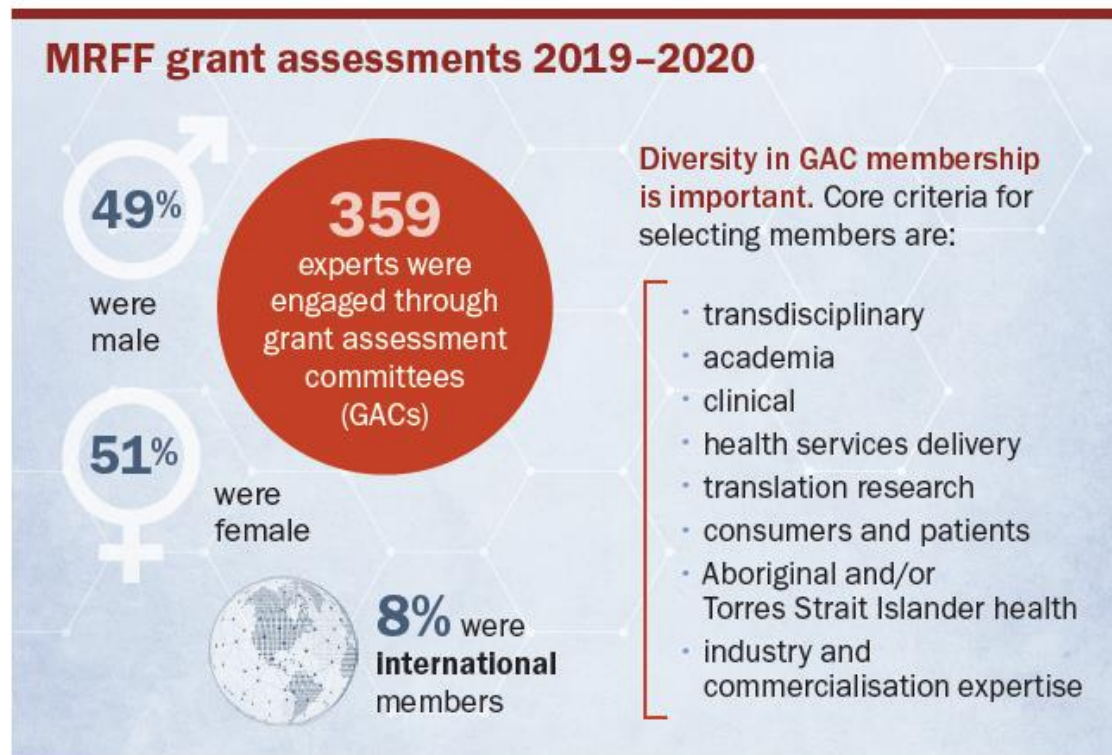






## MRFF Financial Assistance Report

- Grant Assessment Committee's have broad membership







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## **AMRAB and the 2021-26 Strategy**

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- 2016-21 member terms expired late February 2021
  - Supporting Government to establish AMRAB 2021-26
- Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-21 expires November 2021
  - A public consultation will be required to establish the 2021-26 by November 2021





# Medical Research Future Fund

## Currently available funding opportunities

TOTAL\$*	Grant Opportunity	Open	Close
\$15 million	2021 COVID-19 Health Impacts and Vaccination Schedules	12 May 2021	18 Aug 2021
\$70 million	2021 Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need General	12 May 2021	18 Aug 2021 (specific streams)
\$12.6 million	2021 International Clinical Trial Collaborations	17 March 2021 (Round 1) 26 August 2021 (Round 2)	8 September 2021 (Round 1) 16 Feb 2022 (Round 2)
\$15 million	2021 Innovative Therapies for Mental Illness	17 March 2021	21 July 2021 (closing today)
\$15 million	2021 Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mothers and Babies	7 July 2021 (guidelines available)	25 Nov 2021

\* Totals include all rounds within each opportunity



# Medical Research Future Fund

## Continuous feedback loops...we are listening and learning

- Receive feedback via AMRAB consultation processes
- Seek and receive feedback from the sector, including through structured processes
- Identify gaps in funding opportunities
- Scan the environment for emerging issues/unmet needs
- Observe which grant opportunities generate most interest





# Medical Research Future Fund

## Useful resources

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- MRFF grant calendar - Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant opportunities and their status:

[www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-grant-opportunities-calendar](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-grant-opportunities-calendar)

- MRFF grant recipient list – information of about funded grants:

[www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/medical-research-future-fund-mrff-grant-recipients](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/medical-research-future-fund-mrff-grant-recipients)

- MRFF projects – more detailed information about some MRFF funded projects:

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-projects>





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# Medical Research Future Fund

## Next webinar

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- Expected – October 2021 [date TBC]
- Will cover:
  - MRFF Missions
  - Accelerator grants
  - Other MRFF updates



Nominate topics by writing to [MRFF@health.gov.au](mailto:MRFF@health.gov.au)





# Medical Research Future Fund

## Keep connected...



### Subscribe to MRFF News

[https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives and programs/medical research future fund/mrff news](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-news)



### Nominate for an MRFF Grant Assessment Committee (GAC)

[https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/2020 21 medical research future fund mrff grant opportunities](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/2020-21-medical-research-future-fund-mrff-grant-opportunities)



### Register for MRFF grants opportunities

<https://www.grants.gov.au/>



### Follow Health Twitter for MRFF updates

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