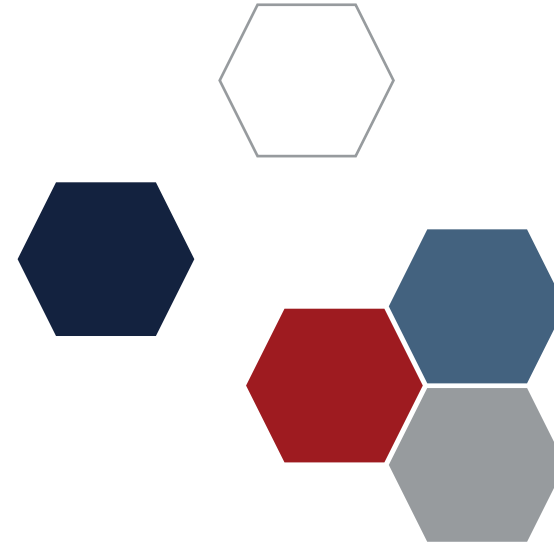




Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

Medical Research
Future Fund



Medical Research Future Fund

MRFF RAO Webinar

4 August 2022

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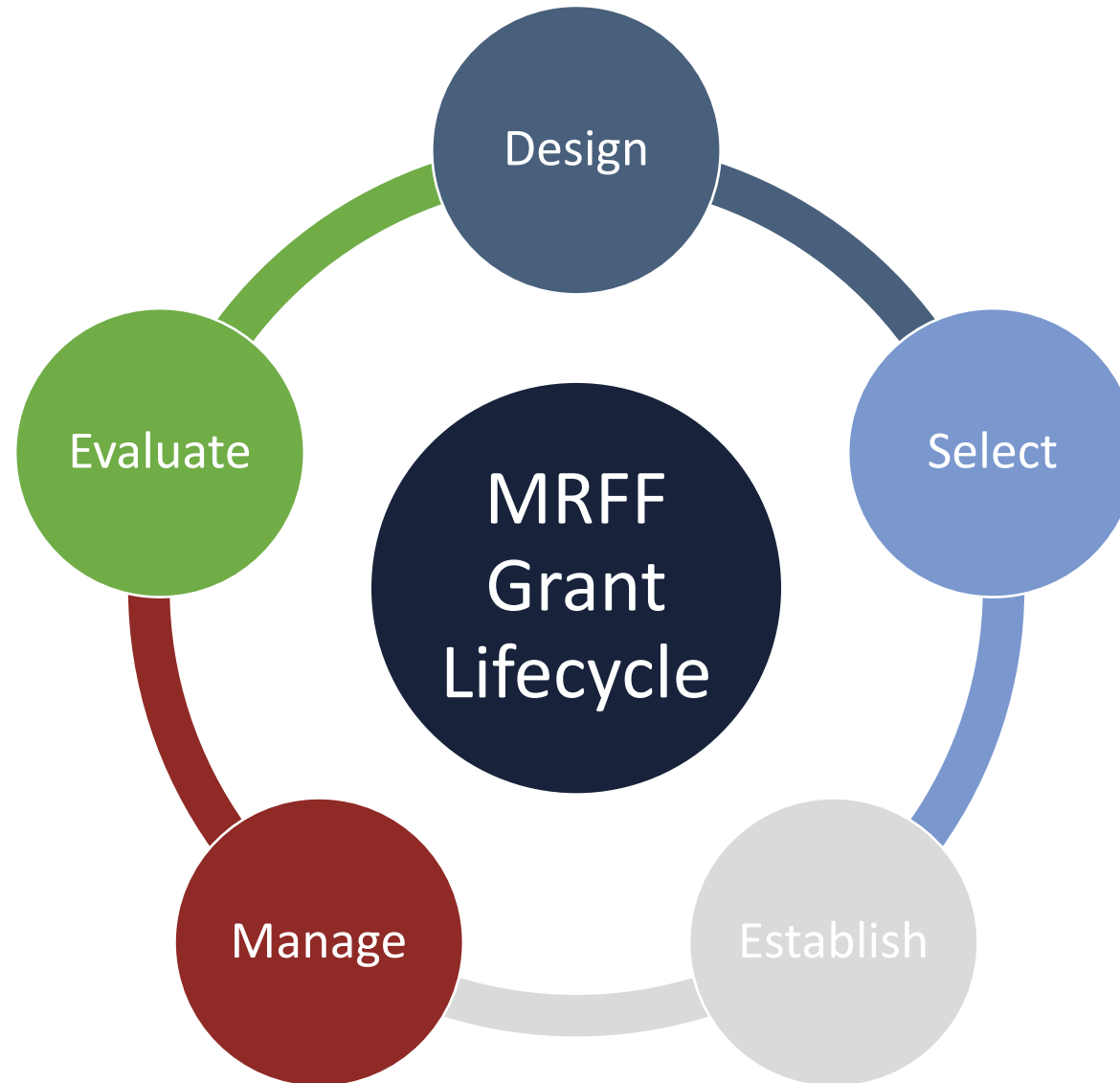
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MRFF Research Administration Officer Webinars

Aim to:

- provide practical information to the sector and Research Administration Officers (RAOs) in particular about MRFF administrative arrangements
- assist RAOs and potential grantees in better supporting MRFF funded research and researchers
- aid the implementation of any administrative changes to the MRFF
- seek feedback from RAOs, with a view toward continuous MRFF administration improvement

Phases of the MRFF grant lifecycle



Medical Research Future Fund Act, Strategies and Priorities

Sophie Han, Director of Strategy and
Governance Section



Guidance documents and the MRFF



Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015



Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2021-2026 and related Priorities

- The Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Strategy and Priorities inform where the Australian Government directs its research funding
- The Strategy and Priorities are set by an independent group of experts called the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (AMRAB)



Strategy 2021-2026

Vision

A health system fully informed by quality health and medical research

Aim

Transform health and medical research using priority-driven investments that promote collaborative research, research innovation, research translation and impact to improve lives, whilst contributing to health system sustainability, nurturing the next generation of researchers and building the Australian economy

Strategic objectives of the MRFF

The Priorities for 2020–2022 focus on:

- antimicrobial resistance
- global health challenges such as pandemics
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- ageing and aged care
- digital health tools
- comparing the value of different health interventions
- primary care research
- support for health professionals to conduct their own research
- identifying gaps where research does not address the lived experiences of patients, and fixing these
- using existing drugs for new purposes
- testing public health interventions to reduce chronic disease
- supporting Australian biomedical and medical device development.

2nd MRFF 10-year Investment Plan



Medical Research Future Fund 2nd 10-year Investment Plan 2022-23 to 2031-32

OVERVIEW

The Australian Government has committed \$6.3 billion for health and medical research through the 2nd 10-year Investment Plan (the 2nd Plan) for the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). The 2nd Plan provides funding for 21 initiatives between 2022-23 and 2031-32, 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.

The 2nd Plan builds on investments (actual and committed) made through the 1st 10-year Investment Plan, which was announced in the 2019-20 Budget and totalled \$5.1 billion from 2018-19 to 2027-28. Commitments made in the 1st 10-year Investment Plan will be carried forward and remain available for expenditure as part of the 2nd Plan. The 2nd Plan provides flexibility for the MRFF to continue to be responsive to emerging health challenges while maintaining focus on addressing key health challenges. The 2nd Plan continues a strong focus on funding activities that will stimulate health and medical research across the entire research, translation and commercialisation pipeline.

CONTEXT

Developing new drugs, devices, treatments and cures can take more than a decade. The 2nd Plan gives researchers and industry certainty and direction so that they can address areas of unmet need and excel in collaborative and transformative research.

MRFF activities are based on national priorities identified by the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board following a national consultation process. Activities put patients 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 21 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.

2020-2022 priorities	21 MRFF initiatives
Consumer-Driven Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven ResearchPreventive and Public Health Research
Translational Research Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Early to Mid-Career ResearchersNational Critical Research InfrastructureResearch Data InfrastructureFrontier Health and Medical ResearchMedical Research CommercialisationGenomics Health Futures MissionResearcher Exchange and Development within IndustryStem Cell Therapies MissionRapid Applied Research Translation
Comparative Effectiveness Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clinical Trials ActivityPreventive and Public Health Research
Public Health Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Preventive and Public Health ResearchMillion Minds Mental Health Research MissionCardiovascular Health MissionAustralian Brain Cancer MissionClinical Trials Activity
Primary Care Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Primary Health Care Research
Clinical Researcher Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clinician ResearchersEarly to Mid-Career ResearchersFrontier Health and Medical ResearchResearcher Exchange and Development within Industry
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Indigenous Health Research Fund
Ageing and Aged Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission
One Health – Antimicrobial Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Global Health
Global Health and Health Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Global HealthEmerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research
Drug Repurposing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Australian Brain Cancer MissionPreventive and Public Health
Digital Health Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Critical Research InfrastructureResearch Data InfrastructureTraumatic Brain Injury Mission

Missions – Roadmap and Implementation Plan

- An **Expert Advisory Panel** develops a Roadmap and Implementation Plan following national consultation and international review
- The **Roadmap** is a high level strategic document that includes the aim, vision, goal and priorities for investment for the Mission
- **Implementation Plan** supports the Roadmap
 - Maps the research required to achieve the goal set out for the Mission (i.e. it will guide research short, medium, and long term investments over the life of the Mission)
 - It establishes how the outcomes from each priority will be evaluated in terms of benefit to Australian patients and facilitate tracking of the Mission's progress towards its objectives

MRFF Missions, Roadmaps and Implementation Plans

Genomics Health Futures Mission

Genomics Health Futures Mission

Roadmap

The Genomics Health Futures Mission (GHFM) is investing \$500 million over 10 years in genomics research under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). It will improve testing and diagnosis for many diseases, help personalise treatment options to better target and improve health outcomes, and reduce unnecessary interventions and associated health costs.

Genomics is already transforming our ability to diagnose conditions and provide targeted interventions, especially for people with rare genetic diseases and cancer. Genomics is also improving the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Continually improving genomics technologies and their applications offers an opportunity to generate individual, public health, social and economic benefits in Australia and globally. To maximise these benefits, new ways of thinking and working are required to develop and disseminate advances in genomics technologies, and to support their timely adoption and implementation into health care and disease prevention.

Scope

The GHFM will fund research to integrate genomics knowledge and technology into clinical practice. It aims to:

- ensure Australians live longer and healthier lives through access to genomics knowledge and technology
- position Australia as a global leader in genomics research
- deliver improved diagnostic and targeted treatments
- avoid unnecessary health costs
- improve patient experience and outcomes

The GHFM will also advance precision medicine in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to ensure genomics research that is scientifically sound, culturally safe, and competent to address inequity in research participation and outcomes.

Indigenous Health Research Fund

Indigenous Health Research Fund

Roadmap

Through the Indigenous Health Research Fund (IHRF), the Australian Government has committed \$160 million to improve the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people over 11 years from 2018-19 to 2028-29, funded under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

Improving health and social equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people is one of Australia's most pressing challenges. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people have a 10-year lower life expectancy and 2.3 times higher burden of disease than non-Indigenous Australians, despite considerable investment into existing programs.

There is a vital need for transformative health and medical research to deliver the knowledge needed to drive impactful policy and service delivery and achieve equity in outcomes. This requires a shift from short-term fragmented research efforts to longer-term collaborative research – driven by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people – that prioritises the most pressing health issues and knowledge gaps.

This agenda is proportionally informed by and aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which emphasises the importance of Shared Decision Making, Building the Community Controlled Sector, Improving Non-acute Institutions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data governance, with specific Socio-economic Targets to guide the development and implementation of programs and policies directly related to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

An Expert Advisory Panel comprising members Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research experts and leaders is guiding the approach to implementation and investment of the \$125 million under the IHRF. It is the first national research fund led by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and conducted through close engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Scope

The IHRF will mobilise health and medical research for the prevention of disease and promotion of health and social equity. Consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, cohesive research that is led by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and is designed to deliver community benefit will inform and transform the way the health system responds to the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people across the life course.

Traumatic Brain Injury Mission

Traumatic Brain Injury Mission

Roadmap

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Mission will provide \$50 million over 10 years under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to support research designed to improve the lives of all Australians who experience TBI.

TBI arises from a range of circumstances, including concussion while playing sport, falls in older people or severe injury after major trauma. The resulting injuries are diverse in presentation, vary in severity from mild to severe, and can lead to dramatic and often long-lasting negative consequences for patients, their families and carers. TBI can also involve significant health care resources and have a substantial effect on society. Research under this mission will build the evidence base and drive improvements in TBI care, as well as innovate new strategies for treatment, rehabilitation and community integration.

Scope

The TBI Mission will invest in research that:

- identifies predictors of outcomes that facilitate personalisation of care following TBI
- develops and assesses interventions that improve lives following TBI
- identifies opportunities for improvement in care
- investigates effective pathways to translate research findings into nationally consistent clinical practice
- identifies best management for people with TBI in the presence of other injuries and comorbidities
- identifies mechanisms for improving public awareness to help people with TBI integrate into the community
- supports evolution of TBI management and care

Our goal

To better predict recovery outcomes after a TBI, identify the most effective care and treatments and reduce barriers to support people to live their best possible life after TBI.

Australian Brain Cancer Mission

Australian Brain Cancer Mission

Roadmap

The Australian Brain Cancer Mission will provide \$50 million over 10 years under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to support research designed to improve the lives of all Australians who experience brain cancer.

The Australian Government will contribute \$50 million under the Medical Research Future Fund and seek matching contributions from philanthropy, other governments, industry and the private sector in an initial demonstration of the benefits of collaboration. Care Brain Cancer Foundation has committed \$20 million and the Melbourne Foundation's Estimate Cancer Initiative has committed \$10 million, towards this fund and important Mission.

Together we can make brain cancer history.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

INCREASED PATIENT SURVIVAL, QUALITY OF LIFE AND CARE EXPERIENCE

- Prioritise the benefits of surgery or treatment at centres of clinical excellence, and the merits of innovative referral
- Audit and build national care standards, support decision making, and articulate clinical pathways for patients
- Define patient support roles, and work with governments to improve transport and other support schemes
- Invest in supporting research to better understand the lifelong impact of a brain cancer diagnosis

INCREASED AND EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN CLINICAL TRIALS

- Define and remove barriers to participation to ensure every patient has access to a clinical trial
- Enhance capacity of Australian and New Zealand Clinical Trials Network (ANZCTN) to support trials and adequately support top trial centres
- Support research to improve patient experience through a coordinated grant program for innovative research capable of supporting international research excellence
- Enhance research (biomedical and translational) is integrated with existing platforms and data collections
- Open a grant program for innovative clinical trials capable of supporting international collaborations

EXPANDED RESEARCH PLATFORMS AND EXCELLENCE

- Build a national bio-banking, laboratory, registry data management capacity for the entire patient cohort
- Upgrade existing pre-clinical techniques and platforms, including animal and in-vitro modelling capacity, immunotherapy, genomics and genomics
- Explore opportunities to encourage the biopharmaceutical industry to collaborate on drug discovery and the new drugs in children
- Identify drugs of potential, and ensure access to new drugs by adults and children
- Establish a new centre for basic and clinical research excellence in paediatric and adult brain cancer
- Support research time for clinicians through targeted funding, mentorship, and support for research and practitioner fellowships
- Build domestic research talent through a coordinated grant program for innovative research capable of supporting international research excellence
- Support and expand the Brain Cancer Discovery Collaborative to include all sectors of brain cancer research excellence and attract new talent

Cardiovascular Health Mission

Cardiovascular Health Mission

Roadmap

The Cardiovascular Health Mission will provide \$220 million over 10 years under the Medical Research Future Fund to improve cardiovascular health and stroke for all Australians.

Cardiovascular disease is far from "silent" and continues to be Australia's biggest killer. Together, heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of premature death, disability and avoidable hospital admissions, costing more than \$8 billion each year in direct health care costs (2015-16).

Despite Australia's significant gains over past decades, we still have enormous knowledge gaps in cardiovascular disease, from the biology of common diseases to systems for equitable delivery of world-best care to all Australians. Australian researchers are well positioned to discover transformative solutions with this substantial strategic investment, combined with leadership and collaboration.

Scope

The Mission will improve health and save lives by mobilising research efforts, and developing collaborative and translational platforms. It will encourage broad innovations in cardiovascular health and stroke to benefit all Australians, with particular efforts to improve equity and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our goal

To make transformative improvements in cardiovascular health and stroke for all Australians through:

- Reducing the number of Australians of all ages affected by heart disease and stroke
- Improving outcomes from acute cardiovascular and stroke events
- Improving long-term recovery and survivorship after a cardiovascular or stroke event

Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission

Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission Roadmap

Scope

The Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission is a research program that will invest \$185 million to June 2029 with the aim to support older Australians to maintain their health and quality of life as they age, live independently for longer and access quality care when they need.

Vision

Healthy ageing will enable older people to contribute socially, culturally and economically to the wider community and reduce the cost burden of disability by delaying the onset of symptoms, particularly those associated with more resource intensive health and aged care services.

Mission Statement

Through health and medical research, the Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission aims to improve the quality of life for people as they age.

Anticipation

The impact of dementia, ageing and aged care in Australia is considerable and continues to grow as the older population of Australia grows. In 2017, 15% of Australia's total population (approximately 3.8 million people) were aged 65 and over. By 2057, this figure is projected to grow to over 8.8 million, 22% of the population. Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia, and for women it is the number one cause of death. There are currently more than 447,000 people living with dementia in Australia, with this number expected to reach around 1.1 million by 2058.

Goals

- Address the issues of ageing and its impacts on quality of care and quality of life for older people
- Increase the number of years a person could expect to live in optimal health as they age
- Deliver care and services that are of high quality, takes a human rights based approach and supports an individual's wellbeing
- Slow the progression of cognitive decline
- Achieve timely diagnosis of dementia
- These outcomes would be facilitated through the following elements:
 - Develop innovative care models, interventions and technologies to improve health and wellbeing
 - Inform health and aged care system change to deliver improved quality of life and care

Stem Cell Therapies Mission

Stem Cell Therapies Mission

Roadmap

The Stem Cell Therapies Mission will provide \$150 million over 9 years under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to support stem cell research to deliver innovative, safe and effective treatments.

Research advances over the past 10 years have shown the potential to develop new treatments using stem cells. Stem cells may restore function to damaged tissues, or be used to replace replacement tissues and organs, or boost the body's ability to heal itself without any risk to patients. These applications could provide innovative treatments for many chronic and inherited diseases that have major societal clinical needs, and may also revolutionise drug development practices.

Scope

The Stem Cell Therapies Mission invests in research on:

- **issue stem cells** – stem cells or progenitor cells in human tissues that play a role in tissue repair and homeostasis
- **pluripotent stem cells** – human embryonic and induced pluripotent stem cells, which can differentiate into specialised cell type of the human body and play a key role in regenerative medicine
- **cancer stem cells** – cell types within a cancer that can initiate a tumour, or drive tumour growth or progression after treatment

The Stem Cell Therapies Mission includes applications of these stem cells and their derivatives for:

- development of novel cellular therapies and tissue engineering, including using gene-modified stem cells
- disease modelling to identify underlying disease mechanisms, screen for new treatments or enhance preclinical studies

Our goal

To support world-leading translational stem cell research to improve health and deliver innovative, safe and effective stem cell medicines to improve health outcomes, in partnership with patients and carers.

Our mission

To use stem cells and their derivatives to develop innovative, safe and effective treatments that are accessible to all Australians who need them.

Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission

THE MILLION MINDS MISSION

The Million Minds Mission will assist an additional one million people who might not otherwise benefit from mental health research and take full use of new opportunities to prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment and recovery developed from the work of this Mission.

The Mission will provide \$100 million under the Medical Research Future Fund to support research designed to improve the lives of all Australians who experience mental health issues.

The Australian Government will contribute \$100 million under the Medical Research Future Fund and seek matching contributions from philanthropy, other governments, industry and the private sector in an initial demonstration of the benefits of collaboration. Care Brain Cancer Foundation has committed \$20 million and the Melbourne Foundation's Estimate Cancer Initiative has committed \$10 million, towards this fund and important Mission.

Together we can make brain cancer history.

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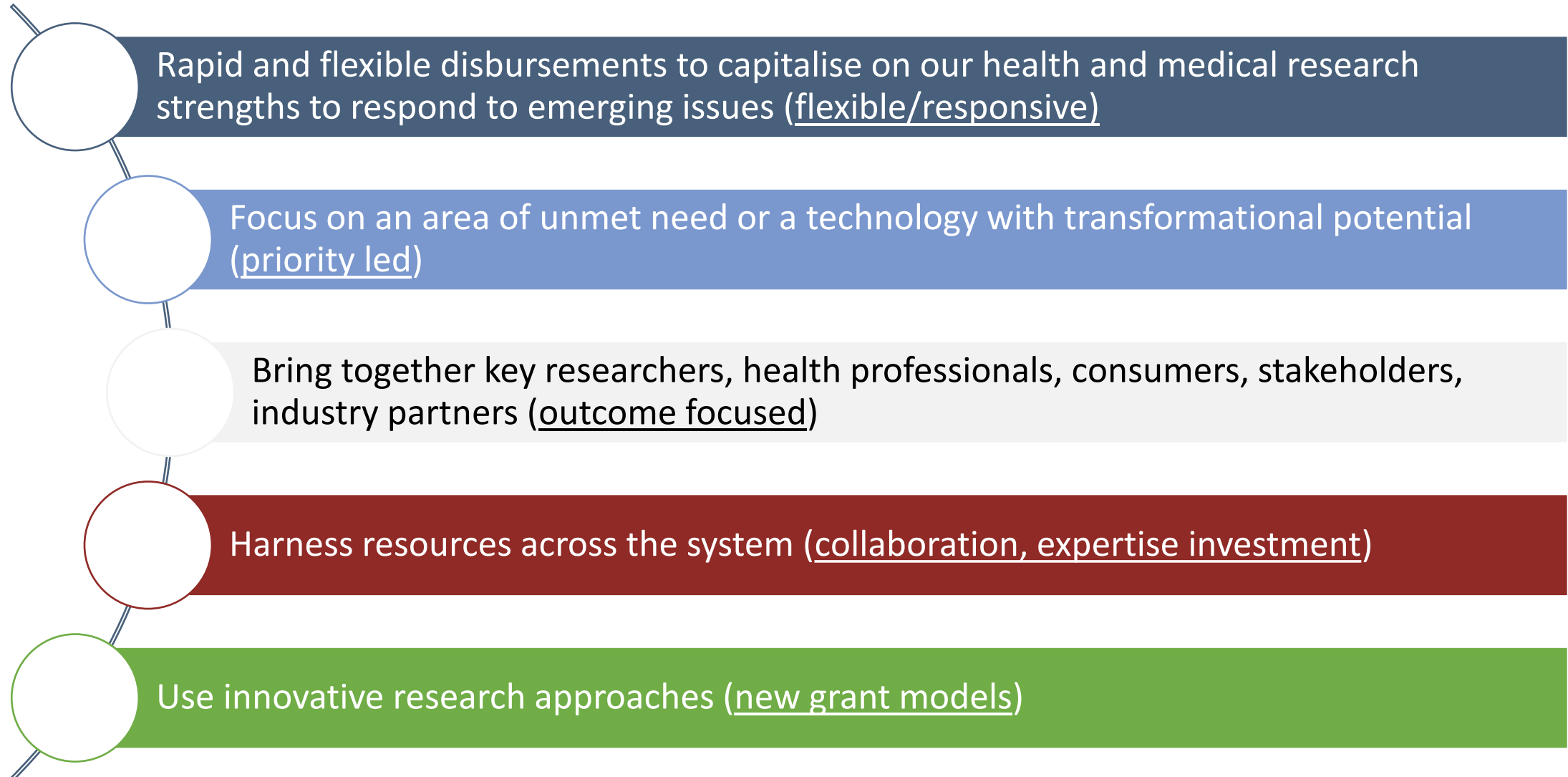
Designing MRFF grant opportunities

Ruth Webster, Director of Patients and
Infrastructure Section





How is the MRFF different?



Designing Grant Opportunities

Grant opportunities are designed, taking into account many factors:

- Government priorities and objectives
- AMRAB advice through the Strategy and Priorities as previously mentioned
- Mission Roadmaps and Implementation Plans
- Aims for each Initiative
- Funding available to each Initiative in that financial year
- Literature review
- Scan of the research area for trends and research gaps

Grant opportunities may:

- Be **general**, e.g. Early to Mid-Career Researchers
- Be **topic specific**, e.g. pain relief for Pancreatic cancer
- Use **different grant models**
- Have **multiple streams**
 - As a priority-driven funder, this allows us to focus funding on multiple priorities under a single topic
 - If there are differences in eligibility or assessment criteria between streams this will be spelled out



What to look out for in each grant opportunity

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 (e.g. 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)
- includes assessment criteria that are focused on outcomes (Impact, Methodology, Capacity/Capability/Resources, Overall Value and Risk)
- uses different MRFF grant models

MRFF grant models

Incubator Grants

support early stage, small scale research projects
to assess the potential and feasibility of novel strategies
to address critical/intractable health issues
small scale (up to \$1 million) and short-term (6-24 months) funding

Targeted Calls for Research

support larger-scale interdisciplinary research
larger-scale and longer-term (generally three to 5 years)

Accelerator Grants

support large-scale interdisciplinary research
to drive implementation of substantial improvements to health care and/or health system effectiveness
large scale (up to \$5 million) and long-term (up to 5 years) funding

Innovation Grants

support smaller scope research projects
to allow grantees to build evidence of the feasibility of their projects to be competitive in future funding
small scale and short-term (6-12 months) funding
aimed at a specific groups of researchers

Key considerations when applying

How well does the application align with the:

Objectives and intended outcomes

- See section 1.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- Project impact criterion

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

- See the MRFF Measures of Success as described in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy
- Project Impact and Overall Value and Risk of the Project criteria

Grant model

- Check the intent of the grant model
- Project Methodology criterion

Things to note

Technical assessment criteria vs Overall Value and Risk

- Applications must rate highly against all criteria
- ‘Non-weighted’ for Overall Value and Risk does not mean it doesn’t matter – it impacts what is funded

Partner Organisation vs Participating Institution and Letters of Support

- Letters of support are intended to speak to feasibility of the research proposed in the application, and to document commitment to participate
- In general, it is assumed that for investigators listed as CIs on an application, no letters of support are required
- We have noted the need for increased clarification around this, and around letters of support

Information about currently open grant opportunities

- Queries are directed through and managed by the relevant grant hub – BGH, NHMRC – to ensure consistency in responses provided. The hubs have their own processes in place for responding to queries to ensure responses are consistent
 - If responses are not consistent please let the hubs know as soon as possible so this can be addressed
- The ‘source of truth’ is the grant opportunity guidelines including any associated addenda

Addenda

The decision to issue an addendum (or FAQs) primarily sits with the grant administration hub (BGH, NHMRC), in consultation with the Department

Addenda are issued:

- to ensure there is equity of information provided to applicants
- when there are points which require clarification of intent or definition

Some matters raised may not require an addendum

- For example, a specific administrative matter that only pertains to a single application, and is not relevant to other applications

Continuous updating of grant opportunity guideline templates occurs to try and address issues for future grant opportunity openings.

- For example, recent issue around definition of 5 year period for publications

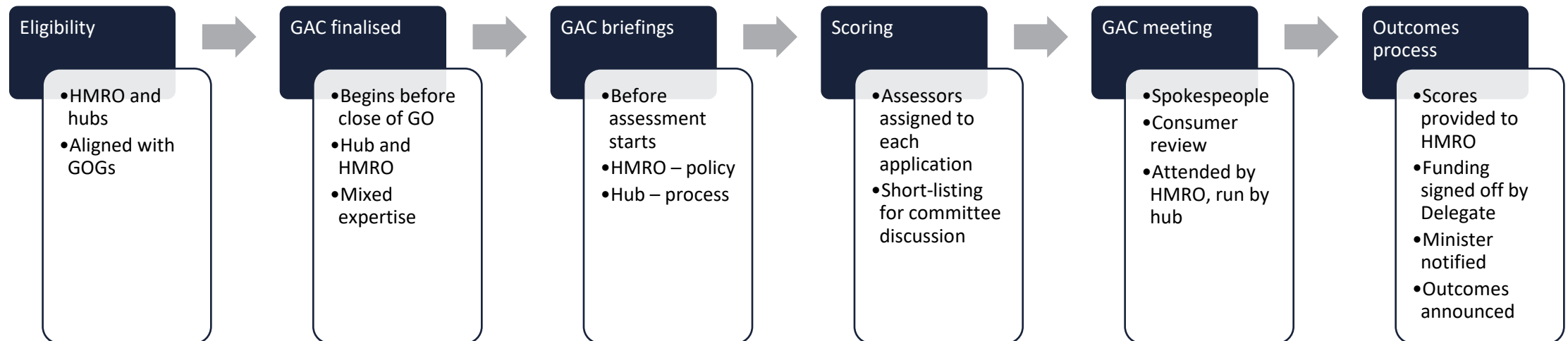


Selecting and establishing MRFF grants

Ruth Webster, Director of Patients and Infrastructure Section



The grant opportunity has closed. What next?



How is a Grant Assessment Committee formed?


The Department works with the grant administration hub to identify suitable Grant Assessment Committee (GAC) members.

Independent assessment is conducted by expert reviewers in their capacity as members of GACs.

We consider **gender balance** and **geographical representation**

Members are selected based on experience and expertise in a range of areas:

- transdisciplinary (e.g. in areas of health economics, biostatistics)
- academia
- clinical
- health services delivery
- translation research
- consumers and patients
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health
- industry and commercialisation expertise



MRFF Grant Assessment Committees

Applications for funding under the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) undergo rigorous assessment processes by independent grant assessment committees (GACs). Learn about their role and the people who are involved.

A merit-based selection process

An independent assessment of grants determines the projects that are to be funded through the MRFF.

Independent assessment is conducted by expert reviewers in their capacity as members of GACs. Independent review by suitably qualified and experienced experts enables decisions about the allocation of MRFF funding to be based on merit and alignment with assessment criteria.

What are MRFF GACs?

Decisions on which projects should receive MRFF grant funding are based on the assessments of independent GACs.

GACs are set up by the agencies that administer MRFF grant opportunities – the [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#) and the [Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources \(Business Grants Hub\)](#).

GACs bring together national and international assessors to consider applications against technical and non-technical assessment criteria, with a strong focus on impact and value. The robust methodology underpinning the assessment process, and high-quality advice from experts sitting on GACs, support the MRFF in identifying high-impact projects that are most likely to deliver health and economic benefits for Australians.

The scientific and other technical expertise of GAC members is integral to the generation of knowledge and innovation through the MRFF, maintaining the integrity of science and supporting the best health and medical research in Australia.

Grant assessment process

Grant Assessment Committee Briefings

- Emphasise to GAC members that MRFF is unique, with different objectives and criteria to that of other funders – how does this reflect in expert assessment?
- Documents provided – application documents, grant opportunity guidelines, scoring matrices

GAC scoring

- Spokesperson model
 - Each application scored by nominated assessors
 - If there is a low number of applications, all applications may be assessed by all assessors
 - Spokesperson allocated to lead discussion at the committee meeting
 - Everyone scores/rescores all the short-listed applications
- Committee Chair/s and the Consumer Representative are usually non-scoring members. However, in some situations the Consumer Representative can also score if they are confident with assessing the methodology and capacity; those with lived-experience are invited to provide comments.

Assessment of applications against criteria

Assessment Criteria	Relevant Grant Proposal section
Project impact (40%)	A – Project impact F – Measures of success statement
Project methodology (30%)	B – Project methodology C – Milestones and Performance Indicators
Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30%)	D – Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project
Overall Value and Risk of the Project (non-weighted)	E - Overall Value and Risk of the Project (risk management plan and partner funding) F – Measures of success statement

Threshold for funding:

- NHMRC: 4 or higher against all technical criteria, at least ‘Good’ for Overall Value and Risk
- BGH: 5 or higher against all technical criteria, at least ‘Good’ for Overall Value and Risk

Assessment criteria scoring matrices

MRFF Scoring Matrix for the Technical Assessment Criteria – Targeted Call for Research

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.

Assessing Indigenous health research excellence

The scoring matrix includes guidance on the assessment of Indigenous health research excellence.

Assessment Criterion 9: Project Impact

SCORE						
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensively and convincingly addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity and will deliver against all desired outcomes is informed by an exemplary analysis of existing and ongoing studies in the field demonstrates broad and meaningful involvement of consumers, community, and/or research end-users in the research journey* demonstrates broad and meaningful involvement of an appropriate range of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) if successful, will rapidly and significantly improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement are highly relevant and meaningful to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strongly addresses the objectives of the grant opportunity and will deliver against all desired outcomes is informed by a thorough analysis of existing and ongoing studies in the field demonstrates meaningful involvement of consumers, community, and/or research end-users in all key aspects of the research journey* demonstrates meaningful involvement of relevant partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) if successful, will rapidly improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement are very relevant and meaningful to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all, or almost all, objectives of the grant opportunity with only minor concerns. Will deliver outcomes that are relevant to the desired outcomes is informed by a good analysis of existing and ongoing studies in the field, with a few very minor concerns demonstrates consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in a number of key aspects of the research journey* demonstrates good involvement of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) if successful, will improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement are relevant and meaningful to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses a number of the objectives of the grant opportunity to a varying degree. Will deliver outcomes that are relevant to a number of the desired outcomes is generally informed by existing and ongoing studies in the field, with several minor concerns demonstrates consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in a number of aspects of the research journey* demonstrates involvement of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) in some aspects of the research. if successful, is likely to improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement are likely to be relevant and meaningful to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not convincingly address any of 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 studies in the field, with significant or major concerns demonstrates limited consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in the research journey* demonstrates narrow or otherwise limited involvement of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) if successful, may improve health outcomes some outcomes in the Measures of Success statement may contribute to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 studies in the field, and raises several major concerns demonstrates minimal consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in limited aspects of the research journey* demonstrates minimal involvement of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) is unlikely to improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement are unlikely to contribute to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity 	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not address the objectives of the grant opportunity is not informed by existing and ongoing studies in the field does not demonstrate consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in any aspect of the research journey* does not demonstrate meaningful involvement of partners (e.g. commercial, health services delivery, multi-disciplinary, policy) will not improve health outcomes outcomes in the Measures of Success statement will not contribute to the goal and aims of the grant opportunity

Rating scale for assessment criterion: Overall Value and Risk

The following rating scale is used as a guide to rate an application against the Overall Value and Risk criterion. The rating scale provides indicators that are sampled to guide appropriate rating of each application: it is not necessary for every indicator relating to a given rating to be met for that rating to be awarded.

Rating	Descriptor
Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application provides excellent overall value. The research is an excellent investment that will significantly contribute to MRFF priorities and is a highly efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources. The identified outcomes and results in the MRFF Measures of Success statement will significantly contribute to the Initiative’s goal and aims. The proposed budget is detailed, aligns very well with the scope and scale of the proposed project, and is sufficient to undertake all components of work. The applicant’s risk management plan is well considered and appropriate to the project. If provided, partner contributions will support completion of the project and likely adoption of the research findings.
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application provides good overall value. The research is a good investment that will contribute to MRFF priorities and is an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources. The identified outcomes and results in the MRFF Measures of Success statement will contribute to the Initiative’s goal and aims. The proposed budget, with some minor shortcomings, is substantiated and will meet the scope and scale of the proposed project. The applicant’s risk management plan is appropriate to the project, with some minor shortcomings. If provided, partner contributions may support completion of the project and likely adoption of the research findings.
Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application provides marginal overall value. The research is a poor investment that will not contribute to MRFF priorities and is a not an efficient, effective, economical or ethical use of public resources. The identified outcomes and results in the MRFF Measures of Success statement will not contribute to the Initiative’s goal and aims. The proposed budget is higher than expected for a project of the same scale and scope, with some line items questionable. If provided, partner contributions will not support completion of the project and likely adoption of the research findings.

Outcomes Process

- GAC recommendations provided by hub Delegate to the Department delegate
- Grant offers are signed off by the Department delegate
- The Minister for Health and Aged Care is notified
- Grants are announced
 - Processes for notifying applicants are being reviewed
- What feedback is provided to applicants?
 - Feedback varies between the two hubs and is currently under review

You might have noticed.....

More grant opportunities ‘bunching together’ with common opening and closing periods

- Trying to be a bit more predictable
- Taking into consideration all holiday periods
- But also functioning within bounds of when money needs to be spent
 - Stemming from the MRFF Act, we do need to expend funds in certain time periods which is different from the NHMRC
 - Progress made to ‘get ahead’ on disbursement of money which will assist in ensuring longer opening times

Mostly longer opening periods – aiming for 4 – 6 months

Two different grant administration hubs –Business Grants Hub and NHMRC

- Different processes (business reasons)
- Work is ongoing to standardise processes

Continuous feedback loops...we are listening and learning

- Receive feedback via AMRAB consultation processes
- Seek and receive feedback from sector, including through structured processes
- Observing which grant opportunities generate most interest, which had challenges
- Identifying gaps in funding opportunities
- Scanning the environment for emerging issues and unmet needs
- We do have some system limitations, but address what we can, when we can





Managing MRFF grants

Misha Hutchings, Assistant Director of Grants Management Office

- managing grant agreements through reporting and variations
- monitoring grantee performance and compliance with the grant agreement
- managing risks and issues



Project reporting



Progress and final reports are essential for ensuring achievement of grant opportunity objectives and outcomes

Health wants to assess whether project is on track and within budget, and to identify whether there is a risk to the project not meeting its objectives

Soon to release updated Progress Report and Final Report forms



Tips

State the simple facts about project progress to date

Keep it jargon free--not too detailed or scientific

Provide enough information to enable the Department to gauge progress against milestones and objectives

Do not use progress reports to request variations

If you're unable to submit a progress report by the agreed deadline, contact the hub or consider whether a variation request might be necessary

In addition to risks and mitigation strategies, do highlight your wins and newsworthy findings

Varying the project and grant agreement



Recently launched - MRFF Grant Variation Policy

Available on Department of Health and Aged Care website

Applies to all MRFF grants regardless of hub administration

NHMRC procedural appendix is available, an equivalent for BGH-administered grants is under development

BGH variations request form is also under development



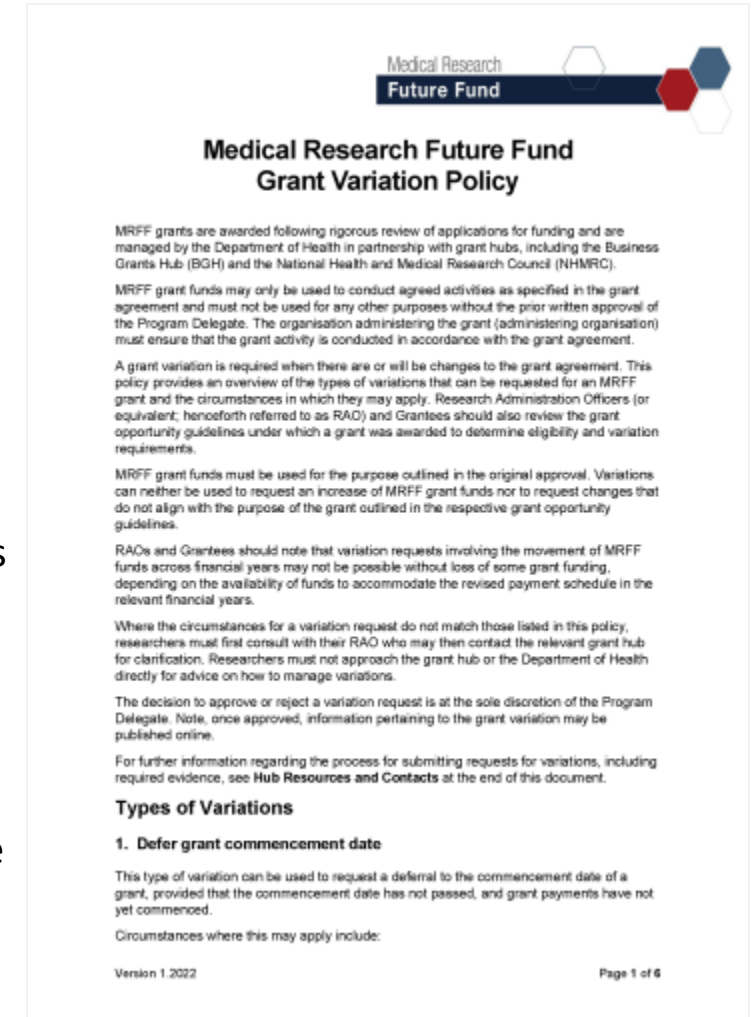
Tips

Requests should be well justified—policy outlines examples of relevant circumstances and evidence requirements

State as plainly as possible the issue, the proposed solution and what is being requested

Submit requests proactively at least one month before the proposed effective date

Ensure you're familiar with the guidelines and content of the agreement whilst drafting your variation



Upcoming post-award developments

Reports

Streamlining project reporting

- for NHMRC-administered grants, will align project reporting timing with financial reporting to eliminate requests for duplicate information.
- for all MRFF grants, revised report templates to make them clearer and easier to complete with each successive report

Variations

Streamlining variation process

- release forms to guide content development and procedures to support proactive, complete and timely submission of requests, and also to allow for timely review & consideration of requests

Q&A



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Thank you for your time