TARGETED CALL FOR RESEARCH

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Go to page 22 for the objectives of this Targeted Call for Research.

Applications for this Targeted Call for Research open on 14 December 2012 and close at 15:00hrs (AEST) on Wednesday 10 April 2013.

Late applications will not be accepted.

This document must be read in conjunction with the Targeted Call for Research: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Advice and Instructions to Applicants.
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PART 1 - NHMRC FUNDING RULES

1 Introduction

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia’s leading funding agency promoting the development and maintenance of public and individual health standards. It is established under the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992, (the NHMRC Act) which is available on the NHMRC website at:

The object of the NHMRC Act is to make provision for a national body to pursue activities designed to:

- raise the standard of individual and public health throughout Australia;
- foster the development of consistent health standards between the States and Territories;
- foster medical research and training and public health research and training throughout Australia; and
- foster consideration of ethical issues relating to health.

The NHMRC Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) describes the agency’s strategic objectives and provides the context within which its funding schemes operate. NHMRC’s strategy for health and medical research is to invest in the highest quality research, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research.

Further information on the Strategic Plan can be found at:

NHMRC will only support excellence in research because the best outcomes flow from the best research. NHMRC is committed to all research relevant to health (including biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research) and recognises that multidisciplinary approaches are needed to solve the complex problems of health.

These rules apply to all NHMRC funding schemes. They were designed to provide researchers and the Research Administration Officers (RAOs) ease of access and consistency across funding schemes.

These rules must be read in conjunction with Part 2 - Scheme-Specific Information and the relevant Advice and Instructions to Applicants documents.
2 Enquiries

Enquiries about the content of NHMRC Funding Rules should be addressed to your Administering Institution’s RAO in the first instance. If further assistance is required, please contact the Research Help Centre on 1800 500 983, or at help@nhmrc.gov.au or refer to the relevant funding scheme web page on the NHMRC website:

Applicants must not contact grant review panel members or external assessors in relation to their application, or the peer review process. Doing so may constitute a breach of The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007 (the Code) (refer to subsection 2d) and the application may be excluded from further consideration. Applicants are to direct any queries concerning the peer review process to their Institution’s Research Office.

3 Submitting an Application

All applications must be submitted electronically using NHMRC’s Research Grant Management System (RGMS) at:

Applicants who are not registered RGMS users should submit a new user request via the RGMS login page at https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au/, or contact help@nhmrc.gov.au for more information.

When completing an application, refer to - Advice and Instructions to Applicants documents available from https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply-funding. Templates of the application forms are also available at:

For help in learning to use RGMS, applicants are advised to use RGMS Tutor, a training tool, available at the RGMS Library within RGMS at:

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of application, as this will be used as the prime source of information available to the peer review panel.

Applications must be certified and submitted by an NHMRC registered Administering Institution. Further information on becoming an Administering Institution can be found in the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy at:

It is important to check the closing dates for the funding schemes you wish to apply to. The closing dates for NHMRC funding schemes can be found at:

Applicants should note that Administering Institutions may have a submission date well in advance of NHMRC’s closing date, and should consider relevant institutional timeframes when preparing the application.
Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered by NHMRC. Once submitted to NHMRC, the application will be considered final and no changes will be permitted.

Further information in relation to the completion of the application is located in the Library section of RGMS.

**Retracted Publications**

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, applicants must advise NHMRC of the retraction at the earliest opportunity by email (help@nhmrc.gov.au) with an appropriate explanation regarding the retraction. Applicants are required to send this information to NHMRC through their RAO.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's Track Record, that information must be immediately recorded in their Profile & CV in RGMS.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, applicants should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, applicants choose not to withdraw the application, they should make their reasons clear in their communications with NHMRC.

### 3.1 Profile and CV

RGMS provides an online Profile and CV function. This function must be used when applying for all types of grants in RGMS. Relevant information from the Profile and CV will be uploaded automatically into the application form. It is therefore important that the Profile and CV are up to date.

NHMRC has made a significant investment to ensure that RGMS has sufficient capacity for all applicants to have adequate access to the system to prepare their applications in a timely manner. However, congestion management may be necessary during times of extreme load on the system. To avoid any inconvenience applicants are encouraged to complete their Profile and CV as early as possible following the opening of applications for the funding round.

### 3.2 Withdrawal of Applications

Applicants may withdraw their application at any time in writing, through their Administering Institution’s Research Office to NHMRC.

### 3.3 Incomplete, False or Misleading Applications

All details in the application, particularly concerning any current grants and other applications, must be current and accurate at the time of application.

Under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. Such action can be punishable by up to 12 months imprisonment.

Examples of false or misleading information in an application include, but are not restricted to:

a) providing a dishonest statement regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought;

b) providing incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding;

c) providing fictitious track records; and
d) falsifying claims in publication records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

If NHMRC believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional, it may refer the matter for appropriate legal action.

3.4 Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Institutions that administer grants, as well as Chief Investigators (CIs), are bound by the conditions of the NHMRC Funding Agreement (Funding Agreement), and through this agreement by the requirements of the Code available at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39.

The purpose of the Code, which was issued by NHMRC in partnership with the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, is to guide institutions and researchers in responsible research practices. The Code promotes integrity in research and provides a mechanism by which a breach of the Code or an incident of research misconduct can be resolved.

All institutions must have a mechanism in place to handle and investigate research misconduct. All staff should be aware of this process. Researchers who become aware of research misconduct should follow the process outlined in the Code and can report on scientific misconduct by completing an e-form available from the NHMRC website at: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/contact-us/complaint-form.

Administering Institutions are required to inform NHMRC of cases of research misconduct and NHMRC may exclude these applications from further assessment if the applicant is found to have committed serious research misconduct.

3.5 Removal of Applications

NHMRC reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to remove applications from further consideration.

Exclusion of applications may take place at any time during the assessment process if they contravene these Funding Rules.

The application must:

a) be submitted using RGMS by the advertised closing date;
b) declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the particular area of the application;
c) be certified and submitted through the appropriate Research Office of an NHMRC approved Administering Institution;
d) be within the specified page limits; and
e) be formatted (including font sizes and margins) as specified in the Advice and Instructions to Applicants document.

Applications may be excluded under the following circumstances:

a) the application is clearly of a standard that will not gain support via the competitive funding scheme (note: NHMRC would only determine an application to be non-competitive on advice from a review panel);
b) the application does not comply with the eligibility criteria specified in either this document or Scheme-Specific Information;
c) the application includes any incomplete, false or misleading information;
d) the application is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) (refer to sections 3 and 51 of the NHMRC Act);
e) the application does not comply with the requirements of these rules, Scheme-Specific Information, or the Advice and Instructions to Applicants document; and
f) the application involves researcher/s against whom a finding of research misconduct has been made.

3.6 Relative to Opportunity

Peer reviewers’ consideration of relative to opportunity may take into account the amount of time spent as an active researcher; career disruption (see subsection 3.7); available resources; clinical, administrative or teaching workload; relocation of an applicant and his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting; restrictions on publication associated with time spent working in other sectors (e.g., industry, policy and government) and the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question.

A number of the assessment criteria for NHMRC funding schemes are assessed relative to opportunity. This reflects NHMRC’s aim that assessment processes accurately measure an applicant’s track record relative to stage of career, including consideration as to whether productivity and contribution is commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant.

3.7 Career Disruption

Career disruption represents a special category within the assessment of relative to opportunity, and includes pregnancy; major illness; and carer responsibilities including parental leave. Employment outside the research sector including time spent working in industry; clinical, administrative or teaching workload; relocation of laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity are not considered to be career disruption and are considered under relative to opportunity (see subsection 3.6).

4 Confidentiality and Privacy

Section 80 of the NHMRC Act prevents NHMRC Officers (including staff and members of NHMRC Council and committees) from disclosing commercial-in-confidence information acquired in the course of their duties and relating to matters under consideration by NHMRC, unless the disclosure is made in the performance of duties under the NHMRC Act. Information which may properly be regarded as confidential commercial information should be designated as such.

Information comprising the names of successful grant applicants and their Administering Institutions, together with the title of the research project and the funding awarded, may be published in the NHMRC Annual Report and are available through NHMRC’s website. NHMRC may also release information about the areas of research of the grant, funding partners and a brief description of the grant. This information is provided by the applicant in response to the question on the application form designated as Media Summary.
4.1 Privacy

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected by NHMRC in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (the Privacy Act), which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Privacy Act allows.

4.2 Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)

NHMRC is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) and is committed to meeting the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability requirements. Changes to the FOI legislation as of late 2010 have implications for the way in which NHMRC responds to and reports on, requests for information under the FOI Act. The FOI Act provides a legal right of access to any person to obtain documents of Commonwealth agencies. Access to documents may only be refused where the FOI Act provides a legal basis for the refusal, such as where the documents are exempt.

However, subject to its FOI obligations, NHMRC remains committed to maintaining the confidentiality of grant applications, the peer review process and the privacy of people participating in peer review. If an FOI application is received in relation to peer review documents that contain your personal or business information, NHMRC will take into account the nature of those documents and where appropriate, consult with anyone whose personal information or business information may be affected by the release of those documents (this is known as “third party consultation”).

Sections 27 and 27A of the FOI Act prescribe when third parties must be consulted in relation to the information contained in documents that are subject to an FOI request. In addition, where appropriate and practicable, NHMRC will consult above and beyond those requirements. In the event that you are consulted as a third party, NHMRC will send you a detailed letter seeking your views and giving you a reasonable time to respond.

However, please note that whilst FOI decision-makers are required to take into account third parties’ views on the release or non-release of their information, decision-makers are not bound by those views. Should a decision-maker decide to release a document containing your personal or business information after you have submitted that it should not be released, the FOI Act states that that document must not be released to the FOI applicant until you, as a third party, have exercised and exhausted all your review rights, or chosen not to exercise them. Your review rights consist of:

a) a right to request the NHMRC to review its decision to release the document (called an internal review and conducted by a different decision-maker) or to request the Australian Information Commissioner to review the decision;

b) a right to appeal to the Australian Information Commissioner against an internal review decision if it is adverse; and

c) a right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal against an adverse decision of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Until such time as all those appeal rights are exhausted, the contested document cannot be released.

5 Eligibility

Applications for all NHMRC funding schemes are subject to eligibility rules. Applications which do not meet these eligibility guidelines may be removed from the assessment process. For further information, refer to subsection 3.5 NHMRC Funding Rules (Removal of Applications).

NHMRC may compare the research proposed with Research Support grants it currently funds, and grants provided by other agencies. NHMRC may remove from consideration any application it considers to duplicate research previously, or currently being undertaken.

Additional eligibility criteria may apply and applicants should read this section and its subsections in conjunction with the Scheme-Specific Information.

5.1 Multiple Research Grant Eligibility

Project Grants

Individuals are limited to holding a maximum of six NHMRC Project Grants as a Chief Investigator (CI). A different requirement applies to CIs on Program Grants (please refer to subsection 5.1 Multiple Research Grant Eligibility – Program Grants).

The maximum number of Project Grant applications a CI (CIA-CIJ) may submit in any year will be six, less the number of NHMRC Project Grants that are scheduled to continue in the year that any new grants will commence. For example, if an investigator, at the time of submission of an application holds four NHMRC Project Grants, one of which will finish at the end of the year in which applications close, the investigator may submit up to three applications.

Where a CI (CIA-CIJ) has submitted applications in excess of the maximum number of grants and applications for which he/she is eligible, all applications that include that investigator as a CI will be automatically ineligible and removed from the assessment process; refer to subsection 3.5 NHMRC Funding Rules (Removal of Applications). It is the responsibility of all CIs to ensure that this condition is adhered to prior to submission of an application.

Program Grants

Full-time Program Grant CIs are not permitted to hold, or apply for more than one Project Grant.

Applicants should note that there can only be one Program Grant holder named as a CI on any Project Grant application. Program Grant CIs cannot be the only (sole) CI named on a Project Grant or a Project Grant application: there must be at least one other CI who is not also a CI on a Program Grant receiving funding in any year in which the Project Grant is funded.

A researcher can be a part-time CI on one or two Program Grants. Part-Time Program Grant CIs who hold one Program Grant are permitted to hold up to two Project Grants. Part-Time Program Grant CIs who hold two Program Grants are not permitted hold or apply for any Project Grants.

New Program Grant awardees who are named as a CI on more than one Project Grant must submit grant variation requests for all Project Grants they are no longer eligible to hold prior to the commencement of funding for the Program Grant. The Grant Variation Request(s) will need to make the case that the viability of the Project Grant(s) will be maintained.
Targeted and Urgent Calls for Research

Awards of this funding type will not count towards the maximum of six NHMRC Project Grants held as a CI or towards the one Project grant held by CIs that also hold a Program Grant. Applications for other NHMRC funding schemes are subject to conditions outlined in their respective Funding Rules. Time commitments of CIs will be carefully considered in the review of applications.

5.2 Chief Investigators and Research Teams

Note: subsections 5.2 and 5.3 apply to Research Support schemes but do not apply to People Support awards (e.g. Fellowships and Scholarships).

Chief Investigators

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be included as CIs in exceptional circumstances if appropriate for the proposed research project.

The maximum number of CIs allowed on an application is 10.

Unless support for personnel is being sought on the grant, funding for a grant depends on the continuing employment of each of the CIs over the period of the grant.

Chief Investigator A

CIA is the project leader who takes the lead role in the conduct of the research project, and is the investigator who takes responsibility for completion and lodgement of the application.

The Funding Agreement requires the Specified Person (CIA for Research Support schemes) prepare Progress and Final Reports for each Research Activity by the date specified in the Scheme-Specific Information.

Where a CIA requests a transfer of the administrative responsibility for a grant to a new institution, it is the responsibility of the CIA to drive the transfer process and to ensure that the completed transfer request is submitted to NHMRC in a timely manner.

It is generally required that, at the time of application submission, the CIA is an Australian citizen or is a permanent resident of Australia. It is also required that the CIA is based in Australia for the duration of the grant.

NHMRC may waive the requirement to be an Australian citizen or permanent resident where it can be demonstrated that the research is based in Australia and will benefit health and medical research in Australia. Requests to waive this requirement need to be made through the Research Administration Office of the Administering Institution and should be emailed to help@nhmrc.gov.au and marked for the Project Officer for the relevant scheme.

Note: Applicants who have applied for and received waivers for existing NHMRC grants, must again seek a waiver for each application round.

Exception: A CIA who is a New Zealand citizen is not required to seek a waiver if they are based in Australia for the duration of the grant.
Chief Investigators B to J
Researchers who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents in Australia are eligible to apply for a grant as a CI B to J. If they are based in Australia for the duration of the grant, they may be eligible to request a personnel support package.

CIs based overseas are not eligible to draw a salary from a grant unless additional provisions in Scheme-Specific Information state otherwise.

Associate Investigators
An Associate Investigator (AI) is defined as an investigator who provides intellectual input into the research and whose participation warrants inclusion of their name on publications.

Associate Investigators are not able to draw a salary from any grant.

There are no restrictions on individuals who may be named as an AI on an application. However, the maximum number of AIs who can be named is 10 per application.

5.3 Consent to be a Chief Investigator
The CIA must confirm with other CIs (B-J) that they agree to be named on the application. The CIA will provide written evidence (e.g. an email) to the RAO of all CIs’ endorsement of the application. The RAO will certify and submit the application in RGMS (Research Grants Management System).

The RAO should not submit the application to NHMRC until all CIs have completed this step and all relevant consents have been obtained as per this requirement.

5.4 Consent to be an Associate Investigator
The CIA must confirm with all AIs that they agree to be named on the application. Written evidence (e.g. an email), must be obtained from all AIs and provided to the RAO, stating their agreement to be on the application. AIs are not required to endorse an application prior to submission to NHMRC.

The RAO should not submit the application to NHMRC until all the CIA has completed this step and all relevant AI consents have been obtained as per this requirement.

6 Use of NHMRC Funds
Note: Section 6 and its subsections apply to Research Support schemes but do not apply to People Support awards (e.g. Fellowships and Scholarships).

6.1 Access to NHMRC Funding
NHMRC seeks to promote collaboration between researchers and to remove artificial barriers that prevent multidisciplinary and multi-organisational proposals. However, NHMRC contributes funds only to the direct costs of a research project.

To access NHMRC funding, applicants are required to:
- Make a case for NHMRC grant funding in accordance with the Scheme-Specific Information. For further information, refer to section 3 NHMRC Funding Rules (Submitting and Application); and
• Declare the sources, duration and level of funding already held for research as part of the application.

NHMRC funds may be used for (see Appendix A):
• Supporting personnel, where the level of personnel support package requested matches the roles and responsibilities of the position, rather than the expertise of a specific occupant of the position;
• Equipment that is unique to the project and is essential for the project to proceed;
• Direct research costs (DRCs) for the purchase of research materials (not personnel) required to conduct the proposed research;
• Costs of animal agistment that are a direct requirement of the research project; and
• Travel costs directly related to achieving the objectives of the grant.

NHMRC does not fund:
• Research infrastructure that an institution with research as part of its mission would be expected to supply;
• Institutional overheads and administrative charges; or
• The other indirect costs of research.

For more information regarding direct and indirect research costs, refer to the links below:
1. Direct Research Costs – a guide for research and administrative staff:
   http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/admin/nhmrc_direct_research_costs_1209.pdf; and
2. Use of NHMRC Project Grants funds and other Research Support Grants funds for travel, conferences and publications costs:

Further information on the use of NHMRC Funding is available at Appendix A.

6.2 Salary Support for Chief Investigators

NHMRC Research Support awards are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs and in some schemes, salary support for CIs is not offered. However, if applications are seeking salaries for CIs, this should be justified in the proposed budget as being directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research.

Salaries for research staff must be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). Further details on PSPs can be found at:

NHMRC does not support senior research salaries through Research Support schemes. Researchers seeking salaries outside of the range of PSP 1 to 5 must do so via NHMRC’s People Support schemes (ie, Research or Practitioner Fellowships). Information about NHMRC People Support schemes can be found at:

6.3 Registration of Clinical Trials

All NHMRC funded clinical trials must be registered in the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR), or equivalent, prior to commencement of the clinical phase.
Applicants proposing to undertake a randomised controlled trial may request the administrative charge payable for the registration of the trial. Requests for funding of trial registration must be justified in the DRC component of the application.

Information pertaining to the ANZCTR or equivalent, and how to register can be found at: http://www.anzctr.org.au.

6.4 Paid Parental Leave Scheme

All NHMRC awards provide for investigators to undertake research on a part-time basis for all or part of the duration of the grant.

7 Outcome of Application
NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution’s Research Office of the outcome of the application as early as possible following announcement of funding.

NHMRC will publish the following information on its website for all successful grants:
   a) Application Identity;
   b) All CI names;
   c) Administering Institution;
   d) Scientific title and/or simple title;
   e) Broad Research Area;
   f) Funding partners (if relevant); and
   g) Total funding awarded and duration.

NHMRC may publish this information in a manner that allows it to be searched and viewed in a variety of ways, including by CI name, State, Institution and/or Application ID.

The media summary may also be published.

8 Complaints in Relation to the Outcome of Funding Applications
Applicants may contact NHMRC seeking clarification on the outcome of their application for funding, or to state an objection to any part of the process. The complaint must be lodged in writing through the Administering Institution’s Research Office and be received within four weeks of the date of notification.

The complaint should be directed to the Complaints Officer at:

Complaints Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or via email to: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.
The NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints.

The NHMRC policy on complaints can be found at: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/contact-us/complaint-form.

8.1 Formal Complaints to the Commissioner of Complaints

The NHMRC Act provides for the Commissioner not to investigate a complaint where the complainant has not initially applied to the complaints officer as outlined above (see Section 8).

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge a formal complaint with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints, as detailed in Part 8 of the NHMRC Act.

A person whose interests are affected may at any time lodge a complaint under section 59 of the NHMRC Act. Section 61 of the NHMRC Act provides the Commissioner of Complaints with discretion, including where a complainant has not approached the CEO with the complaint, to choose not to investigate and refer the complaint to the CEO.

Complaints to the Commissioner should be addressed to:

NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Formal complaints can be mailed to the above address, or sent by email as a PDF letter to complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

Complaints must be in writing, be signed by the complainant, describe the action complained about and specify the nature of and grounds for the complaint.

Complaints can only be considered against administrative process and not the merits of a particular decision. The grounds of complaint are detailed at section 58 of the NHMRC Act and are that:

a) the action involved a breach of the rules of natural justice;
b) the action was induced or affected by fraud;
c) there was no evidence or other material to justify the action;
d) an irrelevant consideration was taken into account in relation to the action;
e) a relevant consideration was not taken into account in relation to the action;
f) in the course of the action a discretionary power was exercised for a purpose other than the purpose for which the power is conferred;
g) the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in bad faith;
h) in the course of the action, a personal discretionary power was exercised at the direction of another person;
i) the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in accordance with a rule or policy without regard to the merits of the particular case; or
j) the action involved any other exercise of a power in a way that constitutes abuse of the power.

Complainants are advised to contact their RAOs prior to making a complaint to the Commissioner.
The Commonwealth Ombudsman can also investigate complaints about the actions and decisions of Australian Government agencies. For further information please refer to the Commonwealth Ombudsman website at: [http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/).

9 Approvals to be Obtained Prior to Funding Commencing

Funding for an NHMRC Grant (other than Research and Practitioner Fellowships and TRIPs) will not commence until all relevant approvals, particularly in relation to ethics and biosafety, have been received from the appropriate institutional committees and lodged with the Administering Institution's Research Office prior to the commencement of the research. Provisional approvals are not acceptable and no funding will be provided on the basis of a provisional approval.

The grant offer may be withdrawn if ethics approvals are not obtained within six months of the original grant commencement date.

Where an ethics clearance or regulatory approval is not required until the latter years of a Grant and the relevant committee cannot review the proposal without the results of the preliminary findings of the research then, NHMRC approval can be sought for the funds to be released. These requests will be considered by NHMRC on a case by case basis.

Applicants must ensure that where appropriate, a copy of the application is referred to the relevant institutional committees or approval bodies.

The Research Administration Officer, who is responsible for the application, must advise NHMRC when clearances have been granted by the relevant committees.

NHMRC reserves the right to request further information in relation to decisions made in response to an application for ethics committee or biosafety committee approval.

10 Approvals and Licenses

10.1 Research Involving Humans

Research funded by NHMRC that involves human participants must be reviewed by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or an institutional low risk review process in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007* (the National Statement). Consideration must also be given to the Privacy Act.


Human research, in this context, includes research involving any human tissue, no matter what the source, and also includes research in which there is any intervention (physical or psychological) in the normal lives of humans.

All research involving the administration of drugs, chemical agents or vaccines to humans must be considered by a HREC to assess the appropriateness of their use. If such research is part of a clinical trial, then it falls under the responsibility of the Therapeutic Goods Administration...
(TGA) which administers the Clinical Trials Notification/Exemption schemes. Further information on these schemes can be obtained from the TGA: http://www.tga.gov.au/industry/clinical-trials.htm.

In the case of multi-centred clinical trials, the relevant institutions and their HRECs may agree that the primary ethical and scientific assessment be made at one institution/organisation, with copies of the approvals being sent to the other institutions/organisations involved. Further information on multi-centre research approval is provided in the National Statement.

10.2 Human Embryo Research


10.3 Use of Personal Information in Research
Section 95 of the Privacy Act provides that the CEO of NHMRC may, with the approval of the Commissioner, issue guidelines for the protection of privacy in the conduct of medical research. Any research involving humans that uses personal information held by Commonwealth agencies where identified information needs to be used without consent from the individual(s) involved should abide by NHMRC guidelines approved under section 95 of the Privacy Act (section 95 guidelines). In these situations, the proposed medical research must be approved by a properly constituted HREC in accordance with the section 95 guidelines.

NHMRC guidelines approved under section 95A of the Privacy Act (section 95A guidelines) are broader than the section 95 guidelines and apply to the collection, use and disclosure of health information held by organisations in the private sector for the purposes of research or the compilation or analysis of statistics, relevant to public health or public safety, without the consent of the individual(s) involved. Under the section 95A guidelines, a HREC must give approval for the use of this information.

10.4 Research Involving Animals
Research funded by NHMRC that involves the use of animals must be reviewed and approved by a properly constituted Animal Ethics Committee as being in accordance with the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2004 (the Animal Code). The Animal Code is available on the NHMRC website at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ea16.

10.5 Generation or Use of Genetically Modified Organisms
Applicants proposing to undertake research involving genetically modified organisms (GMO) must ensure that all the requirements of the Gene Technology Act 2000 and Gene Technology Regulations 2001 have been met.

In the first instance, applicants should seek advice from their Institutional Biosafety Committee on the level of authorisation needed for any proposed GMO research. Information on the gene
technology regulatory scheme, including the Act and Regulations, is also available from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator website at: http://www.ogtr.gov.au.

11 Considerations Relevant to NHMRC Funded Research

11.1 Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Ethics applications for research that involves the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be developed with reference to the Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003). Further information is available from the NHMRC website at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e52.

11.2 Use of Carcinogenic or Highly Toxic Chemicals


11.3 Use of Cultured Cell Lines for Research

Concern exists within the scientific community regarding the impact of contamination with mycoplasma and other cells in eukaryotic cell lines and the use of incorrectly characterised cells lines, on the validity of research outcomes. NHMRC recommends that researchers employ quality assurance procedures to ensure their eukaryotic cell lines are free from mycoplasma.

11.4 Use of datasets for research purposes


11.5 Nagoya Protocol

Applicants should be mindful of the Nagoya protocol and the likelihood of Australia becoming a signatory. The protocol seeks to establish a legally-binding framework for biotechnology researchers and other scientists to gain access to genetic resources. It also establishes a framework for researchers and developers to share any benefits from the use of genetic resources, or traditional knowledge associated with those resources, with the provider country. More information can be obtained at: http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/access/biological-diversity.html.

11.6 Defence Trade Controls Act 2012

12 Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research

The Statement on *Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because many consumers and researchers recognise the contribution that consumers can make to health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Inc (CHF) and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement. Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research. Applicants should refer to the CHF and NHMRC Statement available at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r22-r23-r33-r34.

NHMRC and CHF are currently revising the Statement. Public consultation on a draft revised Statement is scheduled for the first half of 2013.

13 Administration of NHMRC Grants

Any enquiries regarding the administration of NHMRC grants should be directed firstly to the applicant’s RAO, then by email to postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au.

13.1 NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the Funding Agreement which is an agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. In signing the Signature Block for Schedules, the Administering Institution is agreeing to the conditions contained in the Funding Agreement and the Schedule.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/administering-grants/nhmrc-funding-agreement.

A grant may not commence, nor grant funds be expended, prior to:
- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution being in place; and
- the appropriate Signature Block for Schedules being signed by the signatories to the Funding Agreement, or an appropriate delegate, and signed and executed by NHMRC.

13.2 Payments

Subject to appropriations provided by the Commonwealth Department of Finance and Deregulation, payment of funds will be made to Administering Institutions in regular instalments, in accordance with approved payment arrangements made for assistance provided from the MREA. Funds must be used only for the purposes approved and detailed in the Funding Agreement and its Schedule.

Payments will commence once any outstanding reporting obligations have been met by the CIs and the Administering Institution.

13.3 Research Misconduct

Research funded by NHMRC must comply with the Code, which can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39.
The Funding Agreement contains provisions for the handling of allegations of research misconduct. Applicants and grant holders are referred to the NHMRC Policy on Actions to be taken in the event of research misconduct involving NHMRC funding. This is available at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/funding/funded/manage/policy/policy_research_misconduct_nhmrc_funding.pdf.

13.4 Intellectual Property


14 Reporting on NHMRC Grants

14.1 Progress Reports and Financial Reports

Annual progress and financial reports will be required by 30 April of each year in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant, a final report and financial acquittal will be required within six months after the period of funding ends.

Failure to report within timeframes may also affect eligibility to apply for and receive funding.

Additional reporting requirements and reporting exemptions may apply: please check the Scheme-Specific Information for the scheme (e.g. People Support Schemes).

NHMRC has designated Section A of the End of Grant – Final Report as information that NHMRC may publicly release. Use of this information may include publication on the NHMRC website, publicity (including release to the media), and the promotion of research achievements.

All information provided to NHMRC in progress and final reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

The reporting requirements are included in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement and can also be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/administering-grants/progress-and-final-reporting.

NHMRC may suspend payment of further instalments of:

- the relevant grant, and/or
- all grants held by the CIA, and/or
- all grants administered by that Administering Institution until the appropriate reports have been received and assessed as satisfactory.

In addition, where an institution fails to submit satisfactory reports as required, NHMRC may also terminate funding and determine that all or part of the funding must be repaid. Alternatively, NHMRC may withhold the remainder of the Institution’s payments under the scheme for the current year or initiate recovery of funding.
15 Open Access Statement

15.1 Dissemination of Scientific Results

The Australian Government makes a major investment in research to support its essential role in improving the wellbeing of our society. To maximise the benefits from research, findings need to be disseminated as broadly as possible to allow access by other researchers and the wider community.

NHMRC acknowledges that researchers take into account a wide range of factors in deciding on the best outlets for publications arising from their research. Such considerations include the status and reputation of a journal or publisher, the peer review process of evaluating their research outputs, access by other stakeholders to their work, the likely impact of their work on users of research and the further dissemination and production of knowledge. Taking heed of these considerations, both organisations want to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the research supported by their grants, in the most effective manner and at the earliest opportunity.

NHMRC encourages researchers to consider the benefits of depositing their data and any publications arising from a research project in an appropriate subject and/or institutional repository wherever such a repository is available to the researcher(s). If a researcher is not intending to deposit the data from a project in a repository within a twelve-month period, they should include the reasons in the project’s Final Report. Any research outputs that have been or will be deposited in appropriate repositories should be identified in the Final Report.

Section 4 of the Code, outlines these and other responsibilities of Institutions and researchers, which apply to all forms of dissemination.

Grant recipients must ensure that they comply with NHMRC policy on the dissemination of research findings, which is available at:

16 Resources

16.1 NHMRC Resources

The role of NHMRC at:

Access the Research Grants Management System (RGMS) at:

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007 at:

Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes at:

Criteria for Health and Medical Research of Indigenous Australians at:
NHMRC Administering Institutions policy at:

NHMRC complaints handling policy:

NHMRC Funding Agreement at:

NHMRC policy on the dissemination of research findings:

NHMRC Strategic Plan 2010-2012 at:

Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research at:

16.2 Legislation
Criminal Code Act 1995 at:

Freedom of Information Act 1982 at:

National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act) at:

Privacy Act 1988 at:

Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002 (PHCR Act) at:

Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002 (RIHE Act) at:
PART 2 – SCHEME-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

TARGETED CALL FOR RESEARCH: FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

1 Introduction to this Scheme

The NHMRC Strategic Plan includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing as a priority research area, and the organisation has committed to expend at least 5 per cent of its research funding in this priority area. Further information on the Strategic Plan can be found at: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/nh132](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/nh132).

NHMRC’s *Road Map II: A strategic framework for improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research* (2010) identifies several key action areas for research aimed at closing the gap between the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the overall Australian population. *Road Map II* also supports a partnership in research translation, that is, research that generates ‘accessible and effective clinical and public health medicine in partnership with the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector’.

As part of the implementation of *Road Map II*, NHMRC’s priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health revolve around building capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and setting research priorities that are relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The NHMRC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Health Research Council of New Zealand recently signed a trilateral letter of intent, to continue the ongoing cooperation between the three countries to improve Indigenous people’s health, established under the original Tripartite Agreement. NHMRC, CIHR and HRC will now work together to implement initiatives that will encourage researchers to make links throughout the three nations for knowledge and best practice sharing, develop linkages with mentors and develop capacity, particularly of junior researchers.

In order to promote such international research collaboration, knowledge transfer and capacity building, NHMRC may support opportunities to promote international exchange and collaboration under the Tripartite Agreement where synergies are identified across existing funded research projects including those that may be funded under this TCR.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an overarching term used to describe a range of cognitive, physical, mental, behavioural, learning and developmental disorders. FASD results from the consumption of alcohol in pregnancy with negative impacts on health and wellbeing observed across the breadth of the Australian community.

The Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC), and NHMRC’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advisory Committee (ATSIHAC) have identified the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) as one of the highest priorities in Indigenous health, since a large proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
population is less than 15 years of age, the rates of teenage pregnancy are high and there is evidence of risky alcohol consumption in pregnancy. However, there is limited understanding of the impact of these trends and no national program or coordinated national approach to address this issue.

In response to the recognition that there is limited understanding of the impact of these trends and no national program or coordinated national approach to address the issue of potential impacts of alcohol and other drugs on the fetus, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) will provide a total of up to $2.5m for targeted research.

Progress in addressing this issue would also support the Australian Government’s Closing the Gap - Life expectancy initiative which can be found at:  

Further Information
Enquiries about the content of the Scheme Specific Information – Targeted Call for Research: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be addressed to your Administering Institution’s Research Administration Officer (RAO) in the first instance.

If further assistance is required, please contact the Research Help Centre on 1800 500 983 or by email at help@nhmrc.gov.au.

Alternatively, go direct to the NHMRC Targeted Call for Research webpage on the NHMRC website:  

Enquiries may also be addressed to the Research Help Centre at:

  NHMRC National Health and Medical Research Council
  GPO Box 1421
  CANBERRA ACT 2601
2 Description and Objectives

Road Map II and the aims of NHMRC in running this scheme
Applicants should note that, in order to meet the objectives of Road Map II, the aims of NHMRC in running this Targeted Call for Research (TCR) are to:

- Support appropriate methods of effective policy and program delivery in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health;
- Promote collaboration, networking and partnerships in research through targeted intervention and evaluation research;
- Create partnerships with service providers, in particular the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services sector; and
- Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers and thereby grow the current research workforce.

The Objectives of the Research Supported by this TCR
This TCR provides support for research with a primary focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (NHMRC’s Priority Research Area of Indigenous Health).

The research must involve human participants. This TCR does not support research programs that are only (solely) laboratory based research, including animal-based research or research based on animal models.

The objectives of the research include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To understand the multiple factors that contribute to FASD;
- To evaluate the impact on FASD of current programs and interventions;
- To determine which interventions are more likely than others to be successful;
- To develop and test new interventions to tackle the determinants of FASD;
- To develop and test new models of service delivery and clinical management to address FASD;
- To investigate the practicalities of implementing and maintaining interventions; and
- To understand longer-term outcomes (in relation to education, justice, health and employment) for children and adults affected by FASD.

The desired outcomes from the research are to provide an evidence base to support the development and implementation of culturally appropriate programs and interventions to address the problem of FASD.

3 Funding

3.1 Duration of Funding
NHMRC has allocated a total of up to $2.5m to support a small number of funded research projects in response to the FASD TCR. NHMRC research grants of up to 5 years duration will be offered, but the period requested must be justified within the application.
Applicants are advised to justify clearly the requested budget, paying particular attention to any research cost(s) which may be specific to this field of research and specially needed for this TCR.

NHMRC funding is provided by the Australian Government in accordance with the conditions specified in the Funding Agreement. For further information, refer to subsection 11.2 NHMRC Funding Rules (NHMRC Funding Agreement).

4 Critical Dates
Applicants applying for funding under this TCR should note the following critical dates.

Applications for this TCR will open in the NHMRC Research Grants Management System (RGMS) on 14 December 2012.

Applications must be submitted by 15:00hrs (AEST) 10 April 2013.

Late applications or changes to applications after the closing date 15:00hrs (AEST) 10 April 2013, will not be accepted.

The following timeline for this TCR is proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening of the TCR</td>
<td>14 December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close of submissions of applications</td>
<td>15:00hrs (AEST) 10 April 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Peer Review</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Additional Eligibility
The following eligibility criteria are in addition to those in section 5 NHMRC Funding Rules (Eligibility) and should be read conjunctonally.

Chief Investigators
Applicants can apply as a CI on a maximum of three (3) applications only.

Chief Investigator A
Applicants can only apply as Chief Investigator A (CIA) on one application under this TCR. Applicants who wish to apply as a CI on multiple applications (up to three (3) applications) can do so as CIB-CIJ ensuring that they are listed as CIA on one application only.

Citizenship Waivers
Applicants without Australian Citizenship should refer to Part 1 - NHMRC Funding Rules, subsection 5.2. Applicants who have applied for and received waivers for existing NHMRC grants, must again seek a waiver for this TCR.

6 Assessment of Applications
All applications under this TCR will be regarded by NHMRC as new applications for funding. Applications will undergo rigorous peer review, whereby there will be scrutiny and evaluation by a Grant Review Panel who are experts in the field(s) of the application. This process also ensures value for money for all grants recommended for funding. Therefore, applicants can
expect that any matter relevant to the scientific quality, significance and innovation, applicant track record(s) and budget may be brought to the consideration of their application by assessors and the Grant Review Panel.

6.1 NHMRC Peer Review Panel

The GRP will include experts from relevant disciplines who will:
- review applications against the assessment criteria;
- review budgets; and
- provide a ranked list of applications with recommendations for funding.

GRP members will bring their expertise and experience to the evaluation of the merit of applications for funding. All application will be subject to assessment by experts with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

In developing their applications, applicants should take into account the nature of peer review. GRP members may draw as appropriate from the research literature and from their breadth of knowledge in the relevant discipline(s) and field(s).

NHMRC may seek additional advice on any grant application.

Issues not relevant to the scientific quality, significance, track record and budget are not to be considered. For further information, refer to subsection 6.1 NHMRC Funding Rules (Formal Complaints to the Commissioner of Complaints).

The GRP will rank the applications and make its recommendations based on its judgement about the overall merits of each application against the assessment criteria using the scoring rubric (at Appendix B) and having due consideration for the Indigenous Criteria. For further information, refer to subsection 6.3 The Indigenous Criteria.

Consistent with the Indigenous Criteria, research must focus on achieving health gains, be built on collaborative partnerships with communities and across sectors (education, employment, housing), and support consultation, building of trust, and translation of findings into action.

The GRP will submit a ranked list of applications for consideration by Research Committee and Council In accordance with Subsection 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, the CEO accepts Council’s recommendation (as advised by Research Committee) and then formally seeks the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC’s approval to expend public money from the MREA.

6.2 Assessment Criteria
Applications for the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples TCR will be assessed against the following criteria (percentage values of the maximum score are provided in brackets).

i) Scientific quality of the project including feasibility (40%);
ii) Significance of the project and expected outcomes (40%); and
iii) Track record of the team as an indication of ability to undertake research and deliver outcomes specific to this TCR – relative to opportunity (20%).

In scoring applications against the assessment criteria, the FASD TCR Grant Review Panel will also consider how well the application addresses and meets The Indigenous Criteria (See Criterion 2 below). All applications received in response to this TCR must address The Indigenous Criteria. For further information, refer to Part 2, subsection 6.3 - The Indigenous Criteria.

Criterion One
Scientific quality of the project including feasibility (40%)
- Strong scientific rationale for pursuing the questions or gaps in knowledge that are being addressed. Applicants are proposing original research that is complementary to research underway elsewhere.
- Proposed methods are appropriate to answer the research question(s).

Criterion Two
Significance of the project and expected outcomes (40%)
- Success is likely to lead to significant new knowledge.
- The application of new ideas, procedures, technologies, programs or health policy settings to the objectives of the scheme outlined in section 2.
- The strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the Indigenous Criteria.

Criterion Three
Track record of the team as an indication of ability to undertake research and deliver outcomes specific to this TCR – relative to opportunity (20%)
- The applicant’s previous research demonstrates that the research team is capable of achieving the proposed project.
- Team members have established a high quality track record relevant to this field of research.

Track record may encompass the national and international standing of the applicant(s) based upon their research achievements, including but not limited to:

- Research outputs – most recent significant publications; publications that illustrate innovation and significance to past accomplishments; impact or outcome of previous research achievements, including effects on health care practices or policy; awards or honours in recognition of achievements;
- Contribution to discipline or area - invitations to speak at international meetings, editorial appointments, specialist and high level health policy committee appointments; and
- Other research-related achievements, such as:
  - Influence on clinical/health policy or practice, or provision of influential advice to health authorities and government.
  - Impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes; e.g. via mainstream media, the community or industry involvement.
The following factors will be considered when assessing the research-related achievements of applicants of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Descent:

i) NHMRC is committed to developing career paths for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in health research. This commitment is outlined in the NHMRC Road Map II: a Strategic Framework for Improving the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People through Research, in particular Action Area 1: Improving the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NHMRC programs and Action Area 2: Capacity Exchange.

ii) It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will also be considered when assessing research output and track record.

Relative to Opportunity
Track record is considered in relation to opportunity, including career disruptions.

Track Record will be judged on the most recent five years. For further information, refer to subsections 3.6 and 3.7 NHMRC Funding Rules.

Further information on the scoring of applications against the scoring rubric is available at Appendix B.

6.3 The Indigenous Criteria
As part of its commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has established certain requirements and processes which are designed to ensure that research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is not only of the highest scientific merit but that it is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

All applicants proposing to conduct research that relates to the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data must be aware of, and refer to the following documents in formulating their proposal:

APPENDIX A: NHMRC BUDGET GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT GRANTS

Introduction
NHMRC funds the direct costs of the research proposal based on advice from peer review. This document is designed to assist NHMRC grant applicants in identifying resources which can or cannot be funded using NHMRC funds, and to assist applicants in the preparation of the budget component of their grant application.

Level of funding
Applicants are advised to clearly justify the requested budget paying particular attention to any research cost(s) which may be specific to this field of research and specially needed for their application.

The PRP advises NHMRC of a budget for each application. The PRPs recommendation is based on the budget requested by the applicant, the requirements of the proposal as assessed by the PRP and its knowledge of the costs associated with the research.

Grant applicants are required to:

- make a case for NHMRC grant funding in accordance with the Scheme-Specific Information.
- declare the sources, duration and level of funding already held for research.

Where co-funding has already been secured, applicants should indicate the components of the budget for which NHMRC support is being sought.

Budget considerations
There are three areas to consider when preparing a budget proposal:

1. support for personnel engaged in the conduct of the research;
2. direct research costs; and
3. equipment costs necessary to conduct the research.

These and other budget considerations are discussed below.

Support for Personnel
Researchers who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents in Australia are eligible to apply for an NHMRC grant as CI B to J.

Associate Investigators are not permitted to draw salary from a NHMRC grant.

Casual computing and similar casual staff requirements, which will be contracted at hourly rates, should be included under DRCs.
Funds to support personnel are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The level of PSP requested in an application should match the roles and responsibilities of the position, rather than the expertise of a specific person whom the CIs may intend to appoint to the position. Information on PSP amounts can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/projects/budget.htm.

Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) are designed to contribute to salary and salary on-costs (e.g. payroll tax, workers compensation, leave loading, compulsory and contributory superannuation and long service leave). Administering Institutions should seek their own advice on any potential taxation implications.

All applicant CIs must indicate the proportion (%) of their research time that they will commit to NHMRC funded research for the currently submitted grant application. Further information on how to indicate the amount of time proposed to be devoted to the grant, should it be awarded, is provided in the Advice and Instructions to Applicants document.

Applicants may apply for a full PSP provided that 80% or more of the occupant’s time will be devoted to the Project.

An annual indexation will be applied to PSPs, based on the Australian Government Wage Cost Index (WCI).

**Direct Research Costs**

DRCs are awarded for the purchase of research materials (not personnel) required to conduct the proposed research. For example: items such as consumables, printed materials, microfilms, survey or field expenses, purchase costs for animals and computing charges.

DRCs are available in multiples of $5,000. Individual items of equipment costing less than $10,000 must be requested as DRC.

All requests for funds must be fully justified, especially requests for:

- programming, preparation and data storage or the hire of external computer time. Funds will not be provided for the hire of computer time on a computer within the applicant's institution,
- covering the liability insurance for human clinical trials; and
- administrative charges associated with registration of clinical trials.


**Using Research Facilities**

**Biospecimen and Associated Data**

Requests for biospecimens and associated data must be fully justified in the DRC component of the application form.
The NHMRC will support the costs of biospecimens and associated data that are a direct requirement of the research project. Biospecimen and associated data costs must be based upon published cost recovery schedules of biobanks or similar accredited bodies (e.g. Pathology services). An indicative list of these is available below. Such costs will typically represent cost recovery for the costs of collection, processing, storage and distribution. Consideration for additional project development and management costs for utilising biospecimens and associated data may be requested.

Given the significant expansion in biobank activities in Australia in the last decade, any future proposal for prospective funding of a biobank must specify why the samples cannot already be sourced from an existing biobank. Any proposal to establish a new biospecimen collection should seek to use infrastructure or services provided by biobanks or similar accredited bodies. Comprehensive justification for not using one of these must be provided.

Following is an indicative list of Biobanks and services that provide services based upon international standards of best practice (ISBER):

- Australian Ovarian Cancer Study http://www.aocstudy.org/
- Australian Prostate Cancer BioResource http://www.apcebioresource.org.au/bioresource.html#Ethics0
- Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au
- Cancer Institute NSW Biobanking Network. Including
- GynBioBank
- Kolling Institute of Medical Research Neuroendocrine, Gynaecological, Breast and Upper GI Banks
- Genetic Repositories Australia (GRA) http://www.neura.edu.au/GRA
- Lowy Biorepository http://powcs.med.unsw.edu.au/research/adult-cancer-program/services-resources/biorepository
- NATA Accredited Pathology Practices
- NSW Children’s Hospital Network
- The Leukaemia and Lymphoma Tissue Bank A joint research initiative of ALLG and the Leukaemia Foundation email: allg_tissue_bank@health.qld.gov.au
- Victorian Cancer Biobank www.viccancerbiobank.org.au
- WA Research Tissue Network (Operated by St John of God HealthCare)
- Wesley Institute

Other Research Facilities
The costs of utilising the services of other research facilities can also be sought through DRCs. Examples of organisations that are included in this category include Non-Human Primate colonies, the Australian Twin Registry, Cell Bank Australia, the Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG) and suppliers of clinical trials services. This list is illustrative and is by no means exhaustive.
Researchers should consult with research facilities to ensure that the services they are seeking DRC funding for can be provided and that the research budgets reflect these charges. Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration should be included with the application to assist the Grant Review Panel in assessing the application.

**Animal Agistment Costs**

Requests for animal agistment costs must be fully justified in the DRC component of the application form.

The NHMRC will support the costs of animal agistment that are a direct requirement of the research project. Animal agistment costs may include the costs of food and caging, and of experimental breeding, during the course of the project. For information on animal agistment costs, consult your Administering Institution. The purchase of animals should be included in DRC.

Funds will be provided for the full purchase price of non-human primates. Applicants should contact the relevant non-human primate breeding colony to obtain information about the terms and conditions associated with the purchase of animals and agistment fees.

The NHMRC will not support infrastructure costs that should normally be provided by the Animal House of the host institution (such as administration or support of Animal House staff) regardless of whether or not the institution has its own Animal House.

**Equipment**

Where an applicant is requesting funding for an item of equipment, the equipment must be unique to the project and essential for the project to proceed. Equipment requests must not include the type of apparatus normally provided from institutional funds such as freezers, etc.

Applicants must provide details as to why the equipment is not being provided by their institution. For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the Research Office of the Administering Institution and must be made available to the NHMRC on request.

The applicant must ensure the Administering Institution is prepared to meet all service and repair costs in relation to equipment awarded.

Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where these are an integral component of a piece of laboratory equipment or are of a nature essential for work in the research field. For example: a computer which is dedicated to data collection from a mass spectrometer, or used for the manipulation of extensively large datasets (i.e. requiring special hardware) may be supported.

Individual items of equipment costing less than $10,000 must be requested as DRCs. Applicants may not seek funding for equipment totalling more than $80,000 for the entire period of the grant.

An annual indexation will be applied to equipment, based on the WCI.
Medicare Claims

The following information relates to health services NHMRC grant applications having clinical relevance in order to attract Medicare benefits.

Medicare is governed by the *Health Insurance Act 1973* which sets out the services attracting benefits. Sub-section 19(5) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* provides that benefits are for where services are clinically relevant for the treatment of the patient. Clinical relevance is a matter of judgement for the patient's medical practitioner.

Where a range of services or tests are carried out by the patient’s medical practitioner as part of the deliberate management of the patient's health, Medicare rebates are payable.

However, a range of tests offered to a patient by a clinic for which there is no apparent clinical necessity, as determined by a medical practitioner, do not attract benefits.

In light of this information, Medicare rebates would not be available for patient visits to General Practitioners as part of a research project, where such visits would not be deemed clinically relevant for the treatment of the patient.

Infrastructure, Indirect Costs and Institutional Overheads

NHMRC does not fund:

- the indirect costs of research; or
- research infrastructure; or
- institutional overheads and administrative charges (levied to pay for institutional research; and
- general infrastructure.

This policy applies regardless of whether the institution, department, unit or individual researcher is in receipt of any form of Commonwealth or State support for research infrastructure.

Research infrastructure includes facilities necessary to the research endeavour that a responsible institution with research as a part of its mission would be expected to supply as a prerequisite to its engagement in research, and includes:

- Physical space and all the services associated with it;
- Furniture for research staff;
- Administrative services;
- Office services and consumables that are not specific to the research project;
- Laboratory services and consumables that are not specific to the research project;
- Animal house facilities;
- Computer networks and basic network utilities; and
- Personal computers, related network peripherals and software needed for communicating, writing, and undertaking simple analyses.

Research infrastructure does not include:

- Office services and consumables that are specific to the project;
• Individual human research subjects or research animal services specific to the project;
• Laboratory services and consumables that are specific to the project;
• Computer network facilities required to meet project specific needs;
• Personal computers, related network peripherals and software required to meet project specific needs; and
• Other items of equipment that are required to meet project specific needs.
APPENDIX B: TARGETED CALL FOR RESEARCH SCORING RUBRIC

The following scoring rubric is used to score an application against each of the assessment criteria: 1) Scientific quality of the project including feasibility, 2) Significance of the project and expected outcomes, and 3) Track record of the team as an indication of ability to undertake research and deliver outcomes specific to this TCR-relative to opportunity. Categories 1-3 are un-fundable. Categories 4-7 are potentially fundable, subject to the availability of resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Scientific quality of the project including feasibility (40%)</th>
<th>Significance of the project and expected outcomes (40%)</th>
<th>Track record of the team as an indication of ability to undertake research and deliver outcomes specific to this TCR – relative to opportunity (20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7 Outstanding by International Standards | The proposal:  
• has objectives that are well defined, highly coherent and strongly developed  
• is a near flawless design  
• is without question highly feasible | the planned research:  
• addresses an issue of utmost importance to human health  
• will translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health or fundamental changes in health policy  
• will likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at meetings, often with relevance across several fields  
• will almost certainly result in highly influential publications | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
• generally comprises the most outstanding researchers in the country for their peers/cohorts  
• is highly recognised for their contribution to their field of research  
• members have very strong records or other research-related achievements  
• members have strong reputations or are well on the way to developing them  
• members hold leadership positions in highly regarded scientific or professional societies  
• has a track record that is highly relevant to the proposed research |
| 6 Excellent             | The proposal:  
• is clear in its intent and logical  
• is excellent in design  
• is apparently highly feasible | The planned research:  
• addresses an issue of major importance to human health  
• could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at meetings  
• is innovative with respect to the question being addressed and the approach to it  
• is very likely to result in highly influential publications | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
• has a record of achievement that places them in the top 10-20% of peers/cohorts  
• members are recognised for their contribution to their field of research  
• members have growing reputations  
• members have established positions of leadership, or are emerging leaders in their field  
• members hold leadership positions in well regarded scientific or professional societies  
• members have track records that are very relevant to the proposed research |
| **5 Highly Competitive** | The proposal:  
- has clear objectives  
- raises only minor concerns regarding study design  
- will likely be successfully achieved | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of considerable importance to human health  
- could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at specialty meetings  
- contains at least one innovative idea  
- may result in several influential publications | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- has a record of achievement that places them well above average for their peers/cohort  
- members are well recognised for their contributions to their fields of research  
- members have growing reputations and their research appears frequently at meetings  
- members have track records in fields relevant to the proposed research |

| **4 Good** | The proposal:  
- is sound in terms of its objectives  
- contains several areas of concern in the experimental design  
- raises some concerns about successful completion | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of some importance to human health  
- may have some novel aspects, while others underpin or extend existing knowledge  
- may result in some strong or influential publications | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- have solid records of achievement  
- members have made contributions to their field of research  
- contains one or more CI with an existing or emerging reputation, albeit in a niche area  
- members have track records that are consistent with the proposed research |

| **3 Marginal** | The proposal:  
- is satisfactory in terms of its objectives, but may not be successful with all of them  
- has a number of areas of significant concern  
- contains several study design problems or flaws | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of some concern to human health  
- has relatively little novelty  
- is not particularly innovative | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- members have published a number of works in a field relevant to this application in the last 5 years, but many have been less productive than might reasonably be expected  
- is deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research  
- members have limited track records in the field of the proposed research |

| **2 Unsatisfactory** | The proposal:  
- provides a program of research which will at best, only incrementally advances current knowledge  
- contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible in several areas | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of only marginal concern to human health  
- only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or  
- | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- has not published more than a few works in relevant other fields of research  
- is heavily underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program  
- members have track records which do not relate well to the proposed research |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>the proposal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• will not advance current knowledge in the field</td>
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<td>• raises major concerns about the feasibility of the research plan</td>
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<td>• contains a study design which is inadequate in a number of areas</td>
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<td>the planned research:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• does not address an issue of concern to human health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• is not innovative or significant</td>
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<td>relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</td>
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<td>• is not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• does not have the expertise or capacity to successfully complete more than a small fraction of the program of research</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• members do not have relevant track records in the field of the proposed research</td>
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