



# Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines

Opening date:	11 March 2026
Closing date and time:	17:00 ACT local time on 6 May 2026
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Enquiries:	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance are to direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)</li><li>▪ Email: <a href="mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au">help@nhmrc.gov.au</a></li></ul> <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries relating to this grant opportunity submitted after 13:00 ACT local time on 6 May 2026.</p> <p>Note: NHMRC's Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within 2 working days. This timeframe may be longer during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p> <p>Submission of a registration form and activation of a Sapphire account must occur at least 3 business days before application close, noting that account activation processes cannot be guaranteed in less than this time.</p>
Date guidelines released:	11 March 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive



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# 1. Ideas Grants 2026 processes

## **NHMRC's Ideas Grant scheme is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

The Ideas Grant scheme is a component of the Portfolio Budget Statements Program 1.1: Health and Medical Research, which contributes to Outcome 1: Improved health and medical knowledge.



## **The grant opportunity opens**

NHMRC publishes the grant opportunity guidelines on GrantConnect.



## **Minimum Data deadline**

Application Fields marked with a flag must be completed and not contain placeholder text.



## **Applicants complete and submit a grant application**

Applicants must complete the application form and address all of the eligibility criteria to be considered for a grant.



## **Applications are verified and assessed**

Applications are verified against eligibility criteria and applicants are notified if not eligible. Peer reviewers assess applications against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money.



## **Grant decisions are made**

NHMRC's CEO seeks approval of funding recommendations from the Minister.



## **NHMRC notifies applicants of the outcome**



**Applicant's Administering Institution signs the NHMRC Grant Schedule(s) setting out the grant activity**



## **Delivery of grant**

Grantees undertake the grant activity as set out in the schedule to the Funding Agreement. NHMRC manages the grant through the relevant Administering Institution.





### **Evaluation of the Ideas Grant scheme**

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its funding schemes to determine strengths and to identify where improvements can be made.

## 1.1. Introduction

These grant opportunity guidelines (guidelines) contain information for the Ideas Grant 2026 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant scheme/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grants will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

GrantConnect ([www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

The Ideas Grant 2026 grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#) (CGRPs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

Commonwealth funding for this grant opportunity, including where future or additional funding opportunities are indicated, is subject to the relevant Commonwealth Government funding policy and priorities at the time of notification and accordingly may be subject to change. This may affect the funding available, and its timing, provided under this grant opportunity. Any such changes will be notified as soon as possible.

## 2. About the grant program

### 2.1. About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and the integrity of, health and medical research. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program in accordance with the [National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992](#) (NHMRC Act) and the CGRPs.

Consistent with the NHMRC Act, the grant program aims to foster health and medical research throughout Australia, and to raise the standard of individual and public health throughout Australia. Grants are awarded through several grant opportunities each year across the 4 pillars of health and medical research: basic science research, clinical medicine and science research, public health research, and health services research.

NHMRC funds high-quality research and researchers, as determined through peer review, to help achieve our mission of building a healthy Australia. Across NHMRC grant opportunities, NHMRC welcomes any research proposals within its remit (and consistent with the specific objectives of the grant opportunity), including those that seek to address Australian Government priorities, such

as Australia's national science and research priorities and NHMRC's strategy and priorities for health and medical research, as outlined in its annual Corporate Plan. NHMRC's International Engagement Strategy aims to foster Australian participation in international networks and collaborative research, and NHMRC welcomes research that addresses global and regional health priorities where it advances health and medical knowledge and improves the health of Australians.

The specific objectives of this Ideas Grant 2026 are outlined in 2.2 below.

## 2.2. Ideas Grant 2026 objectives

Funding for the program will be provided from the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), which is underpinned by section 51 of the NHMRC Act.

The objectives of the Ideas Grant scheme are to support innovative research projects addressing specific question(s).

The intended outcomes of the Ideas Grant scheme are:

- innovative and creative research
- funding of researchers at all career stages
- funding any area of health and medical research from discovery to implementation.

As part of a commitment to funding researchers at all stages of their career, the Ideas Grant scheme provides particular opportunities for early and mid-career researchers. It is expected that the Chief Investigator A (CIA) will have the capability to lead the team in achieving the project aims.

Only applications that address the intended objective and outcomes will be competitive for funding. The Ideas Grant scheme is not intended to support research where a clinical trial or cohort study is the primary objective, and applications meeting that description should be submitted to the [Clinical Trial and Cohort Studies Grant scheme](#). Where applications have elements consistent with both the Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grant scheme and the Ideas Grant scheme, applicants should decide where the project is predominantly suited, based on the objectives and intended outcomes of the respective schemes and where the application would receive the most appropriate peer review.

Applicants should also anticipate a high level of interest in this grant opportunity, and it is expected to be highly competitive. Applications should be carefully scrutinised within the Administering Institution prior to submission to NHMRC to ensure that the application will have the best chance to be considered favourable during NHMRC peer review.

## 2.3. Key changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the Ideas Grant 2026:

- Section 13.1. Information about fraud and corruption has been added.
- Appendix E Guide to Applicants, section 6.9, has been updated to clarify increased scrutiny at the application budget review stage.

- Appendix E Guide to Applicants, section 8, has been updated to include an additional check that any images of people are appropriately de-identified or informed consent has been given.
- The *Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research* is being embedded in application and assessment processes (see Section 7.5) including:
  - The Ideas Grant 2026 application form in Sapphire includes a new mandatory question about the integration of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation in the proposed research (see Appendix E Guide to Applicants).
  - The score descriptor for the ‘Research Quality’ assessment criterion includes an additional component on the appropriateness of how sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation are integrated in the proposed research and/or the strength of the justification for why any of these Variables are not integrated.

## 3. Grant amount and grant period

### 3.1. Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the Ideas Grant 2026 is \$297.1 million. NHMRC’s Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes. Indexation has been included in the funding for this grant opportunity and corresponding indexation is applied to grant payments annually.

### 3.2. Grant period

All Ideas Grants are expected to commence on 1 January 2027. An Ideas Grant can be requested for between one and five years depending on the proposal.

## 4. Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from [NHMRC Administering Institutions](#).

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) and Administering Institution must ensure applications and grants meet all eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be ineligible and may be excluded from further consideration.

A submitted Ideas Grant application that is withdrawn after the closing date for applications will continue to affect the eligibility of other Ideas Grant applications submitted in the same funding round (i.e. where funding commences in the same year, see Section 14: Glossary). Conversely, the removal of CIs from other relevant NHMRC applications (after round close) and/or grants (see section 4.2) will continue to affect Ideas Grant eligibility.

Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information to assess whether the eligibility requirement has been met.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities, or other NHMRC funding schemes will

not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity.

Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants of the decision.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before the minimum data deadline. Grant offers may be withdrawn if eligibility criteria are not maintained. Action may also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

## 4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

### 4.1.1. Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators

The maximum number of CIs allowed on an Ideas Grant 2026 application is 10.

#### Chief Investigator 'A'

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia, or have an appropriate work visa in place. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.

#### Chief Investigators

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. CIs are expected to remain on the grant activity for the duration of the grant, unless a variation is approved by NHMRC in accordance with the [NHMRC Grant Variations Policy](#). NHMRC will only approve a change in CIs in exceptional circumstances and a variation request must not be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

#### Associate Investigators

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 AIs can be entered in Sapphire.

## 4.2. Multiple applications/grants

Limits apply to the number of NHMRC grants that a CI may concurrently apply for and/or hold.

These limits do not apply to AIs.

Existing NHMRC data on current grants held will be used to determine an Ideas Grant applicant's eligibility to apply.

It is the responsibility of the CIA to ensure they meet all the eligibility requirements for concurrent research applications and/or grants, including any additional applications to the Investigator Grant scheme in the same funding round.

## 4.2.1. Information for Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes

CIs can submit a total of up to 2 applications across the Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes in any given funding round.<sup>1</sup> For the 2026 funding round, this includes the 2026 Investigator Grant round, which closed in July 2025 and the 2026 Ideas Grant round (i.e. this grant opportunity), closing in May 2026. See specific rules for the Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes.

CIs can hold a maximum of up to 2 grants concurrently from the Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes.

Eligibility for existing Ideas Grant holders to apply for and/or hold an Investigator or Ideas Grant is based upon the 'original' end date of the held grant (contained in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement) irrespective of whether the Ideas Grant end date has been extended through a variation.

Eligibility for existing Investigator Grant holders to apply for and/or hold an Investigator or Ideas Grant is based upon the Investigator Grant's 'actual' end date of the held grant (in Sapphire) at time of application. This means that, where CIAs apply grant variations that extend the grant's 'actual' end date in Sapphire (e.g. defer grant start date, fully suspend the grant or extend the term of the grant pro-rata for career disruptions) their eligibility to reapply may be impacted. If an Ideas Grant CI (CIA-CIJ) is successful with their Investigator Grant application, the value of the RSP will be reduced by 50%, for the period of overlap with the concurrently held Ideas Grant. The reduction to the RSP will cease at the original end date for the Ideas Grant.

Investigator Grant holders cannot apply for an Ideas Grant unless they are in the final year of the Investigator Grant at the time of application<sup>2</sup>.

For the purposes of eligibility, recipients of MRFF Investigator Grants<sup>3</sup> will be considered equivalent to NHMRC Investigator Grants. All conditions and policies outlined in these Guidelines will be applicable to MRFF Investigator Grants.

If any CI (CIA-CIJ) submits an Investigator or Ideas Grant application(s), in the same funding round, in excess of the maximum for which they are eligible to apply or hold, the breaching application(s) (i.e. the last submitted) on which that CI is named may be ineligible and excluded from consideration, irrespective of:

- the scheme to which they have applied
- that CI's position or role on the application.

If a CI (CIA-CIJ) concurrently (in the same funding round) applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant and the Investigator Grant application is successful, the Ideas Grant application will not be eligible for NHMRC funding.

If an Investigator Grant applicant is a CI (CIA-CIJ) on an Ideas Grant application(s) from the previous round, and are subsequently offered an Ideas Grant(s) to the maximum of NHMRC grants

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in the 2026 funding round for funding commencing in 2027 (subject to other scheme-specific eligibility requirements), CIs may submit 1x Investigator Grant application + 1x Ideas Grant application = 2 applications in total. Note: the outcome of the application (i.e. successful, unsuccessful, ineligible or withdrawn) does not impact on it counting towards the 2 applications each CI is permitted per funding round.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Investigator Grant's 'actual' end date (in Sapphire).

<sup>3</sup> Investigator Grants awarded in 2019 and 2020 via the Investigator Grants: Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Priority Round.

that they are eligible to hold, the Investigator Grant will not be eligible for NHMRC funding and will be removed from consideration, irrespective of whether the Ideas Grant(s) is accepted.

If an Investigator Grant is offered, then application and grant capping eligibility rules will continue to affect applications to the Ideas Grant schemes for the remainder of the concurrent round in which the Investigator Grant was offered.

NHMRC eligibility capping rules do not apply to Ideas Grant CIs who apply for or hold Ideas Grants that do not seek or receive NHMRC funding (i.e. that only seek funding through an NHMRC Partner Organisation, e.g. Cancer Councils, Cancer Australia & Funding Partners, see [Appendix A](#) of the Ideas Grant Guidelines). Such applicants should check the capping rules applied by those Partner organisations.

Requests for alteration of a submitted application in an attempt to satisfy eligibility criteria (for example removal of a CI) will not alter the eligibility ruling for those affected applications.

Detailed information on how eligibility for an Investigator Grant is affected by a CI's grant applications and/or currently held grants is available in [Appendix D](#) (eligibility for 2026 funding round) and the [NHMRC Eligibility web tool](#).

#### 4.2.2. Limits on the number of Ideas Grant applications

CIs can submit a maximum of up to two Ideas Grants applications in a grant opportunity, subject to other NHMRC grants concurrently held or applied for.<sup>4</sup>

If any CI (CIA to CIJ) submits an Investigator or Ideas Grant application(s) in excess of the maximum they are eligible to apply for or hold, the last submitted application (the 'breaching application') may be ineligible and excluded from consideration, irrespective of:

- the scheme to which they have applied, and
- that CI's position or role on the application.

#### 4.2.3. Limits on the number of Ideas Grants that may be held

CIs can hold no more than two Ideas grants concurrently, subject to other NHMRC grants held or concurrently applied for.

### 4.3. Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if NHMRC identifies that:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in these guidelines
- it, or any CI named on the application, [contravenes an applicable law or code](#), or
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the MREA.

An application will be excluded if any CI named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding

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<sup>4</sup> For example, if a researcher holds 1 Ideas Grant (CIA-J) that will not cease prior to when the new Ideas Grant is due to commence, they are eligible to apply for up to 1 Ideas Grant.

schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect consequential action taken by NHMRC in response to findings of a serious breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code) (including a finding of research misconduct, where this term is used) or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the [NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#).

Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA and Administering Institution certification of the application.

If a decision is made to exclude an application from further consideration, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO). The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision. Decisions to exclude an application may be reviewable by [NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints](#).

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1. Eligible grants activities and expenditure

Funding provided by NHMRC for a grant activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that grant activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the [Direct Research Cost Guidelines](#).

#### 5.1.1. Salary support

Ideas grants are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs. However, if applicants are seeking CI salaries, justification on how the proposed budget is directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research must be provided and will be considered during peer review.

CIs, including the CIA, can draw a salary from the Ideas grant if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period. CIs based overseas cannot draw a salary, but the grant can be used to provide salary support for research support staff based overseas (see section 5.2). Requested salaries must be based on [Personnel Support Packages](#) (PSPs).

Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to 100%, if allowed in the guidelines for the respective grant opportunities.

Associate Investigators cannot draw a salary from any Ideas grants.

### 5.2. Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

The CIA can request funding to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so, the CIA must clearly demonstrate that the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia.

In some instances, the CIA can seek to conduct the majority of the work overseas. However, it is important that the CIA ensures such research is well justified and conforms with the scheme eligibility requirements. For example, the CIA is required to be based in Australia for at least 80% of the requested grant duration. Funding (including salaries) for research support staff based overseas can be considered where this is important to achieve the aims of the research.

See [NHMRC's Direct Research Cost Guidelines](#) for further guidance on the expenditure of funding for a grant activity.

### 5.3. Duplicate funding

NHMRC may compare the research proposed in grant applications with current applications across NHMRC-funded and administered grant opportunities, grants previously funded, currently funded and funded by other agencies (e.g., Australian Research Council or Department of Health and Aged Care) and published research. NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and one has been successful, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research activities in each application. If NHMRC subsequently considers that the research activities are not sufficiently different, the applicant will be required to withdraw the application in train.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research activities in each application. If NHMRC subsequently considers that the research activities are not sufficiently different, NHMRC may withdraw an offer of funding, or the applicant will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

## 6. The assessment criteria

Applications for Ideas Grants 2026 are assessed by peer reviewers against the assessment criteria listed below and the score descriptors in [Appendix B](#).

- Research Quality (35%)
- Innovation and Creativity (25%)
- Significance (20%)
- Capability (20%)

1) **Research Quality** - NHMRC defines 'Research Quality' for the Ideas Grant scheme as the quality of the project aims and the proposed research plan. Given the focus on innovation, it is expected that the research proposals for Ideas Grant applications will include some element of risk; applicants should demonstrate an appreciation of those risks and incorporate strategies to address any uncertainties as part of their proposed research plan. Applicants must have appropriately

integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation into the research and/or justified why any Variables are not integrated. With the focus on innovation and creativity as a scheme objective, preliminary results and pilot studies are not expected for Ideas Grant applications.

2) **Innovation & Creativity** - NHMRC defines 'Innovation & Creativity' for the Ideas Grant scheme as health and medical research that seeks to challenge and shift current paradigms and/or have a major impact on a health research area through one or more studies that creatively:

- develop or use novel research concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions
- propose a reinterpretation, refinement, improvement or new application of existing theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions, or
- integrate and adapt concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions from other research fields or disciplines for a new purpose or in a new way.

Applicants should clearly explain their point of difference from current concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions in order to sufficiently demonstrate innovation and creativity in their proposed research.

(Refer to [Appendix C](#) of the Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines for more information on the concept of Innovation and Creativity.)

3) **Significance** - NHMRC defines 'Significance' for the Ideas Grant scheme as the extent to which the outcomes and outputs will result in advancements to and/or impact on the research or health area.

4) **Capability** - NHMRC defines 'Capability' for the Ideas Grant scheme as the appropriateness of the applicant team and their expertise, the resources and access to additional personnel necessary to achieve the project aims. Capability is not an assessment of traditional track record elements, such as number of publications, grants held, or conference invitations. The CIA must demonstrate their ability to lead the project, including managing the project's resources, personnel, budget and administrative requirements, in order to execute the project. Associate Investigators (AIs) can be included to strengthen the overall technical capability of the team (e.g. specialists such as statisticians), but they must not be essential for the leadership of the project. Consideration should also be given to the gender balance and development of new researchers within the applicant team.

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 be considered when assessing research output.

## 7. How to apply

### 7.1. Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

11 March 2026	Applications open in Sapphire
17:00 AEDT 8 April 2026	Minimum data due in Sapphire
17:00 AEDT 6 May 2026	Applications close in Sapphire
June – September 2026	Anticipated peer review period
November 2026 (Date is indicative and subject to change)	Anticipated notifications of outcomes

Applications must be submitted electronically using Sapphire (unless otherwise advised by NHMRC).

Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and all CIs on an application to register for an account in Sapphire. Applicants who are not registered can submit a new user request via the login page of Sapphire.

Applicants should refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for detailed user instructions or contact their RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further assistance.

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

### 7.2. Application extensions

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted by email to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au) before the application closing date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or cyclones
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family,<sup>5</sup> is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions will be for a maximum of 7 calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent peer review processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed, especially as eligibility decisions for some NHMRC schemes depend on an applicant's success with other schemes.

**Requests for extensions submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.**

<sup>5</sup> Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).

## 7.3. Application requirements

The application must contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. Further information on what can and cannot be included and guidance for each component of the application is provided in [Appendix E](#).

All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be ineligible.

## 7.4. Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. **Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will be ineligible and will not proceed.** Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Applications containing placeholder text (including in the application title) such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” at minimum data may be ineligible. The Minimum Data deadline will not be extended.

Applicants are discouraged from making any changes to minimum data fields following the minimum data deadline as NHMRC uses minimum data to identify appropriate peer reviewers to assess the application. Incorrect minimum data may result in less suitable peer reviewers assessing the application.

Minimum data fields for Ideas Grants 2026 are outlined in Appendix E (section 3) and within Sapphire.

RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications are only to be certified once complete and ready for submission.

## 7.5. Attachments to the application

NHMRC Ideas Grants requires a grant proposal with your application.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application in line with the instructions provided in Sapphire or [Appendix E](#). Only attach requested documents. NHMRC will not consider information in attachments that it does not request.

## 7.6. Consumer and community involvement

The *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Statement’s purpose is to guide research institutions, researchers, consumers and community members in the active involvement of consumers and community members in all aspects of health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd (CHF) and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.

To complement the statement, NHMRC has released a Toolkit with resources on consumer and community involvement in, and expectations of, health and medical research. Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers and to use this Toolkit throughout all stages of research, including the planning and preparation of grant applications, the conduct of research and the evaluation of outcomes.

Further information on CHF, the Statement and the Toolkit is available on the [NHMRC webpage on consumer and community engagement](#). Consumer and community involvement in the proposed research will be considered, as relevant, as part of the applicable assessment criteria (see Section 6).

## 7.7. Consideration of Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation

The [Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research](#) has been developed to improve health outcomes for all people in Australia by ensuring the evidence base that informs our health care system considers sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation (the Variables). It provides a guide for researchers to consider the Variables at all stages of their research project. Applicants for NHMRC funding:

- must consider sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation at all stages of every research project
- should use consistent definitions and classifications according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation](#).

In addition, applicants are expected to integrate sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation in their proposed research where appropriate. The application form includes a mandatory question on integration of the Variables (see Appendix E Guide to Applicants). Here applicants must indicate which of the Variables are integrated in the proposed research and summarise how they will be integrated, or they must justify why any/all of the Variables have not been integrated. For some research projects it may not be relevant to address all or any of these Variables. If the relevant Variables are being integrated into the proposed research, then this should also be detailed within the Grant Proposal (in addition to this section of the form).

Information provided on the Variables in both the response to the application form question and, where applicable, the Grant Proposal will be considered when the application is scored against the relevant assessment criteria. Applicants may choose to include or exclude the Variables in their application, provided they offer a sound, evidence-based justification for their decision. Assessors should give equal consideration to both approaches, focusing on the strength and validity of the rationale rather than the presence or absence of the Variables.

The *Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research* provides definitions and better practice prompts for considering the Variables by research life-cycle stage, from question setting and design through to conduct,

analysis, reporting and translation and implementation. Further information and supporting resources are available on the NHMRC [gender equity webpage](#).

## 7.8. Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC Administering Institution using Sapphire.

All parties to certification are responsible for ensuring that the application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Certification is required firstly by the CIA and then by the Administering Institution RAO by the specified due date or the application will be ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

**Once submitted to NHMRC, the application is considered final, and no changes can be made.**

### 7.8.1. CIA certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA before submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct.
- All eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the grant activity have familiarised themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements, in accordance with the guidelines.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time.
- The Head of Department of the Administering Institution (and Participating Institution/s, if applicable) will ensure the appropriate facilities will be available.
- The research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.

### 7.8.2. Certification from other Chief Investigators (CIB to CIJ) and Associate Investigators

By accepting an invitation to participate on an application, Chief and Associate Investigators certify that, at the time of application submission, they:

- agree to be named on the application
- endorse application certification by the Chief Investigator A and submission for endorsement by the Administering Institution's RAO
- have familiarised themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies
- agree to participate in the manner described in the application and to the handling of personal information contained within the application as described in the [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#)
- have met all eligibility and other application requirements.

### 7.8.3. Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution before submitting an application:

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- CIA is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time of accepting the successful grant.
- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
- Where the CIA is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant and will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the funding period.
- Approval of the grant activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained before the commencement of the research activity, or the parts of the research activity that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that 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. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO is authorised to certify and submit applications. Where a researcher is a nominated position holder for the Administering Institution, the Administering Institution is to manage Conflict of Interest and separation of duties and ensure the researcher does not certify their own application.

## 7.9. Retracted publications

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, the applicant must promptly notify their RAO. The RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity of the retraction by email ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)) with an explanation of the reasons for the retraction.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's track record, the applicant must immediately record that information in their Profile in Sapphire.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, the applicant should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, an applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the RAO must advise NHMRC in writing (to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)), clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

## 7.10. Withdrawal of applications

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC.

An application may be 'marked for deletion' by the applicant in Sapphire before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the grant opportunity has closed. The application will not be deleted while the grant opportunity remains open for application submission.

## 7.11. Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's RAO.

All policy enquiries must be submitted in writing by the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC's Research Help Centre. Policy enquiries from applicants will be re-directed to the RAO. Frequently asked policy questions will be addressed via the scheme's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, which will be updated on [GrantConnect](#) as required and should be reviewed before submitting a query.

### NHMRC's Research Help Centre details:

Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

Email: [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)

Refer to the [Research Help Centre webpage](#) for opening hours.

## 8. The grant selection process

NHMRC considers applications through a targeted competitive grant process. Applications are required to meet eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) by independent peer reviewers. Overall assessment scores are

used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

As per section 12 of the CGRPs, the extent to which applications represent value with relevant money is considered as part of the broader score descriptors in [Appendix B](#). This consideration guides assessment of applications against the scheme's objectives and intended outcomes (Section 2), the relative value of the grant sought, the quality of the proposed research and the track record or capability of the applicant(s).

### 8.1.1. Who will assess applications?

NHMRC's peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application to ensure that only the highest quality research that provides value with money is recommended for funding.

Applicants must not seek to identify or make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment, in keeping with NHMRC's principles of impartial and independent peer review. Seeking to influence the process or outcomes of peer review may constitute a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

### 8.1.2. Ideas Grants assessment process

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness. Peer review processes are fair and seen to be fair by all.
- Transparency. Applies to all stages of peer review.
- Independence. Peer reviewers provide independent advice. There is also independent oversight of peer review processes by independent Chairs and Observers, where relevant.
- Appropriateness and balance. There is appropriate experience, expertise and representation of peer reviewers assessing applications.
- Research community participation. Persons holding taxpayer-funded grants should willingly make themselves available to participate in peer review processes, whenever possible, in accordance with the obligations of the Funding Agreement.
- Confidentiality. Participants respect that confidentiality is important to the fairness and robustness of peer review.
- Impartiality. Peer review is objective and impartial, with appropriate processes in place to manage disclosures of interest.
- Quality and excellence. NHMRC will continue to introduce evidence-based improvements into its processes to achieve the highest quality decision-making through peer review.

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see Section 6).

The overall scores from assessments will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is in the accompanying peer review guidelines.

### 8.1.3. Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

As part of NHMRC's stated commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has requirements and processes designed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research is of the highest scientific merit and is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data, must refer to the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- [Road map 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research](#)
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#), and
- [Keeping Research on Track II](#), which is a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) can be put into practice in research.

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity-building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Qualifying applications must address NHMRC's *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as follows:

- Community engagement – the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.
- Benefit – the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
- Sustainability and transferability – the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue, the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.

- Building capability – the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

Peer reviewer(s) with specific expertise in Indigenous health research will evaluate how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* and ensure the research is being undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner. This evaluation is not given a numerical score but is a yes/no determination that will be taken into consideration in the overall assessment of the application, using the assessment criteria outlined in Section 6 (it does not alter the weighting of the assessment criteria). Confirmation of qualifying applications will be used for reporting measures by NHMRC.

## 8.2. Who will approve grants?

In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC's CEO or their delegate makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC. The Minister, acting on the advice of the CEO, determines expenditure from the MREA (subsection 51(2) of the NHMRC Act).

## 9. Notification of application outcomes

NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible, following the approval of grants. Advice of outcomes may occur before the approval of grants if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons.

NHMRC may advise applicants and their Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome [under media embargo](#). This means that the information must not be made public until the media embargo is lifted. During the media embargo period, applicants must not publicise the information or post comments about their or the grant opportunity's grant outcomes in public domains such as social forums, websites, journals or newspapers.

## 10. Successful grant applications

CIAs whose applications are approved for funding will have access to a letter of offer through Sapphire. Administering Institutions responsible for administering approved applications will also have access to the letter of offer and to the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online signing/acceptance process within Sapphire.

NHMRC's CEO or delegate may withdraw or vary an offer of a grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue.

### 10.1. Information required from grantees

Grantees may be required to supply additional information about their grant activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant opportunity guidelines or letter of offer.

### 10.1.1. Persistent Identifiers

The CIA must have a valid [ORCID iD](#) in their Sapphire profile for the grant to commence.

## 10.2. Obligations and approvals

NHMRC-funded grant activities must comply with [applicable guidelines, laws and approval requirements](#).

Institutions applying for NHMRC funding (both Administering and Participating Institutions) must also be aware of their obligations under the [National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse - Grant Connected Policy](#). Relevant institutions that have been named in an application for the Redress Scheme or named in the Royal Commission, and have not joined the Redress Scheme, will be ineligible to receive NHMRC funding.

Note: NHMRC-funded research with ethics and biosafety considerations must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies.

## 10.3. NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the [Funding Agreement](#) (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. Schedule(s) are accepted by the Administering Institution electronically in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.

A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution is in place, and
- the appropriate Schedule to the Funding Agreement is executed in accordance with clause 2.3 of the Funding Agreement.

### 10.3.1. Responsible and ethical conduct of research

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Under the Funding Agreement, NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

## 10.4. NHMRC policies

Under the Funding Agreement, it is the responsibility of Administering Institutions and CIs to be aware of, and comply with, all relevant [legislation and policies](#) relating to the conduct of the grant activity. This includes adhering to the key principles and applicable requirements of the CGRPs and the published grant opportunity guidelines.

## 10.5. Payments

Payments will commence once all outstanding obligations (e.g. conditions, eligibility rules or data requirements specified in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant opportunity guidelines or letter of offer) have been met by the CIA and the Administering Institution.

## 10.6. Suspension of grants

NHMRC funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, requests made by the CIA. Variations will generally only be granted if allowed in the grant opportunity guidelines and the NHMRC [Grantee Variation Policy](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC, in circumstances as set out in the Funding Agreement, including when there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of an alleged breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (including research misconduct, where this term is used).

## 10.7. Tax implications

All amounts referred to in these guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation matters associated with the grant.

## 11. Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on the [GrantConnect website](#) within 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by the CGRPs.

## 12. How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1. Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees are to report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the grant activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant opportunity guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant are to be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in Sapphire. For information on grant variations see the [NHMRC Grant Variations Policy](#).

Note that CIs are expected to remain on the grant for the full funding period and NHMRC will only approve changes to CIs in exceptional circumstances. Before a CIA applies for a grant variation, they and the relevant RAO will need to confirm that all CIs have agreed to the variation, noting the impact that it may have on their suite of grants and their eligibility to hold/apply for other grants. Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

## 12.2. Reporting

Administering Institutions are required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

### 12.2.1. Financial reports

[Annual financial reports](#) are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant or upon transfer to a new Administering Institution, a financial acquittal is also required.

### 12.2.2. Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare [reports](#) for each grant activity. While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met before commencement of a new grant. for each grant activity. While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met before commencement of a new grant.

Information included in the Final Report may be publicly released. Use of this information may include publication on the [NHMRC website](#), publicity (including release to the media) and the promotion of research achievements.

The Administering Institution is also required to provide NHMRC with any other report in respect of any research activity within the timeframe, in the format and containing the information requested by NHMRC. All information provided to NHMRC in reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funded research projects or funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

### 12.2.3. Registration of clinical trials

Research involving clinical trials must be registered in the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) or equivalent before recruitment of the first participant. Information on how to register your clinical trial is available at [www.anzctr.org.au](http://www.anzctr.org.au). Cohort studies can be registered in the ANZCTR and successful grantees are encouraged to register their study with the registry, if applicable.

## 12.3. Evaluation of the Ideas Grant scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its grant opportunities to determine their effectiveness and to identify where improvements can be made.

## 12.4. Open Access Policy

All recipients of NHMRC grants must comply with all elements of [NHMRC's Open Access Policy](#) as a condition of funding.

## 13. Probity

### 13.1. Fraud and corruption

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework 2024, under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and is serious about preventing, detecting and responding to fraud and corruption.

Under 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.

NHMRC manages fraud and corruption matters in alignment with the [NHMRC Fraud and Corruption Control Framework](#).

### 13.2. Complaints process

As per the [NHMRC Complaints Policy](#), applicants or grantees can lodge a formal complaint about an NHMRC process related to funding via their Administering Institution's RAO and in writing to NHMRC Complaints Team at: [complaints@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:complaints@nhmrc.gov.au). Complaints must be lodged within 28 days of the relevant NHMRC decision or action. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision.

If applicants or grantees are dissatisfied with the response from the NHMRC Complaints Team, they can raise their concerns with the [NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints](#). Note that the Commissioner of Complaints does not undertake a merits review.

Applicants or grantees can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC and, where relevant, the Commissioner of Complaints.

### 13.3. Conflicts of Interest

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that interests of any kind are dealt with consistently, transparently and with rigour, in accordance with sections 16A and 16B of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (made under the subsection 29(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)).

Applicants are not required to declare actual or perceived interests.

To manage any conflicts of interest with applicants, NHMRC requires peer reviewers to declare interests, actual or perceived, and sign deeds of confidentiality. Peer reviewers declare any direct or indirect, pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest, which is reviewed by NHMRC, before being

granted full access to an application. Any peer reviewer who is determined by NHMRC to have a 'high' conflict of interest will not be able to participate in the review of that application.

By managing any conflict, NHMRC maintains objectivity, impartiality and integrity in the assessment of applications. Further information about the conflict of interest process is available in the Ideas Grant 2026 Peer Review Guidelines.

## 13.4. Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. The [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#) details the types of personal or sensitive information that may be collected by NHMRC and how it will be handled. Applicants need to familiarise themselves with the NHMRC Privacy Policy before providing personal information to NHMRC.

Information that is generally regarded as confidential information is application information and any other information specifically identified as such by applicants and grantees, and will be received by NHMRC on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidentiality.

NHMRC may disclose personal and/or confidential information to:

- overseas entities, Australian, State/Territory or local government agencies, organisations or individuals where necessary to assess an application or to administer a grant
- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the grant scheme effectively
- employees and contractors of NHMRC to research, assess, monitor and analyse schemes and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for relevant purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in reports and consultations
- NHMRC approved Administering Institutions' Research Administration Offices
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

In addition, NHMRC will provide certain limited personal information of the Chief Investigator/s included in an application to Administering Institutions for the purpose of certification of eligibility requirements.

NHMRC will publicly disclose the names and titles of all CIs for all grants awarded from all NHMRC schemes and all MRFF initiatives administered by NHMRC on both the NHMRC website and GrantConnect. Each CIs ORCID iD (where available) will be published on the NHMRC website

## 13.5. Freedom of Information

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability requirements. Freedom of Information laws facilitate the general public’s access to documents held by national government agencies, including application and funding documentation relating to NHMRC researchers. This right of access is limited where documents, or parts of documents, are exempt under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Researchers are to familiarise themselves with [NHMRC’s Freedom of Information procedures](#) before submitting an application.

## 14. Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent	Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice given on the AIATSIS website ( <a href="https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality">https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality</a> ). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept 3 ‘working criteria’ as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li> <li>• identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and</li> <li>• being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.</li> </ul>
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.
Associate Investigator (AI)	An investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on outputs (e.g., publications).
Chief Investigator (CI)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Chief investigator A (CIA)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs)</i>	The CGRPs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.

Term	Definition
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date on which the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the grant is announced, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
final year	The final 12 calendar months of a grant.
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the <a href="#">NHMRC Funding Agreement</a> and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.
funding round	Collectively refers to the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant opportunities commencing funding in the same year.
grant	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant activity	Defined as 'Research Activity' in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant opportunity guidelines	All the documents published on GrantConnect under the grant opportunity. Also referred to as guidelines in this document.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program. This is referred to as a scheme in this document.
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs. It is available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov.au">www.grants.gov.au</a></p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities (such as NHMRC) must publish grant opportunities on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRPs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been selected to receive a grant. For NHMRC's purposes, grants are awarded to the Administering Institution for the benefit of the grant recipients (however described).

Term	Definition
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	A 'Special Account' established under section 49 of the NHMRC Act, through which Government appropriated funds are used to pay NHMRC grants.
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	The MRFF was established in 2015 by the <i>Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015</i> (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website: <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund">https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund</a>
peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs (schemes). A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program (scheme) associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Probity Event	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Sapphire	NHMRC's electronic, secure system that allows research administrators, applicants, assessors, grant holders and NHMRC staff to manage all aspects of the granting lifecycle.
Schedule	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
The Variables	The term 'the Variables' will be used in some instances as an abbreviation of the term 'sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation'. This is intended to improve readability only and is not intended to describe (or exclude) any groups of people.
value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.  When administering a grant opportunity, an official (including peer reviewers) should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of the project proposal and activities</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li><li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and</li><li>• the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li></ul>



# Appendices

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# Appendix A NHMRC structural priorities, Ideas Grants 2026 priorities and funding organisations

## NHMRC structural priorities

Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to help achieve its broader goals.

Applications that meet structural priorities may be funded in order of merit, supplementary to applications within the budget for the grant opportunity, based on advice from NHMRC's Research Committee. NHMRC's current structural priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers
- Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers

NHMRC is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourages applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Accordingly, NHMRC is committed to allocating at least 5 per cent of the annual allocation from its Medical Research Endowment Account to research directed at improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Support for health and medical research and research translation is central to achieving improvements in this area. It is also important to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how this diversity relates to health issues in these communities. NHMRC has a target of 3.4% of NHMRC grants awarded annually be led by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher.

Applicants identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent are asked to indicate this in their Sapphire profile.

Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice provided on the AIATSIS website (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality>). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept 3 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely:

- being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and
- being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence, consistent with AIATSIS guidance, of a Chief Investigator A's identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and must provide this evidence to NHMRC, if requested.

## Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators

As the Australian Government's lead agency for funding health and medical research, NHMRC is committed to achieving gender equity in its grant program. Funding outcomes have highlighted the underrepresentation of female chief investigators across many of NHMRC's funding schemes.

By providing structural priority funding for female lead investigators, NHMRC is seeking to give more outstanding female researchers the opportunity to receive funding and to encourage more to apply. Non-binary lead investigators are included in the gender equity structural priority to recognise that non-binary people in the research workforce, like women, may have been affected by systemic disadvantage.<sup>6</sup>

## Ideas Grants 2026 priority areas

In addition to these priorities, NHMRC may award Ideas Grants that:

- address other defined structural priorities
- are funded with partner organisations.

## Ideas Grants funded by other organisations

Ideas Grants may be funded [by or in conjunction with other organisations](#). These grants offer opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the priorities and research interests of the partner organisations.

Some funding partners may require a separate application to be provided to them, or may have specific criteria and requirements, in addition to those of NHMRC. Applicants are to contact the funding partner to identify any additional requirements.

For the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988*, applicants and other persons whose details appear in grant applications (e.g. other investigators) need to be aware that NHMRC may provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes, to the funding organisation(s) nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information is to enable potential funding partners to assess the application's eligibility for funding under the funding organisation's policies.

In the event that a funding partner is unable to fulfil its obligation to a co-funded grant, NHMRC will continue to support the Ideas Grant recipient under the conditions that would have been awarded by NHMRC.

Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the funding partner, including Ideas Grants that may have been fully funded by the funding partner, will not be supported by NHMRC.

Further information on Ideas Grants funded by other organisations is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

The following organisations are expected to partner with NHMRC in funding grants under this grant opportunity:

- Cancer Councils
- McCusker Charitable Foundation
- The Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

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<sup>6</sup> Non-binary applicants and applicants who use a relevant term to describe their gender in the "I use a different term" free text field within their Sapphire profile will be included with female applicants for the purposes of structural priority funding.

## Cancer Councils

Applications for Cancer Council funding are aligned with the National Health and Medical Research Council's Ideas Grants submission and review processes. Eligibility and selection criteria for Cancer Council funding varies by state and is outlined below:

### Cancer Council NSW

Cancer Council NSW Project Grants are:

- open to research projects on any aspect of cancer, including its causes, mechanisms, prevention, treatment and care, and the organisation and performance of cancer control services
- awarded for up to three years
- valued up to \$600,000 over three years
- open to all Australian cancer researchers

Researchers wishing to apply for Cancer Council NSW Project Grants must complete:

1. NHMRC Ideas Grant application. In the Sapphire application, applicants to select 'Cancer Council' as a funding option
2. Supplementary Questions via CCNSW online grant submission form; and
3. Consumer Review Form to be uploaded when prompted as part of the CCNSW online grant submission form.

The Supplementary Questions online submission form as well as guidelines and instructions will be available on the scheme open date. Major changes to the questions and guidelines are not expected; however, there is an added requirement for consumers to acknowledge their involvement. Applicants should make sure they are referring to the updated guidelines and submission processes which will be live on the [website](#) by the scheme open date (13 March 2026).

Cancer Council NSW Project Grants Guidelines and Cancer Council NSW Consumer Review Guidelines can be found on the [website](#). Information regarding online submission will be live by the scheme open date.

Information about consumer involvement in research and where to find a qualified consumer can be found on the [Cancer Council NSW website](#).

For any enquiries, please email [research@nswcc.org.au](mailto:research@nswcc.org.au).

### Cancer Council SA

Project Grants funded through the Cancer Council SA Research Program are open only to cancer researchers based in South Australia.

The Cancer Council SA Research Program accepts applications that are:

- based on any aspect of cancer, including its causes, mechanisms, prevention, treatment and care, and the organisation and performance of cancer control services

- 1 year in duration
- have an adjusted 12-month budget up to \$100,000
- based in South Australia

Researchers wishing to apply to the Cancer Council SA Research Program must complete:

1. NHMRC Ideas Grant application. In the Sapphire application, applicants to select ‘Cancer Council’ as a funding option
2. Complete the Supplementary Questions via the CCNSW online grant submission form which will be accessible via the [CCNSW website](#).

Questions relating to the Cancer Council SA Research Program funding requirements can be directed to [grants@cancersa.org.au](mailto:grants@cancersa.org.au). For more information about the Cancer Council SA Research Program, please visit: <https://www.cancersa.org.au/research>

### Key Dates and Deadlines

11 March 2026	NHMRC Ideas Grants / CCNSW Project Grants / Cancer Council SA Beat Cancer Project open
8 April 2026	Minimum data due for NHMRC Ideas Grants via Sapphire
6 May 2026	Closing date for NHMRC Ideas Grants applications via Sapphire
22 May 2026	Closing date for submission of Supplementary Questions and Consumer Review responses via CCNSW online grant submission form

### McCusker Charitable Foundation

The McCusker Charitable Foundation will consider applications for research funding the areas of Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, Crohn’s disease, Colitis, Tourette syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue.

Further information can be obtained from [www.mccuskercharitable.com.au](http://www.mccuskercharitable.com.au)

### The Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

The Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation exists to accelerate life-extending and life transforming solutions for those with cystic fibrosis. We do this by funding innovative research that builds on existing knowledge that has a clearly identified path and a commitment for translational impact. Significant advancements in CF therapies have had a profound impact on life expectancy. While lung disease has the most significant impact on CF and the reason for a shortened lifespan, the emergence of modulator therapies means that new challenges are faced by those with CF. This includes a changed infection landscape, the emergence of new chronic disease challenges such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes as well as emerging new cancer risks. This partnership with NHMRC through the Ideas Grants scheme seeks to support research in cystic fibrosis.

## Appendix B Ideas Grants 2026 Score Descriptors

The objective of the Ideas Grant scheme is to support innovative research projects addressing a specific question(s). The expected outcomes are:

- innovative and creative research
- funding of researchers at all career stages
- funding any area of health and medical research from discovery to implementation

The scheme will provide particular opportunities for early and mid-career researchers. It is expected that the CIA will have the leadership and skills to achieve the proposed project aims.

The Ideas Grant scheme is not intended to support research where a clinical trial or cohort study is the primary objective.

The following score descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the four assessment criteria:

- 1) **Research Quality** – NHMRC defines ‘Research Quality’ for the Ideas Grant scheme as the quality of the project aims and the proposed research plan, along with their alignment with the scheme objectives and expected outcomes. Given the focus on innovation, it is expected that the research proposals for Ideas Grant applications will include some element of risk; applicants should demonstrate an appreciation of those risks and incorporate strategies to address any uncertainties as part of their proposed research plan. Applicants must have appropriately integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation into the research and/or justified why any Variables are not integrated. With the focus on innovation and creativity as a scheme objective, preliminary results and pilot studies are not expected for Ideas Grant applications.
- 2) **Innovation & Creativity** – NHMRC defines ‘Innovation & Creativity’ for the Ideas Grant scheme as health and medical research that seeks to challenge and shift current paradigms and/or have a major impact on a health research area through one or more studies that creatively:
  - develop or use novel research concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions
  - propose a reinterpretation, refinement, improvement or new application of existing theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions from other research fields or disciplines for a new purpose or in a new way.Applicants should clearly explain their point of difference from current concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions in order to sufficiently demonstrate innovation and creativity in their proposed research.  
(Refer to [Appendix C](#) of the Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines for more information on the concept of Innovation and Creativity).
- 3) **Significance** – NHMRC defines ‘Significance’ for the Ideas Grant scheme as the extent to which the outcomes and outputs will result in advancements to and/or impact on the research or health area.

- 4) **Capability** – NHMRC defines ‘Capability’ for the Ideas Grant scheme as the appropriateness of the applicant team and their expertise, the resources and access to additional personnel necessary to achieve the project aims. The CIA must demonstrate their ability to lead the project, including managing the project’s resources, personnel, budget and administrative requirements, in order to execute the project. Associate Investigators (AIs) can be included to strengthen the overall technical capability of the team (e.g. specialists such as statisticians) but they must not be essential for the leadership of the project. Capability is not an assessment of traditional track record elements. Consideration should also be given to the gender balance and development of new researchers within the applicant team.

While the score descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, **it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met.**

The descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. The process of consistently referring peer reviewers to these descriptors is vital to ensuring equity, thoroughness and process consistency.



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
7 Exceptional	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <p>are <b>extremely well</b> aligned to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</p> <p>are supported by an <b>extremely well</b> justified hypothesis/rationale</p> <p>are focused, well-defined, <b>extremely</b> coherent and have a <b>flawless</b> study design and approach</p> <p>would be <b>extremely</b> competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally</p> <p>have <b>extremely</b> well identified and managed scientific and technical risks.</p> <p>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>extremely appropriately</b> and/or has an <b>extremely strong</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated</p>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>extremely innovative</b> project aims, which will result in an <b>extremely substantial</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to an <b>extremely substantial</b> breakthrough or impact in the research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <p>will address an issue of <b>critical</b> importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</p> <p>will result in <b>extremely</b> significant outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</p> <p>will lead to <b>extremely</b> significant research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</p>	<p>The CIA demonstrates a <b>very strong</b> capability to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <p>has <b>exceptional</b> capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes</p> <p>has access to <b>exceptional</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if require, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) necessary for the project</p> <p>has an <b>extremely appropriate</b> balance of integrated expertise, experience and training that <b>specifically targets</b> all aspects of the proposed research, in both depth and breadth.</p>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
6 Outstanding	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are <b>very well</b> aligned to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</li> <li>are supported by a <b>very well</b> justified hypothesis/rationale</li> <li>are focused, well-defined, <b>very highly</b> coherent and have an <b>outstanding</b> study design and approach with a <b>minor weakness</b></li> <li>would be <b>very highly</b> competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally</li> <li>have <b>very well</b> identified and managed scientific and technical risks with only a <b>few minor weaknesses</b></li> <li>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>highly appropriately</b> and/or has a <b>very strong</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>very highly</b> innovative project aims, which will result in a <b>very substantial</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to a <b>very substantial</b> breakthrough or impact in the research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will address an issue that is of <b>very high importance</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</li> <li>will result in <b>very highly significant</b> outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</li> <li>will lead to <b>very highly significant</b> research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>The CIA demonstrates a <b>strong</b> capability to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has <b>outstanding</b> capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes</li> <li>has access to <b>outstanding</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if required, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) necessary for the project</li> <li>has a <b>very highly</b> appropriate balance of integrated expertise, experience and training that is <b>targeted</b> towards all aspects of the proposed research, in both depth and breadth.</li> </ul>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
5 Excellent	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are <b>well</b> aligned to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</li> <li>are supported by a <b>well</b> justified hypothesis/rationale</li> <li>are focused, well-defined, <b>highly</b> coherent and have an <b>excellent</b> study design and approach with a <b>few minor weaknesses</b></li> <li>would be <b>competitive</b> with the best, similar research proposals internationally</li> <li>have <b>well</b> identified and managed scientific and technical risks with a <b>few minor concerns</b></li> <li>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>very appropriately</b> and/or has a <b>strong</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>highly</b> innovative project aims, which will result in a <b>substantial</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to a <b>substantial</b> breakthrough or impact in the research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will address an issue that is of <b>considerable importance</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</li> <li>will result in <b>highly significant</b> outcomes in the science knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</li> <li>will lead to <b>highly significant</b> research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>The CIA demonstrates <b>good</b> capability to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has <b>excellent</b> capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes</li> <li>has access to <b>excellent</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if required, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) necessary for the project</li> <li>has a <b>highly appropriate</b> balance of integrated expertise, experience and training <b>necessary for all</b> aspects of the proposed research, both in depth and breadth.</li> </ul>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
4 Very good	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are <b>aligned</b> to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</li> <li>are supported by a <b>well</b> justified hypothesis/rationale</li> <li>are focused, <b>well-developed</b>, coherent and have a <b>very good</b> study design and approach with several minor weaknesses</li> <li>would be <b>likely to be competitive</b> with <b>high quality, similar</b> research proposals internationally</li> <li>have identified and managed scientific and technical risks with <b>several minor concerns</b></li> <li>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>appropriately</b> and/or has a <b>solid</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>innovative</b> project aims, which will result in a <b>moderate</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to a <b>moderate</b> breakthrough or impact in the research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will address an issue of <b>importance</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</li> <li>will result in <b>significant</b> outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</li> <li>will lead to <b>significant</b> research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>The CIA demonstrates <b>capability</b> to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has <b>very good</b> capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes</li> <li>has access to <b>very good</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if required, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) necessary for the project</li> <li>has an <b>appropriate</b> balance of integrated expertise, experience and training <b>necessary</b> for all aspects of the proposed research, in both depth and breadth.</li> </ul>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
3 Good	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are <b>somewhat</b> aligned to scheme objective and expected outcomes</li> <li>are supported by a <b>sound</b> hypothesis/rationale</li> <li>are logical, <b>generally clear</b> in the study design and approach with more than a few minor concerns</li> <li>would be <b>somewhat competitive</b> with <b>high quality, similar</b> research proposals internationally</li> <li>have identified and managed scientific and technical risks, with <b>some major concerns</b></li> <li>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>somewhat appropriately</b> and/or has a <b>limited</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>some innovative</b> project aims, which will likely result in <b>some</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to <b>some</b> breakthrough or impact in the health research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will address an issue of <b>some importance</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</li> <li>will result in <b>moderately significant</b> outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</li> <li>will lead to <b>moderately significant</b> research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>The CIA demonstrates <b>some capability</b> to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has <b>good capability</b> to execute the project and deliver outcomes</li> <li>has access to <b>good</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if required, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) necessary for the project</li> <li>has expertise, experience and training that is essential, integrated and <b>balanced for most</b> aspects of the proposed research, in both depth and breadth with <b>some major concerns</b>.</li> </ul>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
2 Satisfactory	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are <b>marginally</b> aligned to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</li> <li>are supported by a <b>satisfactory</b> hypothesis/rationale</li> <li>are <b>satisfactory</b> in the study design and approach, but <b>may lack clarity</b> in some aspects and may contain <b>some major weaknesses</b></li> <li>would be <b>marginally competitive</b> with <b>high quality, similar</b> research proposals internationally</li> <li>have identified and managed scientific and technical risks, but there are <b>several major concerns</b></li> <li>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>somewhat inappropriately</b> and/or has <b>little or flawed</b> justification for why any Variables are not integrated.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research demonstrates <b>somewhat innovative</b> project aims, which will result in a <b>minor</b> shift in the current paradigm, and/or lead to a <b>minor</b> breakthrough or impact in the health research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will address an issue of <b>marginal importance</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</li> <li><b>may result</b> in outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</li> <li><b>may lead</b> to research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>The CIA demonstrates some capability to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has <b>some capability</b> to execute the project and deliver outcomes</li> <li>has access to <b>some of the necessary</b> technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities and, if required, may have access to additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) relevant to the project, with some notable concerns</li> <li>has <b>some but not all</b> of the expertise experience and training essential to the proposed research in depth and breadth, with <b>several major concerns</b>.</li> </ul>



Score descriptor	Research Quality (35%)	Innovation & Creativity (25%)	Significance (20%)	Capability (20%)
1 Marginal to Poor	<p>The project aims and proposed research plan:</p> <p>are <b>not aligned</b> to scheme objectives and expected outcomes</p> <p>are underpinned by a <b>weak</b> hypothesis/rationale</p> <p>have <b>significant flaws</b> in the study design and approach and may contain several major weaknesses</p> <p>are <b>unlikely to be competitive</b> with similar research proposals internationally</p> <p>have <b>not satisfactorily</b> identified and managed scientific and technical risks</p> <p>has integrated sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation <b>inappropriately</b> and/or has <b>no justification</b> for why any Variables are not integrated.</p>	<p>Relative to the research field, the planned research <b>does not</b> demonstrate innovative project aims, and is unlikely to cause a shift in the current paradigm, or lead to a breakthrough or impact in the health research area.</p>	<p>The planned research, relative to the research field:</p> <p>will address an issue of <b>some concern</b> to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</p> <p><b>unlikely to result</b> in outcomes in the science, knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues</p> <p><b>unlikely to lead</b> to research outputs (intellectual property, publications, products, services, conferences, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.).</p>	<p>The CIA <b>does not demonstrate capability</b> to lead the team in achieving the project aims.</p> <p>The CI applicant team overall: <b>does not demonstrate</b> capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes</p> <p><b>does not have access</b> to the necessary technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities or, if required, additional support personnel (Associate Investigators) relevant to the project, with several major concerns</p> <p><b>does not have access</b> to expertise, experience and training essential to the proposed research in depth and breadth.</p>



## Appendix C Innovation and Creativity

### Preamble

The Structural Review of NHMRC's Grant Program identifies that applicants may be more likely to propose, and peer reviewers more likely to favour, conservative research to the detriment of innovative and creative research.

Advances in health and medical research, however, require a constant infusion of innovative ideas, technologies and points of view that may differ substantially from current thinking or practice and that may not necessarily be supported by substantial preliminary data.

The Ideas Grant scheme funds innovative and creative research projects proposed by researchers of any career stage and in any area of health and medical research, from discovery to implementation.

### Definition

Innovation generally refers to changing or creating more effective processes, products and ideas. It is about making change or doing something in a new way.

Innovation is a multi-faceted concept that encompasses a broad spectrum of activities and outcomes across the health and medical research sector. As noted in the Australian Government's Innovation System Report (2011), a microbiologist's perspective on innovation might be different to that of an entrepreneur. A business that creates new technology thinks about innovation may be different to the attitudes expressed by a firm that adopts existing technology. Yet, each of these different perspectives can lead to equally important health innovation outcomes. Innovation can be radical and disruptive, but often it is incremental. Innovations need not always be immediately successful and can have downstream impacts.

Innovation in NHMRC's Ideas Grant scheme requires a creative approach that pursues new ideas, embraces intellectual risk and, if successful, may lead to a breakthrough or major impact in a particular health and medical research area. It could extend from the generation of entirely novel areas of research to driving change in current practice.

Innovation in health and medical research occurs in *all* areas of research funded by NHMRC. It seeks to challenge and shift current paradigms and/or have a major impact on a health research area through one or more studies that creatively:

- develop or use novel research concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions
- propose a reinterpretation, refinement, improvement or new application of existing theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions, or
- integrate and adapt concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions from other research fields or disciplines for a new purpose or in a new way.

Examples of areas of innovative research include, but are not limited to, those that:

- propose a new area of inquiry

- develop or use a completely unexplored approach to solving a longstanding important challenge or obstacle
- are substantially different from research already being pursued in the field
- introduce a new paradigm or challenge prevailing paradigms/assumptions
- look at existing problems or issues from a new perspective
- seek unconventional approaches that are outside the mainstream
- could change established practice, terminate a current practice/process or create new fields
- show what doesn't work
- reinterpret or readapt data for new purposes
- apply innovative methods, practices and processes to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and
- could yield new avenues of investigation.

Irrespective of the approach, innovative research should seek to have an impact. Although innovation can be considered in a commercialisation and technology frame, it equally encompasses changes to research concepts, approaches, methodologies and interventions that may improve policy, social aspects of care, quality of life or health processes and outcomes.

## Appendix D Eligibility for Investigator or Ideas grant schemes (2026 funding round)

	Grants eligible to apply for in the 2026 funding round (for funding 2027)
Grants held on 1 January 2027 <sup>^</sup>	<p><i>No Investigator or Ideas Grants held</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1x Investigator Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Ideas Grant (if you are offered the Investigator Grant, you are not eligible to be listed as a CI (CIA-CIJ) on any Ideas Grant application in the same funding round)</li> <li>▪ <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ 2x Ideas Grants</li> <li>▪ 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP*), <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP*) + 1x Ideas Grant (if you are offered the Investigator Grant, you are not eligible to be listed as a CI (CIA-CIJ) on any Ideas Grant application in the same funding round), <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ 1x Ideas Grant</li> </ul>
	<p><i>1x Ideas Grant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction in RSP*)</li> </ul>
	<p><i>1x Ideas Grant and 1x Investigator Grant (in final year)</i></p>
	<p><i>1x Ideas Grant and 1x Investigator Grant (<u>not</u> in final year)</i></p> <p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>2x Ideas Grants</i></p> <p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>2x Ideas Grants and 1x Investigator Grant (in final year)</i></p> <p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>2x Ideas Grants and 1x Investigator Grant (<u>not</u> in final year)</i></p> <p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Investigator Grant (in final year)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant</li> </ul>
	<p><i>1x Investigator Grant (<u>not</u> in final year)</i></p> <p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator or Ideas Grants</p>



^Ideas Grant held eligibility is based on the held grant's 'original' end date (at award). Investigator Grant held eligibility based on the 'actual' end date of the grant (in Sapphire) (e.g. if varied to extend the end date, during the life of a grant). Synergy Grant applications and/or grants do not impact the CI's eligibility to apply for and/or hold an Investigator or Ideas Grant.

\*For the period of overlap with the Ideas Grant

# Appendix E Ideas Grants 2026 Guide to Applicants

## 1. Preparing an application

The following sections provide additional advice about parts of the application that are specific to Ideas Grants 2026.

- Refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.
- Ideas Grant scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in Sapphire (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, refer to Section 7 in the grant opportunity guidelines.

### 1.1 Use of generative artificial intelligence in grant applications

Applicants are to exercise caution when using generative artificial intelligence tools in the preparation of grant applications, as per NHMRC's [Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grant Applications and Peer Review](#).

## 2. Application requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completed mandatory sections of 'My Profile' (Section 5)
- Completed application form (Section 6)
- Grant Proposal as an attachment (Section 6.7.2)

Applications must comply with all requirements as set out in the grant opportunity guidelines. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements may result in non-acceptance or exclusion of your application (refer to Section 4 of the guidelines).

## 3. Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information and are discouraged from making changes to this information after the minimum data due date. NHMRC uses this information to identify peer reviewers who are best suited to assess the application. Minimum data are indicated in Sapphire by a flag (🚩) and are comprised of:

- Application title (not denoted by a blue flag)
- Administering Institution
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health research focus (yes/no)
- Project synopsis

- Privacy agreement (both tick boxes ticked)
- Research Classification:
  - Broad Research Area
  - Field(s) of Research
  - Peer Review Areas
  - Research Keywords (minimum of 5)
- Chief Investigator A (complete CIA Role and Name)

Minimum data must be entered into Sapphire by 17:00pm AEST on 8 April 2026. Applicants are to refer to section 7.4 of the guidelines for further information.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application being ineligible and not proceeding. The Minimum Data deadline will not be extended.

RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications only require certification once complete and ready for submission to NHMRC.

## 4. Key changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the Ideas Grants application form:

- There is a new mandatory question in the Sapphire application form about the integration of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation in the proposed research (Section 6.2).
- Applicants must describe how sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation are integrated in the proposed research within the Research Proposal component of the Grant Proposal, where relevant (Section 6.2).

## 5. 'My Profile' requirements

Within your profile in Sapphire, there is mandatory information that must be provided and/or updated before an application is submitted (refer to Section 7 of the guidelines). This information includes personal details, academic/research interests and peer review information.

Mandatory Profile information is indicated in Sapphire. This requirement applies to all Chief Investigators (CIs) named on the application. You will need to verify that each of the CIs has completed and/or updated their profile before an application is certified.

### 5.1. About my profile

Provide your primary institution name under Primary Institution. If this is an Administering Institution, the RAO(s) will have access to view your profile (including your gender). You may also allow the RAO to edit your profile.

Note: to update your Primary Institution name in Sapphire, go to 'Account Settings', 'Personal details' and click on 'Primary Institution'.

## 5.2. Personal information

Provide your most current details in this section. It is important that your title, names, gender, phone and email details are up to date as these are the details on which NHMRC relies when contacting you.

## 5.3. Academic information

Indicate whether you have a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and, if applicable, the pass date (year) of your thesis (not the date of conferral).

## 5.4. Peer review information

Select a Broad Research Area that best aligns with your expertise.

**Basic Science Research:** seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use, but is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

**Clinical Medicine and Science Research:** seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

**Health Services Research:** seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

**Public Health Research:** seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

Accurate and up-to-date peer review information helps reduce peer review burden and ensures applications are allocated to the reviewers with the most relevant expertise. When completing this section, consider your relevant skills and expertise to review grant applications, rather than the field of your current research.

Select 5 to 10 Research Keywords most applicable to your main area of research. You can also provide further detail about your research interests or areas of expertise. This could include, but is not limited to, your research methodologies, areas of student supervision and areas in which you have published.

Select up to 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best describe your research interests, 1 being the most relevant and 3 being the least relevant.

You can add as many Fields of Research as required to describe your expertise. Indicate when you started your research in that field, the classification of the research (e.g., primary), and whether the research is current or terminated. Individuals are encouraged to list all relevant Fields of Research. Only current Fields of Research will be displayed.

Note: An opportunity is provided in the application to select research areas, fields of research and keywords that best describe your research proposal, as opposed to your personal research interests. The above information about your personal research interests will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

## 5.5. Unavailability calendar

Peer review is an integral part of NHMRC funding schemes. NHMRC grant recipients have obligations to contribute to the assessment of applications (as outlined in the *NHMRC Funding Agreement*). If you are not available to act as a peer reviewer, include a statement detailing your reasons and the period for which you are unavailable. To maintain the list of available peer reviewers within Sapphire, NHMRC requests that all applicants update their availability routinely. This will avoid unnecessary contact if you are unavailable.

## 5.6. Contributions to NHMRC

Indicate the role you have contributed to NHMRC, if you have previously participated in an advisory, peer review, guideline development or other NHMRC activity requiring expert input via formal appointment.

Click '+' to start a new entry to specify the below:

Select a 'Contribution Role', from the drop-down menu

Indicate the year in which you held the Contribution Role.

Indicate the number of times you acted in that role in each year.

You will need to create a new entry for each type of contribution in a particular year.

## 5.7 'My Profile' requirements specific to Ideas Grants 2026

The following sections provide advice about parts of the application that are specific to Ideas Grants 2026. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, you are only required to complete the sections outlined below. If you enter more information than is required, only the required information will be imported into your application.

It is important that relevant 'My Profile' information (for all CIs) is up to date at the time of application submission, as it is used to contact applicants, imported into the application and used by peer reviewers. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile and to capture grant outcomes. 'My Profile' information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made to 'My Profile' (for any CI) after Chief Investigator A (CIA) certification will not appear in the submitted application.

Instructions for entering 'My Profile' information in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Note: You are required to list research outputs in relevant subsections of your profile. You are encouraged to link the entered research output to NHMRC Grant IDs, where applicable.

## 6. Application form requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to Ideas Grants 2026 and must be completed as part of your application. Step-by-step instructions for entering application details in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

### 6.1. Creating an application

Click '+ New Application' to create an application.

#### Grant Opportunity

Select the grant round you wish to apply for, e.g. 2026 Ideas Grants commencing in 2027. The application title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and needs to accurately describe the nature of the research proposal.

The title should not be in all capitals, contain placeholder text, or include the name of the grant opportunity or the applicant. The title should indicate the subject of the application. The title will be used to allocate your application to suitable peer reviewers, peer reviewers to declare interests, and published in the release of grant opportunity outcomes.

Instructions on how to change your application title can be found in the [Application section of Sapphire Help](#).

### 6.2. Application details

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements.

#### Application Identification Number (APP ID)

Each application will have its own unique Application Identification Number (Application ID), which is automatically generated by Sapphire and pre-filled in the application. Use this Application ID number (e.g. 2345678) to identify your application when referring to it in any correspondence.

#### Administering Institution

Select your Administering Institution by entering 3 characters to start searching. There can be only one Administering Institution for each application. You must ensure that the institution you choose as your Administering Institution is the correct institution for your application. If in doubt, contact the RAO at your proposed Administering Institution.

#### Grant Duration

This section may contain pre-filled information that cannot be edited. If not, select the requested duration of your grant (in years) with reference to any limits specified in the grant opportunity guidelines.

#### Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Health Research

This question enables you to identify research that specifically investigates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues. It is also designed to enable NHMRC to identify those research proposals that will require assessment of the proposed research against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

Only select 'Yes' if you can demonstrate that at least 20% of your research effort and /or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

If you have answered 'Yes' to this question, you will be required to provide details of how your application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* in the application form. Your application may be assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*, using information you provide in the following text boxes: 'Community Engagement', 'Benefit', 'Sustainability and Transferability' and 'Building Capability'.

This information will be provided to peer reviewers if your application is confirmed by an assessor with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as meeting the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

### **Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation**

This question is for applicants to indicate whether sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation (the Variables) are or are not being integrated in the proposed research by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' for each Variable. Further information must be provided in the free text box for each Variable. If applicants select 'No', they must provide a scientifically sound and evidence-based justification for why the Variable is not integrated in the proposed research. If applicants select 'Yes', they must summarise how the Variable is being integrated in the proposed research. In addition to the response to this question, applicants must detail how the relevant Variable(s), if any, are integrated in the proposed design, conduct, analysis, reporting and/or translation and implementation of the research within the relevant section of the Grant Proposal. Information on the Variables in both the response to this question and in the Grant Proposal, where applicable, will be considered by assessors when scoring applications against the assessment criteria.

Where relevant, a high-quality description of how sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation are integrated into a research project should include:

- which of the Variables are relevant to the research question(s) and which research participants/subjects will be included to reflect this
- the target distribution of participants/subjects by the relevant Variable(s) and why this distribution has been selected to answer the research question(s)
- planned strategies for meeting the target distribution of population groups (e.g., inclusive eligibility criteria, strategies for recruiting and retaining participants or procuring, managing and storing/housing subjects)
- the plan for collecting, analysing and presenting data by the relevant Variable(s), including use of the [ABS 2020 Standard](#), where appropriate.

The above should be summarised in response to the application question, with more detail provided in the Grant Proposal as required. The appropriateness of the described target distribution of participants/subjects by the relevant Variable(s) depends on the research

question(s). There may be scientifically sound and evidence-based justifications for focusing on a single population group for one or more of the Variables. This will be considered by assessors when scoring applications against the assessment criteria.

### **Project Synopsis**

The synopsis should accurately, and briefly, summarise the research proposal. This information may be used to assign applications to peer reviewers. It may also be considered in the peer review process.

### **Plain English Summary**

Describe the overall aims of the research and expected outcomes in simple terms that could be understood by the general public. Avoid the use of highly technical terms. This information may be used in grant announcements, media releases and other public documents, and by funding partners (where applicable) to determine whether the research proposal meets their priorities for funding.

### **Privacy Agreement**

NHMRC, as an agency subject to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), is required to notify you about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. We do so by referring you to the [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#). Ensure that you have carefully read and understood the Privacy Policy before completing the application. If you require further clarification, contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer via email ([NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au)) or letter (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601).

### **Have you read and understood the NHMRC Privacy Policy?**

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

In addition, and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 8 in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), we seek your consent to send your personal information (consisting of an 'Application summary') overseas, for the purposes of peer review of this application if required. NHMRC uses the expertise of some peer assessors who reside overseas. While we make every effort to protect your personal information, assessors outside Australia are bound by their own country's laws and consequently we cannot provide assurance that your information will be handled in accordance with the same standards as required by the Privacy Act 1988, or that you would have similar remedies if your personal information is released in breach of local privacy laws.

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

### **Partner organisation consent**

Do you give consent to provide your application and assessment results to other partner organisations?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

If you wish to be considered for funding by a partner organisation, select 'Yes'. By selecting 'Yes' you are consenting to NHMRC providing your application and/or assessment information to potential funding partners if your application fits the funding partner's research funding

objectives. For a list of funding partners, refer to this grant opportunity's information on [GrantConnect](#).

### Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Complete this section if at least 20% of your research effort and/or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and you answered 'yes' to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research question within Sapphire

Applicants need to address each Indigenous Research Excellence Criterion as set out in Section 8.1.3 of the Ideas Grants guidelines.

## 6.3. Participating Institutions

In some cases, the institution that will administer your application may differ from the institution in which you will actually conduct the proposed research or your proposed research may be conducted at a collaborating institution in addition to your administering institution. For example, many universities administer research that will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. Information on 'Participating Institutions' is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application and for grant administration purposes.

### Research Institution

List the Participating Institution and department where the proposed research will be conducted.

To add more than one Participating Institution, press '+' and complete the required information. If the Participating Institution does not appear in the list, email the institution name to the Research Help Centre ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)).

### Research Effort (%)

If the research will be conducted at more than one institution, enter the Research Effort percentage (%) allocated to each Participating Institution and department. The percentages (%) entered must total 100%.

Note: If some or all of the proposed research will be carried out at your Administering Institution, create an entry with the Administering Institution and choose a percentage up to 100%. At least one institution must be listed.

## 6.4. Research classification

The details entered in this section will be used in the peer review process to assist with the allocation of your application to the most relevant peer reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile.

Definitions for the 4 Broad Research Areas (BRAs) have been added to the application form in Sapphire to assist applicants in selecting the most appropriate BRA. These definitions will appear as help text (🔗) under Research Classification in the application.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

#### **Broad Research Area:**

Select a Broad Research Area that best describes the research outlined in your grant proposal. For example, research in the very early stages of developing a vaccine against a parasite should be categorised as basic science research instead of public health research.

**Basic Science Research:** seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use but, is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

**Clinical Medicine and Science Research:** seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

**Health Services Research:** seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

**Public Health Research:** seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

#### **Field(s) of Research:**

Click '+' to add rows for each Field of Research (FoR) that best describes the area of research of the application. The choice of FoRs and their proportions will assist in assigning appropriate assessors to the application.

- Select up to 3 Fields of Research that best reflect the nature of the research in the application
- Allocate a percentage (%) against each FoR.
- Ensure the total percentage (%) equals 100%.

#### **Peer Review Areas:**

Select 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best reflect the application's areas of research. PRAs must not be duplicated.

#### **Research Keywords:**

Select 5 Research Keywords that are most applicable to the application's main area of research.

### Burden of Disease:

Select up to 3 Burden of Disease types that best describe the area of research of the application.

- Click '+' to add rows for each additional Burden of Disease.
- You must allocate a percentage (%) of time against each.
- The percentage (%) total must not exceed 100%.

## 6.5. Research team

You can include a maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIs) and 10 Associate Investigators (AIs) in your research team. For further information of the eligibility requirements for CIs and AIs, refer to Section 4 of the guidelines.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. List all members of the Research Team, including CIs and AIs. Complete a separate entry for each member of the team by clicking '+' to add rows.

All CIs/AIs must have a Sapphire account in order to be listed as part of the Research Team. CIs/AIs who cannot be located using the search function will need to complete registration.

Note: Click 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' to invite a Chief/Associate Investigator to complete Sapphire Registration and/or share your application with view or edit access. Enter the email address, select the corresponding access option from the drop-down menu and click 'Save and send'. Users will receive an email invitation to be assigned to the application with appropriate access rights. Click '+ Add another user' to invite any additional Investigators.

Ensure that you have the correct email addresses for your colleagues before commencing your application.

Indicate that you 'agree' to data in your application, including profile information, being viewed by anyone your institution has granted 'nominated position holder' status to or anyone who has been granted 'preview access' to the application. This may include co-CIs for team based applications.

### Chief Investigators (CIA to CIJ)

The 'Role' and corresponding 'Name' fields for Chief Investigator A must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. If you are naming yourself for a CI/AI role, 'Invitation Response' status will automatically change to Accepted.

Indicate whether the Chief Investigator A will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant and outline their background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal.

Click '+' to add rows for additional CIs. Click the 'Role' drop-down menu to select a role for the CI.

To add a CI to your research team, enter their email address. Outline the background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal for each additional Chief Investigator (max. 1000 characters).

If you add a CI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by CIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added CIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

#### **Associate Investigators (AIs)**

Click '+' to Add Rows for AIs. To add an AI to your research team, enter their email address. 'Position' and 'Relevant background and expertise' are optional.

If you add an AI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by AIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added AIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

## **6.6. Ethics**

If you answer 'Yes' to any of the questions, you will need to obtain ethics approvals and supply evidence of these to your research office in the event your application is funded. For further information, see [NHMRC's practical guidelines and advice on Ethics and Integrity](#).

## **6.7. Grant proposal**

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

- Links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online; where links are included, provide the URL in full (e.g. the NHMRC website <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au>). Applicants are asked not to use URL shorteners as this may create a security risk.
- Publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, consistent with the recommendations in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. If included, these metrics will be disregarded by peer reviewers when assessing an application.

The grant proposal must be written in English and submitted in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, using NHMRC's Grant Proposal template, which will be available on [GrantConnect](#). Applicants must use this template. The grant proposal must be uploaded into Sapphire.

#### **Grant Proposal (Upload)**

To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the 'Upload New' button followed by the 'Choose File' button. Select the PDF file you wish to upload and then click 'Start upload' to upload your Grant Proposal. Click 'Save' to ensure the application is submitted correctly.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

Naming and formatting requirements for the grant proposal, to ensure fairness and consistency across applicants, are listed in section 6.7.1. Applications that fail to comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

Details to be addressed in the grant proposal and associated page limits are set out in section 6.7.2. Applicants should note that peer reviewers will, as part of their assessment, consider the reproducibility and applicability of the proposed research and research design. Within the experimental design of the proposal, applicants need to include sufficient information to demonstrate that robust and unbiased results will be produced.

### 6.7.1. Formatting requirements

The grant proposal must be saved and uploaded as a PDF file. The PDF file must:

- not exceed 2 MB in size
- be named using the following: Applicant’s Surname\_Document Type/Name.pdf
- be A4 in size
- include the Application ID and Applicant surname in the header
- include the page number in the footer
- have 2 cm top, bottom, left and right margins
- be written in English.

NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12-point Times New Roman font. Applicants must ensure the font is readable. Single line spacing must be used.

All images and figures within the grant proposal must be appropriately referenced. Applicants must ensure any images of people (particularly children) are appropriately de-identified and/or note that informed consent has been given to use the image.

### 6.7.2. Grant proposal components

Component	Page Limit
Research proposal	7 pages
References	2 pages
Innovation & Creativity Statement	1 page
Significance Statement	1 page
Capability Statement	1 page

### 6.7.2.1. Research proposal

This has a page limit of 7 pages.

The research proposal must address the essential components of your research and can include the following depending on the type of research.

Aims

- Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of hypotheses to be tested.

Background

- Provide a rationale for the project.

Research Plan – methods and techniques to be used

- Outline the research plan in detail, including the following where appropriate:
  - detailed description of the experimental design
  - techniques to be used
  - details and justification of controls
  - details for appropriate blinding
  - strategies for randomisation and/or stratification
  - justification of sample size, including power calculation
  - justification of statistical methods
  - strategies to ensure that the experimental results will be robust, unbiased and reproducible
  - details on the integration of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation, where relevant
  - any ethical considerations
  - community involvement and/or plans to transfer knowledge to stakeholders or into practice
  - strengths and weaknesses of the study design and approach.

Timeline

- Provide a detailed timeline for the expected outcomes of the Research Proposal along with justification for the duration requested.

Identified risks

- Describe the scientific and/or technical risks associated with the research plan and how these will be managed. They could include risks and mitigations relating to the known or anticipated impact of COVID-19 on the research plan.
- Include details, if applicable, of how Associate Investigators (AIs) help to mitigate or control any risk.

Outcomes and significance

- Describe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research plan, and the potential significance of the research.

### 6.7.2.2. References

References for the Research Proposal must:

- not exceed 2 pages
- provide a list of all references cited in the application in an appropriate standard journal format (NHMRC prefers the Author-date (also known as the Harvard System), Documentary-note and the Vancouver Systems)
- list authors in the order in which they appear in PubMed
- only include references to cited work
- be written in English.

### 6.7.2.3. Assessment criteria

NHMRC defines 'Innovation and Creativity' for the Ideas Grant scheme as health and medical research that seeks to challenge and shift current paradigms and/or have a major impact on a health research area through one or more studies that creatively:

- develop or use novel research concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions
- propose a reinterpretation, refinement, improvement or new application of existing theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions, or
- integrate and adapt concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies or interventions from other research fields or disciplines for a new purpose or in a new way.

Applicants should address the Innovation and Creativity assessment criterion in this statement (see Appendix B and Appendix C of the Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines), noting that assessment of this criterion may require supporting or background information provided in other sections of the grant proposal. Applicants should avoid duplicating information provided in other sections of the grant proposal.

### Significance statement – 1 page

NHMRC defines 'Significance' for the Ideas Grant scheme as the extent to which the outcomes and outputs will result in advancements to the research or health area. Significance in this context does not refer to the prevalence of disease or magnitude of the issue.

Applicants should address the Significance assessment criterion in this statement (see Appendix B of the Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines), noting that assessment of this criterion may require supporting or background information provided in other sections of the grant proposal. Applicants should avoid duplicating information provided in other sections of the grant proposal.

## Capability statement – 1 page

NHMRC defines ‘Capability’ for the Ideas Grant scheme as the appropriateness of the applicant team and their expertise, the resources and access to additional personnel necessary to achieve the aim(s) of the project. Capability is not an assessment of traditional track record elements. Consideration should also be given to the gender balance and development of new researchers within the applicant team, if relevant. Applicants should address the Capability assessment criterion in this statement (see Appendix B of the Ideas Grants 2026 Guidelines), noting that assessment of this criterion may require supporting or background information provided in other sections of the grant proposal. Applicants should avoid duplicating information provided in other sections of the grant proposal.

## 6.8. Third party research facilities

Applicants often need to receive services from research facilities to undertake their research.

Such facilities include but are not limited to: biospecimens and associated data from biobanks or pathology services, non-human primate colonies, the Australian Twin Registry, Cell Bank Australia, and the Trans-Tasman Radio Oncology Group and other organisations that provide clinical trials services.

Applicants will need to consult with research facilities to ensure that the services they require can be provided and that the charges included in the budget are accurate (refer to Direct Research Costs section). Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration must be submitted with the application.

Indicate whether you will be using services provided by a research facility to complete your research. If you select ‘yes’, then upload your letter from the research facility confirming their collaboration.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document’s name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

## 6.9. Direct Research Costs

Details on permitted uses of NHMRC funds and setting of budgets can be found in the [Direct Research Cost Guidelines](#).

### Salary

Salary contributions for research staff, including members of the research team, are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The level of PSP requested in an application must match the roles and responsibilities of the position in the proposed research and the percentage of the PSP requested must reflect the required time commitment. Applicants must fully justify all requests for PSPs.

Further information about PSPs, including the levels, is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

This section only needs to be completed if you are seeking salary for a research role.

### **Position function**

Describe the function of the research position for which a salary is requested.

Note: A PSP is awarded based on a justified research function and it is not tied to an individual.

### **Salary level**

Indicate the PSP level for the research position based on the level of the work to be undertaken and the % of a full PSP package to be paid for each year of funding (in whole numbers only). Applicants must apply for the exact proportion of a PSP that is required for the research being proposed.

### **Reason for salary**

Provide detailed justification for the salary that is being requested for the research position. The PSP level and the percentage of salary must both be well justified.

Note: When awarding a budget, peer reviewers will consider whether the PSPs requested are fully justified and reasonable given the time commitment indicated for this application.

**Other Research Costs** Provide details on:

- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- the justification for the particular item requested.

This information must be aligned with the proposed aims of the study, be detailed on a yearly basis and be fully justified (including, in the case of equipment costing less than \$10,000, why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution).

### **Equipment**

Provide details on:

- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- the justification for the particular item requested.

Applicants can request funding to pay for equipment costing over \$10,000 that is essential for the research. The total equipment requested cannot exceed \$80,000. Individual items of equipment costing less than \$10,000 must be requested within the 'Other Research Costs' category.

Applicants must clearly outline the total value of all items of equipment for each year, why the equipment is required for the proposed research and why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution.

For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the RAO of the Administering Institution and be made available to NHMRC on request. The

Administering Institution must be prepared to meet all service and repair costs for equipment funded.

Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where they 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).

Note: NHMRC funds the direct costs of research based on advice from peer review. Applicants should provide detailed justification of budgets requests, which will be closely scrutinised to ensure all requests are appropriate. Inadequately justified budgets may be adjusted.

Funding cannot be used for infrastructure, particularly land, buildings and fixtures.

### **Entering Other Research Costs and Equipment Costs**

You will need to create a separate entry for each cost. Click the plus (+) button to enter a cost.

For 'Item name', enter a brief name/description of the item.

Outline the cost of the item required for each year of the grant proposal. Only the relevant years need to be completed.

#### **Justification**

Provide a comprehensive justification for the cost.

## **6.10. Funding partners and MRFF**

Applicants may be able to seek funding from funding partners, either exclusively or in addition to NHMRC funding. Details of the funding partners participating in the 2026 Ideas Grants round will be provided in Sapphire.

Applicants seeking funding from a funding partner need to be aware of any additional application requirements.

Applicants will need to indicate to NHMRC whether they are applying to receive funding from NHMRC only, from other organisations only, or from NHMRC in conjunction with other organisations. Applications will only be considered for funding from organisations that have been selected.

### **Partner Organisation(s)**

Click '+' to add each Partner Organisation. To find the organisation name, enter 3 or more characters to start searching and select from the drop-down list. Indicate an 'Abbreviated Partner Name'. This will be used for display purposes only. Select 'Next' to enter Partner Details.

#### **Partner Details**

For each Partner Organisation, select a main contact and enter their name and email address.

#### **Publishing Names of Research Partner Organisations**

The Australian Government publishes information on successful grants in written material and on its websites. This information will include the names of research partner organisations. Indicate by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' whether research partner organisations have agreed to allow the Australian Government to publish their names and that this is stated in the Letter of Support.

## 7. Certifying your application

Once all 'My Profile' details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in Sapphire. Certification is required by both the CIA and Administering Institution. Refer to section 7.8 of the guidelines for further details.

### Before completing these steps:

- Review the application to ensure it is accurate and complete and meets all eligibility/application requirements.
- Applicants retain responsibility for confirming that their application satisfies the stated eligibility requirements.
- For funding schemes where the applicant has nominated a research budget, the summary tab automatically generates a summary of the requested budget from the relevant sections.
- A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at Section 8 of this Appendix.
- Ensure you have read and understood the assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings required of CIAs and Administering Institutions as part of this step. These are outlined in section 7.8 of the guidelines.
- Note that certification will lock down the application and prevent further editing. The final snapshot produced at this time will include relevant information from your 'My Profile'. Any subsequent changes to these areas of Sapphire will not appear in the application. If changes are needed after CIA certification but before submission to NHMRC, your RAO will need to reject the application in order for you to make the changes.
- Note that your personal information may be provided to another Administering Institution for the purpose of certifying the application where a researcher is either currently receiving NHMRC funding or is on a different and separate application for NHMRC funding.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Once submitted to NHMRC, your application will be considered final and no changes can be made unless the application is withdrawn for amendment before the closing date.

## 8. Checklist for applicants

### Before creating an application:

- Ensure Sapphire Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete.

- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines and [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).
- Check closing date and time for application lodgement.
- Update your Sapphire 'My Profile' in accordance with requirements set out in this document.
- Read the relevant ethical guidelines/associated documentation if ethics approval is required for the proposed application.
- Inform your RAO of your intention to submit an application.
- Be aware of any Administering Institution internal deadlines and requirements for submission.

#### **During the creation of an application:**

- Check any minimum data requirements.
- Check eligibility requirements.
- Complete all parts of the application.
- Create and upload your Grant Proposal.
- Identify any Relative to Opportunity considerations, including Career Disruptions, where applicable, within your application.
- Consider any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander requirements for your application, including addressing any additional assessment criteria.
- Make sure all required attachments are uploaded.

#### **Before submitting an application:**

- Read and understand the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#). Submission of an application indicates that the Administering Institution and research team understand and will comply with the principles and responsibilities set out in the Code.
- Check your compliance with formatting and page requirements.
- Ensure any images of people (particularly children) are appropriately de-identified and/or note that informed consent has been given to use the image.
- Ensure any approvals or licences are acquired or applied for.
- Check all information is correct and complete.
- Familiarise yourself with your obligations should you be successful.
- Certify the application and ensure RAO certification and submission occur before the closing date and time.

**Remember, your RAO is your primary contact for advice and assistance. RAOs will contact the Research Help Centre for further advice if required.**