Centres of Research Excellence Funding
Rules
For Funding Commencing in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centres of Research Excellence in Clinical Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Including research in the areas of Indigenous health and wellbeing and electromagnetic energy.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Centres of Research Excellence in Population Health Research</th>
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<td>Including research in the areas of Indigenous health and wellbeing and electromagnetic energy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Centres of Research Excellence in Health Services Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Including research in the area of Indigenous health and wellbeing</td>
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Applications OPEN: Wednesday 28 November 2012
Applications CLOSE: 17:00 hrs (AEDT) Wednesday 20 February 2013.

All applications must be commenced in RGMS by 5pm (AEDST) 16 January 2013 (refer Eligibility section 7)

Late applications will not be accepted.

This document should be read in conjunction with the NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence Advice and Instructions to Applicants for funding commencing in 2013.
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OVERVIEW

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia’s leading funding agency promoting the development and maintenance of public and individual health standards. NHMRC is established under the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (the NHMRC Act), which is available on the NHMRC website at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/org/role.htm.

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

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

The NHMRC Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 (Strategic Plan) describes the agency’s strategic objectives and provides the context within which its funding schemes operate. Applicants should pay particular attention to Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan, which includes NHMRC’s strategy to fund programs which build capacity to undertake research and translate knowledge into improved policy and practice.

Further information on the Strategic Plan can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au

The NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2013 incorporates the NHMRC Universal Funding Rules. The Universal Funding Rules were designed to provide investigators and Research Administration Officers (RAOs) ease of access and consistency across funding schemes. The Funding Rules in Part 1 of this document apply specifically to the Centres of Research Excellence scheme only. The Funding Rules in Part 2, the NHMRC Universal Funding Rules, apply to all NHMRC funding schemes, including the Centres of Research Excellence scheme.

This document, Part 1 and Part 2, must be read in conjunction with the ‘The Centres of Research Excellence Scheme Advice and Instructions to Applicants for funding commencing in 2013.’
**PART 1 – Funding Rules Specific to Centres of Research Excellence**

The Centres of Research Excellence Scheme (CRE) will support research which aims to improve health outcomes, and promote/or improve translation of research outcomes into policy and/or practice. The CRE scheme will also support researchers in capacity building activities in specific areas of need identified by NHMRC.

1. **Purpose of this document**

This document provides detailed advice and information for applicants who are considering applying for NHMRC CRE support commencing 2013. *It should be read in conjunction with the NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence Advice to Applicants for funding commencing in 2013 (Advice to Applicants) document, located in the Library section of the Research Grants Management System (RGMS). The document is intended to assist Chief Investigators who are considering applying for an NHMRC CRE for funding commencing in 2013.*

2. **Further Information**

Enquiries about the content of NHMRC Funding Rules should be addressed to your Administering Institution’s Research Administrative Officer (RAO) in the first instance. If further assistance is required, please contact the Research Help Centre on 1800 500 983, or at help@nhmrc.gov.au or go direct to the relevant funding scheme webpage on the NHMRC website: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/types/index.htm](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/types/index.htm)

Postal address: National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

3. **Summary of Changes for 2012 round**

Applicants should note the following changes introduced this year:

- clearer definition of the difference between population health and health services research – refer Part 1, section 4.1;
- inclusion of Universal Funding Rules – refer Part 2;
- two special interest areas – refer Part 1, section 4.3
- applications must contain the minimum data by **16 January 2013** – refer **Part 1, section 7.2**;
- NHMRC will not be covering the costs of flights or accommodation for applicants to attend interviews – refer Part 1, section 10.2; and
- a maximum of five (5) members of an applicant team can attend interview.

4. **Description and Objectives of the Scheme**

4.1. **Introduction**

CREs will provide support for teams of researchers to pursue collaborative research and develop capacity in clinical, population health and health services research. Funding will support three streams:
• CREs in Clinical Research;
• CREs in Population Health Research; and
• CREs in Health Services Research.
Applicants nominate the stream that best fits their research proposal, although in the case of Population Health and Health Services Research there can be overlap. The following definitions are provided to assist applicants to select the appropriate stream.

• Population health research is an interdisciplinary field focusing on the health outcomes of groups of individuals. It studies personal, behavioural and environmental determinants of health, health outcomes, and policies and interventions that link these in efforts to prevent ill-health, improve the health of populations and ameliorate health disparities (adapted from Kindig D, Stoddart G. Am J Public Health. 2003 March; 93(3): 380–383).

• Health services research is an interdisciplinary field that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, and its quality, cost and outcomes. It provides data, evidence, and tools to make health care affordable, safe, effective, equitable, accessible, and patient-centred (http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/hsrguide/hsrguide.htm).

4.2 Scheme Objectives
The objective of funding CREs is to:
• support the conduct and development of innovative, high quality, collaborative research;
• ensure effective translation of research into health policy and/or practice;
• foster and build capacity in the health and medical research workforce; and
• provide opportunities to expand and improve collaborations between research teams.

A CRE may be a single physical entity or institute, or be a geographically disparate network linking across more than one institution. Centres are encouraged to collaborate with, and participate in, international research studies.

4.3 Special Interest Areas
In addition to the general aims of the CRE Scheme, the scheme is used to identify and support research in special interest areas. In this Round there are two special interest areas:

• Indigenous Health and Wellbeing; and
• Electro-magnetic Energy Research (EME).

See Attachment A for details.
5. Criteria for the Assessment of Applications

5.1 Assessment Criteria
Applications for CREs are assessed by peers on whether they meet the scheme objectives using the following Assessment Criteria, which will be weighted equally. In framing applications against the Assessment Criteria, applicants should consider how the proposal will address the associated points.

1. **Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes**
   - clarity of research objectives, and theoretical concepts;
   - strengths and weaknesses of the research design(s), or the appropriateness and robustness of the proposed methodology/ies or appropriateness of the broader strategy of the research program of the Centre;
   - feasibility of the proposed research;
   - aims and concepts of the research are innovative or pioneering on an international level; and
   - likelihood that significant new findings will be produced, and substantially advance knowledge in the field.

2. **Ensure effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice**
   - the quality of the plan for research translation;
   - plans for promoting the Centre’s activities to the wider community, including where appropriate, for commercial gain; and
   - the involvement of end-users and the wider community in the planning, implementation and uptake of the research program.

3. **Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles**
   - strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and encouragement of further career development; and
   - clarity of measures for integrating new researchers into the teams including mentoring strategies.

4. **Facilitate collaboration**
   - likely effectiveness of working collaborations and intellectual exchange;
   - the relationship with other groups in the particular field of research; and
   - integration and cohesiveness of the team.

5. **Record of Research and Translation Achievement - relative to opportunity.**

Teams are required to outline past and/or proposed collaborative arrangements within the applicant team, and address the means whereby the collaborators will ensure the cohesive running of the research during its funding period.
Record of Achievement is also considered in terms of whether the previous research experience of applicants demonstrates that the team is capable of achieving the proposed project and/or ability to deliver the proposed project in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience.

Record of Achievement may encompass the national and international standing of the applicants based upon their research achievements, relative to opportunity, including but not limited to:

- research outputs – most recent significant publications; publications that illustrate innovation and significance to past accomplishments; impact or outcome of previous research achievements, including effects on health care practices or policy; awards or honours in recognition of achievements;
- contribution to discipline or area – invitations to speak at international meetings, editorial appointments, specialist and high level health policy committee appointments; and
- other research-related achievements, such as:
  - influence on clinical/health policy or practice, or provision of influential advice to health authorities and government; and
  - impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes; e.g. via mainstream media, the community or industry involvement.

Record of Achievement is considered in relation to opportunity – with regard to factors such as career disruption, administrative and clinical/teaching load, and typical performance (including publications) for the field in question.

5.2 NHMRC Priority Research Area – Indigenous Health

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria (refer to section 5.1) and NHMRC’s Criteria for Health and Medical Research of Indigenous Australians (The Indigenous Criteria) available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/cre/index.htm.

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

- Values and Ethics – Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research available at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e52syn.htm; and
- The NHMRC Road Map II: A strategic framework for improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through research available at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/your_health/indigenous/index.htm#Road_Map_II.
Applicants wishing to be considered as an Indigenous Health applications need to demonstrate that at least 20% of their research effort and/or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health.

6. Critical Dates

The following critical dates apply to the scheme for funding commencing in 2013:

- Applications OPEN 28 November 2012
- Application commencement and minimum data requirements 17.00pm (AEDST) 16 January 2013 (refer section 7.2)
- Request to waive CIA residency status 11 February 2013 (refer to Section 7.4)
- Applications CLOSE 17:00pm (AEDST) 20 February 2013

Applications cannot be submitted after the closing time and date.

7. Eligibility

7.1 Who Should Apply

CRE grants are open to all researchers in Australia. Researchers who will be primarily based overseas for the duration of the grant cannot be named as Chief Investigator A.

Submissions must be certified and submitted through an NHMRC Administering Institution. This institution is responsible for the administration of the research funding, which is awarded under a funding agreement, and the institution accepts financial responsibility for the grant. The institution is also responsible for providing basic infrastructure support to those researchers involved in the project. Applicants and institutions should refer to the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy which can be found at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/policy/admininst.htm.

7.2 Application Commencement and Minimum Data Requirements

All applications must be commenced in RGMS by 17.00pm (AEDST) 16 January 2013.

Applications in RGMS must contain the minimum data to allow the NHMRC to start sourcing assessors with the appropriate expertise. Applicants wishing to apply for Centres of Research Excellence funding must provide the minimum data, by the due date.

Minimum Data Requirements:

The following information is required by 16 January 2013 to be eligible to apply:

- Part A Home (specifically the Administering Institution, Application Title and Synopsis)
- A-RT Research team and commitment (core team with other members listed as TBA if not yet known)
- Part B-AIR Application Priority Area (special interest area)

Please note: Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.
7.3 Multiple Grant Eligibility
Applicants applying as a Chief Investigator may apply for, and hold other NHMRC grants (subject to any limits set for holding grants in other NHMRC funding schemes). However, the time commitments of the Chief Investigators on the proposed CRE and other grants held (or to be held) will be considered in the review of the application. Chief Investigators should ensure that their time commitment is sufficient to ensure the viability of the CRE.

NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding. Those holding NHMRC grants and/or awards should refer to the relevant funding rules and conditions of the grant or award to determine their eligibility to hold an NHMRC CRE.

7.4 Eligibility for Investigators
The role and contribution of each Chief Investigator must be described in the CRE application form. Higher Degree students may be listed as Chief Investigators in exceptional circumstances. However, justification must be provided in the application form.

Chief Investigators may work part-time.

Chief Investigators
A maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIA-CIJ) is permitted on a CRE application.

Chief Investigators working for a Commonwealth Agency (e.g. CSIRO) cannot draw a salary from a CRE grant.

Chief Investigator A
The Chief Investigator A (CIA) takes the lead role in the conduct of the research project, and is the investigator who takes responsibility for completion and lodgement of the application. It is generally required that, at the time of application submission, the CIA is an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or a New Zealand resident, and must be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.

NHMRC may waive the requirement to be an Australian citizen or permanent resident where it can be demonstrated that the research is based in Australia and will benefit health and medical research in Australia. Requests to waive this requirement need to be made through the Research Administration Office of the Administering Institution and should be emailed to help@nhmrc.gov.au and marked for the Director, Programs and Partnerships by 11 February 2013.

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

Chief Investigators (B to J)
Researchers who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents in Australia are eligible to apply for a CRE as a Chief Investigator B to J. If they are based in Australia for the duration of the grant, they may be eligible to request a personnel support package.

Researchers based overseas cannot draw a salary from a CRE grant.
**Associate Investigators**
Associate Investigators (AI) provide intellectual input into the research and participate in a way that warrants inclusion of their name on publications. There are no restrictions on individuals who may be named as an AI on NHMRC CRE applications. AIs cannot draw a salary from a CRE grant.

**Consent to be a Chief Investigator**
The Chief Investigator A must seek agreement from other CIs (B-J) to be named on the application. The CIA will provide written evidence (e.g. an email) to the RAO of all CIs' endorsement of the application. The RAO will then certify and submit the application in RGMS. The RAO will not be authorised to submit the application to NHMRC until all Chief Investigators have completed this step.

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

The RAO will not be authorised to submit the application to NHMRC until all CIAs have completed this step.

**8. Funding**

Applications for funding must be submitted to NHMRC through an Administering Institution. The funding is provided to the Administering Institution which is responsible for the financial administration of the grant.

Subject to the receipt of competitive applications, the number of CREs to receive funding will be:
- up to six CREs in Clinical Research;
- up to four CREs in Population Health Research, and
- up to four CREs in Health Services Research.

Any successful applications in the special interest area of Indigenous Health and Well-being will be funded from within these allocations.

In addition, and subject to competitive applications, there is separate funding for EME for one CRE to be funded, in the Clinical or Population Health streams.

**8.1 Duration and Level of Funding**
CREs will be of five years duration. Funding will not exceed $2.5 million for each Centre.

**8.2 Access to NHMRC funding**
NHMRC seeks to promote collaboration between researchers and to remove artificial barriers that prevent multidisciplinary and multi-organisational proposals. However, the NHMRC funds only the direct costs of a research project.
CRE applicants are required to:

- make a case for NHMRC CRE funding in accordance with this policy document; and
- declare the sources, duration and level of funding already held for research in a particular area of the application. Applicants must clearly justify all requested budget items and comply with the guidelines set out in the Advice to Applicants. Additional information on NHMRC research budgets can be found at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/projects/budget.htm.

NHMRC funds may be used for:

- supporting personnel, where the level of personnel support package requested matches the roles and responsibilities of the position, rather than the expertise of a specific occupant of the position (refer to Advice to Applicants, Attachment A);
- equipment that is unique to the project and is essential for the project to proceed;
- direct research costs (DRCs) (not personnel) required to conduct the proposed research (refer to Advice to Applicants, Attachment A); and
- costs of animal agistment that are a direct requirement of the research project.

NHMRC does not fund:

- research infrastructure that an institution with research as part of its mission would be expected to supply;
- institutional overheads and administrative charges; or
- the indirect costs of research.

Further information on the use of NHMRC Funding is available at Attachment A of the Advice to Applicants document.

Applicants are encouraged to seek additional funding from other sources, including for the indirect costs of research.

8.3 Funding to support overseas research activities

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so applicants must clearly demonstrate that:

- the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the project; and
- the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia.

Funding for research support staff who are based overseas may only be considered where this is essential to achieve the aims of the research.

9. Submitting an Application

Applicants must not directly contact CRE Grant Review Panel (CRE GRP) members in relation to their application, or the peer review process. If they do so, their application may be excluded
from further consideration. Applicants are to direct any queries to their Institution’s Research Administration Office.

For more information please refer to Part 2, Section 3 of the Universal Funding Rules.

10. Peer Review

10.1 CRE Peer Review
CRE applications undergo rigorous peer review, whereby they are subject to scrutiny and evaluation by others who are expert in the field(s) of the application. CRE Grant Review Panel members will bring their expertise and experience to evaluating the merit of applications.

In developing their applications, applicants should take into account the nature of peer review. CRE GRP members may draw information from the research literature and from their breadth of knowledge in the relevant discipline(s) and field(s), as appropriate. Issues not relevant to the Assessment Criteria (refer to Section 5.1) will not to be considered.

NHMRC staff will conduct an initial review of all applications to identify potentially ineligible applications. Eligible applications will then be assigned to an appropriate CRE GRP and, where applicable an Indigenous assessor for review against the Assessment Criteria.

10.2 CRE Grant Review Panels
NHMRC will establish CRE GRPs for each of the three CRE streams. CRE GRPs will comprise experts who will have primary responsibility for the peer review of all applications in their stream. The composition of GRPs will reflect the expertise needed in order to appropriately assess applications across all areas, including the special interest areas. The GRPs will review applications against the Assessment Criteria and the process they will follow includes the following steps:

- initial review of the applications;
- applications relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health will be assessed against The Indigenous Criteria and the Assessment Criteria – refer section 5.2 and 10.4;
- a short listing process by a Peer Review Panel;
- interview of short listed teams by a Peer Review Panel. (Please note: NHMRC will not be covering the costs of flights/accommodation of applicant teams to attend interviews); and
- written feedback to applicants.

10.3 Assessment Process
The assessment process for CRE grants is highly competitive. Subject to the receipt of competitive applications, grants will be awarded to the top ranked applications within the funding allocation for each of the three streams.

The following flow chart illustrates key points in the assessment process.
All applicants will be provided with comments from the GRP. For those who are shortlisted for interview these comments will be useful in preparing for the interview. For applications that are deemed fundable, the CRE GRP will assess the requested budget against the applicant’s justification for the budget. The CRE GRP will then advise NHMRC of a budget for each application. This is based on the budget requested by the applicant, the requirements of the proposal as assessed by the CRE GRP and its knowledge of the costs associated with the research.

Funding recommendations (with de-identified application data) for each of the three streams will be considered by NHMRC’s Research Committee and recommended to Council, which will advise the NHMRC CEO on funding recommendations. The CEO will make funding recommendations to the Minister for Health.

### 10.4 Indigenous Health Assessment Process

Proposals for research relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health will be assessed against *The Indigenous Criteria* and the Assessment Criteria by a Spokesperson appointed from the CRE GRP. The CRE GRP will include members who have both scientific and Indigenous health research expertise. The aim of assessing applications against *The Indigenous Criteria* is to ensure that research involving Indigenous Australians is designed and implemented in a manner that is safe and beneficial to the communities and individuals.
The assessor’s report may include further questions and issues for a shortlisted applicant to address at interview. The report may also recommend that the CRE GRP place conditions on the shortlisted grant in order that it meets *The Indigenous Criteria*.

If an application fails to address adequately *The Indigenous Criteria*, and conditions cannot be placed such that the grant would meet *The Indigenous Criteria*, that application may be deemed to be non-competitive.

**10.5 Indicative Timeline**

The following timeframe for the peer review of CRE applications is proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application process opens</td>
<td>28 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application commencement and minimum data</td>
<td>17:00 hrs (AEDST) 16 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to waive CIA residency status</td>
<td>11 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>17:00hrs (AEDST) 20 February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications shortlisted by CRE GRP</td>
<td>6 – 8 May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE GRPs meet to interview and rank shortlisted applications</td>
<td>11 – 14 June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked applications referred to NHMRC’s Research Committee and Council</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC submits funding recommendations to Minister for Health.</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
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Part 2. NHMRC UNIVERSAL FUNDING RULES

1. Introduction

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia’s leading funding agency promoting the development and maintenance of public and individual health standards. It is established under the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992, (the NHMRC Act) which is available on the NHMRC website at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/organisation-overview/nhmrcs-role.

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

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

The NHMRC Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 (Strategic Plan) describes the agency’s strategic objectives and provides the context within which its funding schemes operate. NHMRC’s strategy for health and medical research is to invest in the highest quality research, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research.


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

These rules apply to all NHMRC funding schemes. They were designed to provide researchers and the Research Administration Officers (RAOs) ease of access and consistency across funding schemes. They must be read in conjunction with the scheme specific Funding Rules and Advice and Instructions to Applicants documents.
2. Enquiries

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

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

3. Submitting an Application


Applicants who are not yet registered on RGMS should contact help@nhmrc.gov.au for more information.


For help in learning to use RGMS, applicants are advised to use RGMS Tutor, a training tool, available at the RGMS Library within RGMS at: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply-funding.

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

Applications must be certified and submitted by an NHMRC registered Administering Institution. Further information on becoming an Administering Institution can be found in the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admininst.htm.

It is important to check the closing dates for the funding schemes you wish to apply to. The closing dates for NHMRC funding schemes which can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/funding-calendar.

Applicants should note that Administering Institutions may have a submission date well in advance of NHMRC’s closing date, and should consider relevant institutional timeframes when preparing the application.

Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered by NHMRC. Once submitted to NHMRC, the application will be considered final and no changes will be permitted.
Further information in relation to the completion of the application is located in the Library section of RGMS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**3.3 Incomplete, False or Misleading Applications**
All details in the application, particularly concerning any successful grants and other current applications, must be current at the time of application.

If an application is incomplete or contains information that is considered misleading, it will be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

Under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. Such action can be punishable by up to 12 months imprisonment. If an application contains information that is false or misleading, it will be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

Examples of false or misleading information in an application include, but are not restricted to:
- a) providing a dishonest statement regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought;
- b) providing incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding;
- c) providing fictitious track records; and
d) falsifying claims in publication records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

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

3.4 Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Institutions that administer grants, as well as Chief Investigators, are bound by the conditions of the *NHMRC Funding Agreement* (Funding Agreement), and through this agreement by the requirements of the Code available at:


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

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

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

3.5 Removal of Applications

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

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

The application must:

a) be submitted using RGMS by the advertised closing date;

b) declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the particular area of the application;

c) be certified and submitted through the appropriate Research Office of an NHMRC approved Administering Institution;

d) be within the specified page limits; and

e) be formatted (including font sizes and margins) as specified in the *Advice and Instructions to Applicants* document.

Applications may be excluded under the following circumstances:

a) the application is clearly of a standard that will not gain support via the competitive funding scheme (note: NHMRC would only determine an application to be non-competitive on advice from a review panel);
b) the application does not comply with the eligibility criteria specified in either this document or scheme specific *Funding Rules*;

c) the application includes any incomplete, false or misleading information;

d) the application is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) (refer to sections 3 and 51 of the NHMRC Act);

e) the application does not comply with the requirements of these rules, scheme specific *Funding Rules*, or the *Advice and Instructions to Applicants* document; and

f) the application involves researcher/s against whom a finding of research misconduct has been made.

### 3.6 Relative to Opportunity

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

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

### 3.7 Career Disruption

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

### 4. Confidentiality and Privacy

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

Information comprising the names of successful grant applicants and their Administering Institutions, together with the title of the research project and the funding awarded, may be published in the NHMRC Annual Report and are available through NHMRC’s website. NHMRC may also release information about the areas of research of the grant, funding partners and a brief description of the grant. This information is provided by the applicant in response to the question on the application form designated as Media Summary.
4.1 Privacy
Documents containing personal information are handled and protected by NHMRC in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (the Privacy Act), which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Privacy Act allows.

4.2 Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)
NHMRC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (The FOI Act) and is committed to meeting the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability requirements. Recent changes to the FOI legislation have implications for the way in which NHMRC responds to and reports on, requests for information under the FOI Act.

However NHMRC remains committed to maintaining the confidentiality of grant applications, the peer review process and the privacy of people participating in peer review and will be working with the Australian Information Commissioner in relation to the conditional exemptions under the FOI Act.

5. Outcome of Application

NHMRC will advise applicants via RGMS on the nominated Administering Institution’s Research Office of the outcome of the application as early as possible following approval of funding. This advice may initially be provided on a confidential basis. If so, NHMRC will regard any breach of this confidentiality as a serious matter.

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

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

The media summary may also be published.

6. Objections and Complaints in Relation to the Outcome of Funding Applications

Applicants may contact NHMRC seeking clarification on the outcome of their application for funding, or to state an objection to any part of the process. The objection must be lodged in writing through the Administering Institution’s Research Office and be received within four weeks of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of the application.
The objection should be directed to the Complaints Officer at:
Complaints Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Or via email to: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

The NHMRC will provide a written response to all objections.

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

6.1 Formal Complaints to the Commissioner of Complaints
The NHMRC Act provides for the Commissioner not to investigate a complaint where the complainant has not initially approached the CEO for resolution.

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

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

Complaints to the Commissioner should be addressed to:
NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Formal complaints can be mailed to the above address, or sent by email as a PDF letter to complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

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

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

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

Complainants are advised to contact their RAOs prior to making a complaint to the Commissioner.

7. Approvals to be Obtained Prior to Funding Commencing

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Approvals and Licenses

8.1 Research Involving Humans

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


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

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

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

8.2 Human Embryo Research


8.3 Use of Personal Information in Research
Section 95 of the Privacy Act provides that the CEO of NHMRC may, with the approval of the Commissioner, issue guidelines for the protection of privacy in the conduct of medical research.

Any research involving humans that uses personal information held by Commonwealth agencies where identified information needs to be used without consent from the individual(s) involved should abide by NHMRC guidelines approved under Section 95 of the Privacy Act (Section 95 guidelines). In these situations, the proposed medical research must be approved by a properly constituted HREC in accordance with the Section 95 guidelines.

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

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

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

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

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

9.2 Use of Carcinogenic or Highly Toxic Chemicals

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

9.4 Use of datasets for research purposes

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

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

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

11.1 NHMRC Funding Agreement

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

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

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

11.2 Payments

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

11.3 Research Misconduct

Research funded by NHMRC must comply with the Code, which can be found at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39.

The Funding Agreement contains provisions for the handling of allegations of research misconduct. Applicants and grant holders are referred to the NHMRC policy on Actions to be Taken in Response to Research Misconduct Involving NHMRC Funding. This is available on the NHMRC website at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/administering-grants/nhmrc-funding-agreement.

11.4 Intellectual Property


12. Reporting on NHMRC Grants

12.1 Progress Reports and Financial Reports

Annual progress and financial reports will be required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant, a final report and financial acquittal will be required within six months after the period of funding ends.
Additional reporting requirements and reporting exemptions may apply: please check the specific Funding Rules for the scheme (e.g. People Support Schemes).

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

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


NHMRC may suspend payment of further instalments of:
- the relevant grant, and/or
- all grants held by the Chief Investigator A, and/or
- all grants administered by that Administering Institution until the appropriate reports have been received and assessed as satisfactory.

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

### 13. Open Access Statement

#### 13.1 Dissemination of Scientific Results

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

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

NHMRC encourages researchers to consider the benefits of depositing their data and any publications arising from a research project in an appropriate subject and/or institutional repository wherever such a repository is available to the researcher(s). If a researcher is not intending to deposit the data from a project in a repository within a twelve-month period, they should include the reasons in the project’s Final Report. Any research outputs that have been or will be deposited in appropriate repositories should be identified in the Final Report.
Section 4 of the Code, outlines these and other responsibilities of Institutions and researchers, which apply to all forms of dissemination.

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

14. Resources

14.1 NHMRC Resources

The role of NHMRC at:

Access the Research Grants Management System (RGMS) at:

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007 at:

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

Criteria for Health and Medical Research of Indigenous Australians at:

NHMRC Administering Institutions policy at:

NHMRC complaints handling policy:

NHMRC Funding Agreement at:

NHMRC policy on the dissemination of research findings:

NHMRC Strategic Plan 2010-2012 at:

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

14.2 Legislation

Criminal Code Act 1995 at:

Freedom of Information Act 1982 at:


Special Interest Areas for Centres of Research Excellence

**Indigenous Health and Well-being**
Offered in the Clinical, Population Health and Health Services streams

NHMRC designated Indigenous health and well-being as one of its 10 Major Health Issues in its Strategic Plan 2010-2012. The Strategic Plan states that “there remains an urgent need to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will implement the NHMRC Road Map II: A Strategic Framework for Improving the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People through Research.” (Road Map II).

The objective of Road Map II is to “close the gap between the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the overall Australian population.”

The Road Map II strategy focuses on seven action areas aimed at building capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and investing in research that addresses issues of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The seven Road Map II action areas are:
- Improving the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NHMRC programs;
- Capacity exchange;
- Promotion of NHMRC’s role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health;
- Close the Gap;
- Evaluation research;
- Intervention research; and
- Priority-driven research.

Accordingly applications are sought for a CRE in Indigenous health, which will:
- build the skills of teams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers;
- undertake and translate research which will produce better outcomes in Indigenous health to close the 17 year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous Australians and other Australians;
- build Australia wide research capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers;
- strengthen and grow teams with an established base and a record of undertaking innovative, significant and internationally competitive research; and
- provide training and development.

Targeted approaches that focus on specific issues that are of high priority for Indigenous health are encouraged.

**Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Research**
Offered in the Clinical or Population Health streams

The increased use of mobile phones in Australia has generated public concern about possible health issues associated with electromagnetic emissions from handsets and base stations.

There is no clear evidence in the existing scientific literature that living near a mobile phone base stations or using a mobile phone causes adverse health effects. However the possibility of harm cannot be ruled out. Some epidemiological studies have shown an association between heavy mobile phone use and brain cancer; limitations of the methodology prevent conclusions of causality being drawn from these observations. In addition subtle biological effects caused by radiofrequency EME have been reported in some laboratory studies, but there is no evidence that these effects may lead to adverse health outcomes.
Nevertheless, there are gaps in the knowledge that have been identified for further research to better assess health risks. A CRE is seen as a vehicle for undertaking such research.

Applicants are asked for proposals that address the 2010 WHO Research Agenda for Radio Frequency Fields (see http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599948_eng.pdf)

A successful application will be funded through the Australian Government’s levy on radio communication licence fees. This funding allows the NHMRC to consider offering CREs in this Round, in either the Clinical or Population Health streams, subject to the receipt of competitive applications.