



Investigator Grants Outcomes 2019: Factsheet



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New Grant Program

- NHMRC's new grant program commenced on 5 December 2018 with the opening of the Investigator Grant scheme.
- The new grant program was developed to address concerns that the high volume of applications for NHMRC funding is having a range of negative effects on Australian health and medical research. In response to these issues, NHMRC reviewed the structure of its research funding and reformed its grant program.
- The new grant program aims to:
 - encourage innovation and creativity in research
 - provide opportunities for talented researchers at all career stages to contribute to the improvement of human health, and
 - minimise the burden on researchers of application and peer review so that researchers can spend more time producing high quality research.
- Input from comprehensive public consultation, NHMRC Principal Committees and expert working groups was used to develop the new grant program, and the peer review models for the Investigator, Synergy, Ideas and Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grant schemes.
- NHMRC has established a framework for evaluating the new grant program and the outcomes from this first round of the four new schemes will be analysed holistically to determine whether the new grant program is meeting the stated objectives.
- Due to the nature of the capping and eligibility rules, it will take several years of transition before the full benefits are realised.

Investigator Grants

- The Investigator Grant scheme is NHMRC's largest funding scheme, with a 40% funding allocation from the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA).
- This year's Investigator Grant funding totals \$365.8 million.
- The objective of the Investigator Grant scheme is to support the research program of outstanding investigators at all career stages. The scheme provides five-year funding security for high-performing researchers through its salary and research support packages.
- Research support packages range in size from \$250,000 to \$3 million in total over five years, providing researchers with flexibility to undertake innovative research that will lead to health and medical advances for all Australians.

Investigator Grants Outcomes (Emerging Leadership and Leadership Fellows)

- 246 high-performing health and medical researchers from across the country will be funded from this first round.
- The new Fellows represent a diversity in career stages, research disciplines, disease focus and location where the research will be conducted.

Total number of applications received	1857*
Number of grants awarded	246
Percentage of applications awarded	13.2%
Mean budget for awarded grants	\$1,487,066.90

*Four were either withdrawn or ineligible

Level	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Total value
Leadership Level 3 (L3)	92	42	45.7%	\$93,241,988
Leadership Level 2 (L2)	195	40	20.5%	\$83,637,031
Leadership Level 1 (L1)	478	35	7.3%	\$77,514,144
Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)	475	43	9.1%	\$59,770,105
Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)	617	86	13.9%	\$51,710,190
Total	1857	246	13.2%	\$365,873,457*

*Includes FIIRN

Outcomes by Years Post-PhD (or Equivalent) Experience

- Over 45% of the new Emerging Leadership Fellows have less than four years post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

Level	No PhD	0-2 years (no. grants and funded rate)	>2-7 years (no. grants and funded rate)	>7-10 years (no. grants and funded rate)	>10 years (no. grants and funded rate)	Total (no. grants and funded rate)
L3	0	-	-	-	42 (47%)	42 (46%)
L2	2 (100%)	-	1 (33%)	0	37 (20%)	40 (21%)
L1	0	-	1 (20%)	3 (19%)	31 (7%)	35 (7.3%)
EL2	0	0	19 (10%)	19 (9%)	5 (9%)	43 (9.1%)
EL1	6 (18%)	32 (16%)	36 (12%)	10 (18%)	2 (18%)	86 (14%)
Total	8 (20%)	32 (15%)	57 (11%)	32 (11%)	117 (15%)	246 (13%)

*Not adjusted for career disruption

Broad Research Areas (BRAs)

- NHMRC is committed to supporting a broad range of research from discovery science through to clinical research (including clinical trials), health services and public health research.
- Clinical Medicine and Science received the greatest allocation of funding but more Basic Science applications were funded.
- Of grants awarded, 38.6% were for Basic Science and 36.2% were for Clinical Medicine and Science.

BRA	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded	Total value
Basic Science	805	95	11.8%	38.6%	\$137,175,847
Clinical Medicine and Science	593	89	15.0%	36.2%	\$149,136,432
Health Services	194	20	10.3%	8.1%	\$23,940,684
Public Health	265	42	15.8%	17.1%	\$55,576,493
TOTAL	1857	246	13.2%	100.0%	\$365,818,457

Funded Rates by Gender

- The proportion of female applicants fell progressively with seniority, from 55% at Emerging Leadership Level 1 to 18% at Leadership Level 3.
- Funded rates for women and men were similar at most levels, with the notable exception of Leadership Level 3 where the funded rate for women was markedly lower than for men.
- Application numbers and funded rates by gender, within Investigator Grants and across the new grant program, will be closely monitored in the next round and advice sought as required from our Women in Health Science Committee on strategies to foster gender equality.

Level	Female				Male				Gender Not Stated			
	Apps	Funded	Funded rate	Total value	Apps	Funded	Funded rate	Total value	Apps	Funded	Funded rate	Total value
L3	17	5	29.4%	\$11,261,273	75	37	49.3%	\$81,980,715				
L2	60	13	21.7%	\$27,387,942	134	27	20.1%	\$56,249,089	1			
L1	194	15	7.7%	\$30,083,242	284	20	7.0%	\$47,430,901				
EL2	245	21	8.6%	\$28,468,535	227	22	9.7%	\$31,301,570	3			
EL1	340	43	12.6%	\$26,194,982	271	42	15.5%	\$24,875,458	6	1	16.7%	\$639,750
Total	856	97	11.3%	\$123,395,974	991	148	14.9%	\$241,837,733	10	1	10.0%	\$639,750

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research and Researchers

- NHMRC is committed to allocating at least five per cent of the MREA each year to research directed at improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health represent 6.1% of total grants awarded and 5.3% of the total Investigator Grant MREA allocation.
- Applications from researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent represent 2.9% of total grants awarded 2.3% of the total Investigator Grant MREA allocation.

Indigenous Identified/Indigenous focused	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of total funding awarded	Total value
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research	66	15	22.7%	5.3%	\$19,370,843
Researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	11	7	63.6%	2.3%	\$8,545,900
Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research led by researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	9	5	55.6%	1.6%	\$5,949,861

Note: There is overlap between the first two rows above due to applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health being led by a researcher who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, as shown in the third row.

In conclusion

- The Investigator Grant scheme is one of NHMRC's new flagship funding schemes.
- The first cohort of 246 Emerging Leadership and Leadership Fellows now have five years of funding certainty, including a research support package.
- The scheme will be run annually, so there will be a growing number of outstanding researchers at all career stages holding these substantial grants.
- The Investigator Grant scheme is complemented by the Ideas Grant, Synergy Grant and Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grant schemes. The outcomes of the first rounds of these schemes will be announced later in 2019.