



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

**BUILDING
A HEALTHY
AUSTRALIA**

Investigator Grants 2020 Outcomes Factsheet



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Investigator Grants

- The Investigator Grant scheme is NHMRC's largest funding scheme, with a 40% funding allocation from the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA).
- The Investigator Grant scheme was developed as part of a major reform of NHMRC's grant program implemented in 2019.
- The 2020 Investigator Grant round is the second round for this scheme and funds grants commencing in January 2021.
- This year's Investigator Grant funding allocation is \$367.5 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 (RSPs).
- The grants range from \$279,275 to \$3.7 million in total over five years, with the total grant value being calculated by taking into account other concurrently held grants and applicant requests for salary.
- The grants provide 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)¹

- 237 high-performing health and medical researchers from across the country will be funded from the 2020 round.
- The new Fellows represent a diversity in career stages, research disciplines, disease focus and location where the research will be conducted.
- The funded rate is 13.3% and mean budget is \$1,550,528.

Total number of applications received in 2020 (2019)	1,780 [#] (1857 [^])
Number of grants awarded in 2020 (2019)	237 (246)
Percentage of applications awarded in 2020 (2019)	13.3% (13.2%)
Mean budget for awarded grants in 2020 (2019)	\$1,550,528 (\$1,487,067 [*])

[#]Two applications were withdrawn.

[^]Four applications were either withdrawn or ruled ineligible.

Level	Applications in 2020 (2019)	Grants awarded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)
Leadership Level 3 (L3)	92 (92)	45 (42)	48.9% (45.7%)	\$108,956,071 (\$93,241,988)
Leadership Level 2 (L2)	168 (195)	28 (40)	16.7% (20.5%)	\$59,636,486 (\$83,637,031)
Leadership Level 1 (L1)	459 (478)	42 (35)	9.2% (7.3%)	\$92,912,114 (\$77,514,144)
Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)	391 (475)	39 (43)	10.0% (9.1%)	\$55,481,675 (\$59,770,105)
Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)	670 (617)	83 (86)	12.4% (13.9%)	\$50,488,799 (\$51,710,190)
Total	1,780 (1,857)	237 (246)	13.3% (13.2%)	\$367,475,145 (\$365,873,457)

¹ All 2020 budget figures include funding for FIIRN. Where * is indicated, this figure does not include funding for FIIRN in 2019 budget figures.

Outcomes by Years Post-PhD (or Equivalent) Experience

- 43% of the new Emerging Leadership Fellows have four years or less post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

Level	<u>No PhD Grants (funded rate)</u>	<u>0-2 years Grants (funded rate)</u>	<u>>2-7 years Grants (funded rate)</u>	<u>>7-10 years Grants (funded rate)</u>	<u>>10 years Grants (funded rate)</u>	<u>Total Grants (funded rate)</u>
Leadership 3	1(50.0%)	-	0	-	44(49.4%)	45(48.9%)
Leadership 2	0	0	-	0	28(17.1%)	28(16.7%)
Leadership 1	0	-	0(0.0%)	3(27.3%)	39(8.8%)	42(9.2%)
Emerging Leadership 2	1(50.0%)	0	19(10.9%)	13(8.1%)	6(12.0%)	39(10.0%)
Emerging Leadership 1	3(10.0%)	31(18.3%)	35(10.4%)	14(12.0%)	0	83(12.4%)
Total	5(12.8%)	31(17.8%)	54(10.5%)	30(10.3%)	117(15.3%)	237(13.3%)

Not adjusted for career disruption

Broad Research Area (BRA)

- 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.
- Of grants awarded, 30.0% were for Basic Science research and 42.2% were for Clinical Medicine and Science research.
- Clinical Medicine and Science grants received the largest funding allocation followed by Basic Science, as in 2019.

BRA	Applications in 2020 (2019)	Grants awarded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Proportion of grants awarded in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)	Mean budget in 2020 (2019)
Basic Science	690 (805)	71 (95)	10.3% (11.8%)	30.0% (38.6%)	\$124,347,696 (\$137,164,847)	\$1,751,376 (\$1,443,840)
Clinical Medicine and Science	600 (593)	100 (89)	16.7% (15.0%)	42.2% (36.2%)	\$154,395,383 (\$149,136,432)	\$1,543,954 (\$1,675,690)
Health Services	189 (194)	20 (20)	10.6% (10.3%)	8.4% (8.1%)	\$27,076,237 (\$23,940,685*)	\$1,353,812 (\$1,197,034*)
Public Health	301 (265)	46 (42)	15.3% (15.8%)	19.4% (17.1%)	\$61,655,829 (\$55,576,493*)	\$1,340,344 (\$1,323,250*)
Total	1,780 (1,857)	237 (246)	13.3% (13.2%)	100.0% (100.0%)	\$367,475,145 (\$365,818,457*)	\$1,550,528 (\$1,487,067*)

Funded Rates by Gender

- The proportion of female applicants fell progressively with seniority (as in 2019 and in the former Fellowship schemes) from 54.5% at Emerging Leadership Level 1 to 20.7% at Leadership Level 3.
- Women received 39.7% of the total funding.
- NHMRC has identified research led by women as an area of need and, as in 2019, has funded additional applications led by female CIAs using structural priority funding.
- Application numbers and funded rates by gender, within Investigator Grants and across the new grant program, will continue to be closely monitored in the next round and advice sought as required from NHMRC's Women in Health Science Committee on strategies to foster gender equality.

Level	Female CIA				Male CIA				Gender Not Stated CIA			
	Apps in 2020 (2019)	Funded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)	Apps in 2020 (2019)	Funded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)	Apps in 2020 (2019)	Funded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)
L3	19 (17)	8 (5)	42.1% (29.4%)	\$19,858,084 (\$11,261,273)	73 (75)	37 (37)	50.7% (49.3%)	\$89,097,988 (\$81,980,715)				
L2	53 (60)	12 (13)	22.6% (21.7%)	\$25,886,467 (\$27,387,942)	115 (134)	16 (27)	13.9% (20.1%)	\$33,750,018 (\$56,249,089)	(1)	(0)	(0.0%)	(n/a)
L1	188 (194)	22 (15)	11.7% (7.7%)	\$46,974,397 (\$30,038,242)	270 (284)	20 (20)	7.4% (7.0%)	\$45,937,717 (\$47,430,901)	1	0	0.0%	n/a
EL2	215 (245)	18 (21)	8.4% (8.6%)	\$25,407,406 (\$28,468,535)	176 (227)	21 (22)	11.9% (9.7%)	\$30,074,269 (\$31,301,570)	(3)	(0)	(0.0%)	(n/a)
EL1	359 (340)	46 (43)	12.8% (12.6%)	\$27,766,975 (\$26,194,982)	300 (271)	37 (42)	12.3% (15.5%)	\$22,721,824 (\$24,875,458)	11 (6)	0 (1)	0.0% (16.7%)	n/a (\$639,750)
Total	834 (856)	106 (97)	12.7% (11.3%)	\$145,893,330 (\$123,395,974)	934 (991)	131 (148)	14.0% (14.9%)	\$221,581,815 (\$241,837,733)	12 (10)	0 (1)	0.0% (10.0%)	n/a (\$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 3.8% of total grants awarded and 2.8% of the total Investigator Grant MREA allocation.
- Applications from researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent represent 1.7% of total grants awarded and 1.2% of the total Investigator Grant MREA allocation.

Indigenous Identified/Indigenous focused	Applications in 2020 (2019)	Grants awarded in 2020 (2019)	Funded rate in 2020 (2019)	Proportion of total funding awarded in 2020 (2019)	Total value in 2020 (2019)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research	63 (66)	9 (15)	14.3% (22.7%)	2.8% (5.3%)	\$10,465,716 (\$19,370,843)
Researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	7 (11)	4 (7)	57.1% (63.6%)	1.2% (2.3%)	\$4,356,577 (\$8,545,900)
Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research led by researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	4 (9)	3 (5)	75.0% (55.6%)	0.6% (1.6%)	\$2,193,357 (\$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.

New Grant Program

- NHMRC's new grant program commenced in 2019.
- The new grant program was developed to address concerns that the high volume of applications for NHMRC funding was 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 will continue to monitor the outcomes of the new grant program to determine whether it 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.

In Conclusion

- The second cohort of 237 Emerging Leadership and Leadership Fellows now have five years of funding certainty, including a research support package.
- NHMRC will continue to monitor the outcomes of the new grant program to determine whether it is meeting the stated objectives.