



Australian Government

National Health and Medical Research Council

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Investigator Grants 2021 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 2021 Investigator Grant round is the third round for this scheme and funds grants commencing in January 2022.
- This year’s Investigator Grant funding allocation was \$400.0 million, which included;
 - an additional \$15 million to support Early and Mid-Career Researchers in response to the impacts of COVID-19
 - an additional \$9 million to support researchers in the field of dementia research at Emerging Leadership levels.
- 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 \$250,000 to \$3.93 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)

- 254 high-performing health and medical researchers from across the country will be funded from the 2021 round.
- The new Fellows represent a diversity in career stages, research disciplines, disease focus and locations where the research will be conducted.
- The funded rate is 14.8% and the mean budget is \$1,573,356.

Total number of applications received in 2021 (2020)	1,722[#] (1,780 [^])
Number of grants awarded in 2021 (2020)	254 (237)
Percentage of applications awarded in 2021 (2020)	14.8% (13.3%)
Mean budget for awarded grants in 2021 (2020)	\$1,573,356 (\$1,550,528)

[#]Seventeen applications were withdrawn or ruled ineligible

[^]Two applications were withdrawn

Investigator Grants Outcomes

Level	Year	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Total value	Proportion of grants awarded	Proportion of \$ awarded	Mean budget
Leadership Level 3 (L3)	2019	92	42	45.7%	\$93,241,988	17.1%	25.5%	\$2,220,047.33
	2020	92	45	48.9%	\$108,956,071	19.0%	29.6%	\$2,421,246.03
	2021	152	51	33.6%	\$134,724,341	20.1%	33.7%	\$2,641,653.74
Leadership Level 2 (L2)	2019	195	40	20.5%	\$83,637,031	16.3%	22.9%	\$2,090,925.76
	2020	168	28	16.7%	\$59,636,486	11.8%	16.2%	\$2,129,874.50
	2021	226	28	12.4%	\$67,595,762	11.0%	16.9%	\$2,414,134.36
Leadership Level 1 (L1)	2019	478	35	7.3%	\$77,514,144	14.2%	21.2%	\$2,214,689.82
	2020	459	42	9.2%	\$92,912,114	17.7%	25.3%	\$2,212,193.19
	2021	330	29	8.8%	\$65,225,952	11.4%	16.3%	\$2,249,170.76
Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)	2019	475	43	9.1%	\$59,770,105	17.5%	16.3%	\$1,390,002.44
	2020	391	39	10.0%	\$55,481,675	16.5%	15.1%	\$1,422,607.05
	2021	459	53	11.5%	\$75,429,918	20.9%	18.9%	\$1,423,206.00
Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)	2019	617	86	13.9%	\$51,710,190	35.0%	14.1%	\$601,281.28
	2020	670	83	12.4%	\$50,488,799	35.0%	13.7%	\$608,298.78
	2021	555	93	16.8%	\$56,656,564	36.6%	14.2%	\$609,210.36
Total	2019	1857	246	13.2%	\$365,873,457	100.0%	100.0%	\$1,487,067
	2020	1780	237	13.3%	\$367,475,145	100.0%	100.0%	\$1,550,528
	2021	1722	254	14.8%	\$399,632,537	100.0%	100.0%	\$1,573,356

Note: Includes ineligible and/or withdrawn applications

Outcomes by Years Post-PhD (or Equivalent) Experience

- 42% (43% in 2020) of the new Emerging Leadership Fellows have four years or less post-PhD (or equivalent) experience.

Level	Year	No PhD		0-2 years		>2-7 years		>7-10 years		>10 years		Total	
		Grants	Funded Rate	Grants	Funded Rate	Grants	Funded Rate	Grants	Funded Rate	Grants	Funded Rate	Grants	Funded Rate
Leadership Level 3 (L3)	2019	0	0.0%	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	42	46.7%	42	45.7%
	2020	1	50.0%	0	n/a	0	0.0%	0	n/a	44	49.4%	45	48.9%
	2021	0	0.0%	0	n/a	1	100.0%	0	n/a	50	33.3%	51	33.6%
Leadership Level 2 (L2)	2019	2	100.0%	0	n/a	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	37	19.9%	40	20.5%
	2020	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	n/a	0	0.0%	28	17.1%	28	16.7%
	2021	0	n/a	0	n/a	2	100.0%	1	100.0%	25	11.2%	28	12.4%
Leadership Level 1 (L1)	2019	0	0.0%	0	n/a	1	20.0%	3	18.8%	31	6.8%	35	7.3%
	2020	0	0.0%	0	n/a	0	0.0%	3	27.3%	39	8.8%	42	9.2%
	2021	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	10.0%	7	28.0%	21	7.1%	29	8.8%
Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)	2019	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	19	9.8%	19	8.9%	5	8.6%	43	9.1%
	2020	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	19	10.9%	13	8.1%	6	12.0%	39	10.0%
	2021	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	12.7%	29	12.7%	3	4.8%	53	11.5%
Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)	2019	6	14.6%	32	15.5%	36	11.9%	10	17.9%	2	18.2%	86	13.9%
	2020	3	10.0%	31	18.3%	35	10.4%	14	12.0%	0	0.0%	83	12.4%
	2021	4	13.3%	33	23.4%	52	15.6%	4	9.3%	0	0.0%	93	16.8%

Note: Not adjusted for career disruption

Broad Research Area

- 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, 34.3% were for Basic Science research and 38.6% were for Clinical Medicine and Science research.
- Clinical Medicine and Science grants received the largest funding allocation, followed closely by Basic Science.

Broad Research Area	Year	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded	Total value	Mean budget	Proportion of \$ awarded
Basic Science	2019	805	95	11.8%	38.6%	\$137,175,847	\$1,443,956	37.5%
	2020	690	71	10.3%	30.0%	\$124,347,696	\$1,751,376	33.8%
	2021	630	87	13.8%	34.3%	\$155,915,598	\$1,792,133	39.0%
Clinical Medicine and Science	2019	593	89	15.0%	36.2%	\$149,136,432	\$1,675,690	40.8%
	2020	600	100	16.7%	42.2%	\$154,395,383	\$1,543,954	42.0%
	2021	577	98	17.0%	38.6%	\$157,838,020	\$1,610,592	39.5%
Health Services Research	2019	194	20	10.3%	8.1%	\$23,962,685	\$1,198,134	6.5%
	2020	189	20	10.6%	8.4%	\$27,076,237	\$1,353,812	7.4%
	2021	196	16	8.2%	6.3%	\$16,684,710	\$1,042,794	4.2%
Public Health	2019	265	42	15.8%	17.1%	\$55,598,493	\$1,323,774	15.2%
	2020	301	46	15.3%	19.4%	\$61,655,829	\$1,340,344	16.8%
	2021	319	53	16.6%	20.9%	\$69,194,209	\$1,305,551	17.3%
Total	2019	1857	246	13.2%	100.0%	\$365,873,457	\$1,487,290	100.0%
	2020	1780	237	13.3%	100.0%	\$367,475,145	\$1,550,528	100.0%
	2021	1722	254	14.8%	100.0%	\$399,632,537	\$1,573,356	100.0%

Funded Rates by Gender

- The proportion of female applicants increased at most levels compared with the previous funding round, but still declined progressively with seniority (as in 2020) from 58.8% (54.5% in 2020) at Emerging Leadership Level 1 to 21.1% (20.7% in 2020) at Leadership Level 3.
- Women received 43.3% of grants and 38.5% of the total funding.
- NHMRC has identified research led by women as an area of need and, as in 2019 and 2020, has funded additional applications led by female CIAs using structural priority funding.
- Application numbers and funded rates by gender, within the Investigator Grant scheme and across the 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	Year	Female CIA				Male CIA				CIA Gender Not Stated or Not Provided			
		Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Total Value	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Total Value	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Total Value
L3	2019	17	5	29.4%	\$11,261,273	75	37	49.3%	\$81,980,715	0	0	n/a	\$0
	2020	19	8	42.1%	\$19,858,084	73	37	50.7%	\$89,097,988	0	0	n/a	\$0
	2021	32	13	40.6%	\$34,412,422	120	38	31.7%	\$100,311,919	0	0	n/a	\$0
L2	2019	60	13	21.7%	\$27,387,942	134	27	20.1%	\$56,249,089	1	0	0.0%	\$0
	2020	53	12	22.6%	\$25,886,467	115	16	13.9%	\$33,750,018	0	0	n/a	\$0
	2021	91	12	13.2%	\$29,874,550	134	16	11.9%	\$37,721,212	1	0	0.0%	\$0
L1	2019	194	15	7.7%	\$30,083,242	284	20	7.0%	\$47,430,901	0	0	n/a	\$0
	2020	188	22	11.7%	\$46,974,397	270	20	7.4%	\$45,937,717	1	0	0.0%	\$0
	2021	155	10	6.5%	\$20,811,995	175	19	10.9%	\$44,413,957	0	0	n/a	\$0
EL2	2019	245	21	8.6%	\$28,468,535	227	22	9.7%	\$31,301,570	3	0	0.0%	\$0
	2020	215	18	8.4%	\$25,407,406	176	21	11.9%	\$30,074,269	0	0	n/a	\$0
	2021	248	27	10.9%	\$39,050,580	209	26	12.4%	\$36,379,338	2	0	0.0%	\$0
EL1	2019	340	43	12.6%	\$26,194,982	271	42	15.5%	\$24,875,458	6	1	16.7%	\$639,750
	2020	359	46	12.8%	\$27,766,975	300	37	12.3%	\$22,721,824	11	0	0.0%	\$0
	2021	324	48	14.8%	\$29,685,112	227	44	19.4%	\$26,320,712	4	1	25.0%	\$650,740

Total	2019	856	97	11.3%	\$123,395,974	991	148	14.9%	\$241,837,733	10	1	10.0%	\$639,750
	2020	834	106	12.7%	\$145,893,330	934	131	14.0%	\$221,581,815	12	0	0.0%	\$0
	2021	850	110	12.9%	\$153,834,659	865	143	16.5%	\$245,147,138	7	1	14.3%	\$650,740

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 people.
- Applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health represent 3.5% of grants awarded and 3.1% of the Investigator Grant MREA allocation.
- Applications from researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent represent 2.4% of grants awarded and 1.7% of the Investigator Grant MREA allocation.

Indigenous Identified/Indigenous Focused	Year	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of \$ awarded	Total value
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health focused research	2019	66	15	22.7%	5.3%	\$19,370,843
	2020	63	9	14.3%	2.8%	\$10,465,716
	2021	53	9	17.0%	3.1%	\$12,271,467
Researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	2019	11	7	63.6%	2.3%	\$8,545,900
	2020	7	4	57.1%	1.2%	\$4,356,577
	2021	7	6	85.7%	1.7%	\$6,835,601
Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health focused research led by researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent	2019	9	5	55.6%	1.6%	\$5,949,861
	2020	4	3	75.0%	0.6%	\$2,193,357
	2021	5	5	100.0%	1.3%	\$5,335,601

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

- This cohort of 254 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 its grant program to determine whether it is meeting the stated objectives.