

Call for submissions  
for recognition by NHMRC  
as an  
Advanced Health Research and  
Translation Centre

Updated 28 July 2014

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***Encouraging leadership in health research and translation in Australia.***

***Identifying and recognising the leading centres of collaboration in health and medical research, research translation, research-infused education and training, and outstanding health care.***

Submissions must be provided to NHMRC prior to **7pm AEST, Tuesday 30 September 2014**, by email to [AdvancedCentres2014@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:AdvancedCentres2014@nhmrc.gov.au)

# Background and Rationale

Acceleration of the translation of research is a Priority Action of the NHMRC Strategic Plan (2013-15). A flagship activity for the triennium is to recognise leadership in innovative discovery research, research translational activities, the provision of health care and the training of doctors, nurses and other health professionals.

Leadership is important in the health system as it is in every professional endeavour. If Australia is to have first class health system, one essential feature is that we have major centres where there is excellence in research and the generation of new knowledge, where there is a high level of ambition to bring the gains of this knowledge to patient care, and where doctors and other professionals in training benefit from this environment.

Australian health care and health research attract highly motivated people. Many are leaders; great clinicians and researchers who are dedicated to improving the health system through research, its translation and implementation. These leaders encourage dynamic interactions between education, health care, and research. Such leadership is just one key issue for continuing improvement of the health system, but an important one.

To encourage this leadership, NHMRC wishes to identify and celebrate those centres that excel in research, the translation of evidence into excellent patient care including of the most complex cases, and with a strong research and translation focus in the education of health professionals.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, advances in research and translation come most powerfully from collaboration. NHMRC wishes to promote stronger interactions and relationships between health networks and centres, Universities' research activities, independent medical research institutes and, where relevant, non-government organisations. More can be gained for the people of Australia by these organisations working together harmoniously and cooperatively.

It is a feature of advanced countries to have leading centres<sup>1</sup> that demonstrate outstanding clinical care, including for the most difficult clinical conditions, and that have excellent, innovative biomedical, clinical and public health and health services research. At these centres, there is research infused education and training, and they usually have national and international leaders in research and translation. They exhibit too strong collaboration even when there are a number of different centres of research education and health care within a precinct.

NHMRC initially proposed a concept of Advanced Health Research Centres in 2010, when we published a discussion paper ([Discussion Paper - Developing Advanced Health Research](#))

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<sup>1</sup> Such centres include the Johns Hopkins Hospital, University and associated Centres, Massachusetts General Hospital and its University and Centres, Toronto General Hospital and the University of Toronto, the Mayo Clinic, UCL and the UCL Hospital, the Imperial College Academic Health Science Centre, L'hôpital Necker in Paris, and The Charité in Berlin just to name a few.

These centres are known and acknowledged worldwide, and disproportionately contribute to the advancement of patient care and health policy development. These centres usually attract the most outstanding clinician scientists, and manage the most complex and challenging disease presentations, aspire to the top evidence-based training of doctors and other health professionals, and meet standards against the best in the world

[Centres in Australia](#)) for public consultation. Feedback in this consultation was supportive of the concept.

Once the then government proposed a Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research (McKeon Review), we suspended further development of the concept and instead proposed to the McKeon Review<sup>2</sup> that such centres were an essential feature of a self-improving health system<sup>3</sup>.

As well, Universities and hospitals and some State governments have been establishing Academic Health Science Centres (or similar), sometimes with modest funding attached. This is a helpful development, further incentivising administrators, researchers and clinicians towards the broad goal of infusing health care more fully with the outcomes of high quality research.

From the start, NHMRC's concept has been one of recognition, not of funding. Our aim is to signal that NHMRC values leadership and excellence in research, translation and training of health professionals in an evidence-based environment, at international levels of excellence.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mckeonreview.org.au/>

<sup>3</sup> The McKeon Committee recommended a broader concept of Integrated Health Research Centres.

Recommendation 3 of the Review was *to establish Integrated Health Research Centres that combine hospital and community-care networks, universities, and research organisations such as medical research institutes (MRIs).*

*a. Establish a clear set of criteria around integration, excellence, translation, strategy, leadership and governance.*

*b. Initially select 4–8 Centres and provide funding of up to \$10m p.a. each for five years, and add 1–2 Centres every 1–2 years, building to a total of 10–20 over a 10-year period.*

*c. Monitor and evaluate the performance of the Centres to determine whether funding should be renewed at the end of the five-year funding period*

# Submissions and Evaluation

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NHMRC now calls for submissions from interested groups for recognition as NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres.

Submitting groups should provide evidence of

1. Leadership in outstanding research- and evidence-based clinical care, including for the most difficult clinical conditions,
2. Excellence in innovative biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research,
3. Programs and activities to accelerate research findings into health care and ways of bringing health care problems to the researchers
4. Research-infused education and training
5. Health professional leaders who ensure that research knowledge is translated into policies and practices locally, nationally and internationally
6. Strong collaboration amongst the research, translation, patient care and education programs.

The following provides guidance on the material that may be submitted. Page limits are given against each of the criterion to ensure that applicants focus on their peak achievements.

## Criteria for submissions

**1. Leadership in outstanding research- and evidence-based clinical care, including for the most difficult clinical conditions,**

Submissions should address the leadership activities of the centre in clinical care, and especially how local health care practices and policies are research- and evidence-based. Since the leading health care centres are usually associated with the most complex and difficult cases, due to the outstanding clinicians and facilities available, the submission may include examples of how the centre addresses these cases.

Plans and vision for further growth in such leadership should be included.

(Maximum 5 pages)

**2. Excellence in innovative biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research**

Submissions should provide evidence of the excellence in research, benchmarked at the top international level. This may include but is not limited to:

- key papers and contributions that have received high international recognition, with a brief explanation
- key publications that have changed practice or policy
- evidence of international recognition of research outputs, including prizes at the highest level
- Plans for the future development of excellence in research

Submissions should also demonstrate the breadth of excellence of published research.

(Maximum 4 pages).

**3. Programs and activities to accelerate research findings into health care and ways of bringing healthcare problems to the researchers**

Submissions should provide evidence of actions that are in place to improve local practices and policies flowing from research, and of leadership nationally and internationally. These may include but are not limited to:

- centre programs and policies that accelerate research translation into health
- centre programs to enhance presentation of research questions to researchers
- a culture of research translation for the continuous improvement in health care
- track record in important clinical trials and health services research
- community engagement, including the inclusion of users of the health care facilities in research
- leverage to attract additional funding from business or philanthropy

(Maximum 4 pages).

**4. Research-infused education and training**

Submissions should demonstrate how education and training

- builds the research capacity of health professionals
- provides opportunities for health professionals to train in, and to conduct research
- involves research and translation leaders in teaching and training
- demonstrates infusion of research into educational offerings in all disciplines.

(Maximum 2 pages)

**5. Health professional leaders who ensure that research knowledge is translated into policies and practices locally, nationally and internationally**

Submissions should include a list of up to 20 leaders (with a maximum 2 page curriculum vitae for each, focussed on their local, national and international leadership roles in research translation).

**6. Strong collaboration amongst the research, translation, patient care and education programs of the centre.**

Submissions should demonstrate how effective collaborative arrangements are in place that maximise the research, translation and educational opportunities and minimise duplication of scientific and administrative costs.

(Maximum 3 pages)

# Making a Submission

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## What is a “centre” and who should make a submission?

NHMRC will accept submissions from partnerships across research, translation, health care and training, co-located, clustered or integrated by demonstrable mechanisms. The partners of the centre will share a vision, strategy and clarity of purpose, and be performing at the highest levels of international practice.

Additional information about ‘What is a centre?’ is available at:

[www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/nhmrc-advanced-health-research-and-translation-centres/nhmrc-advanced-health-research-and-t](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/nhmrc-advanced-health-research-and-translation-centres/nhmrc-advanced-health-research-and-t)<sup>4</sup>

The centre must have a healthcare delivery component (likely a hospital or health network and other health care facilities). The partner delivering the healthcare delivery component is responsible for forwarding the joint submission to NHMRC on behalf of the other partners. Submissions will demonstrate governance arrangements that enable the centre to achieve the objectives of an NHMRC designated Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre.

## Requirements for Submissions

Two (2) electronic files should be provided to NHMRC in PDF format, containing:

1. A submission which directly addresses each of the *Criteria for Submissions* (page limits for responses against each Criterion are given on pages 4-5 of this document).
2. A short cover letter submitted by the Head of the healthcare delivery partner, and co-signed by the Heads of all other partner organisations. The cover letter should contain:
  - Contact details (email and mail addresses, phone number/s) for the Head of the healthcare delivery partner.
  - A table listing the names of participating institutions.

## Formatting Requirements

- All written material must be in at least 11 point font.
- All documentation must be submitted in PDF format.
- Submissions must not contain any multimedia, video files or web-links.
  - When addressing Criterion 2, publications should be referenced in a format that provides the minimum information required to enable adequate identification by reviewers. For example: *Surname Initials [first author only], Year, Title, Journal Title, Volume, Issue (DOI)*
  - When Addressing Criterion 5, include a summary table containing the full names of the Health Professional Leaders and their major affiliation or employing institution.

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<sup>4</sup> This information was first included in an update to this document released on 28 July 2014.

## **Making a Submission**

Submissions must be provided by email to [AdvancedCentres2014@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:AdvancedCentres2014@nhmrc.gov.au) by **7pm AEST, Tuesday 30 September 2014**.

## **Review of Submissions**

NHMRC expects only a small number of centres to be performing at an international level. Submissions will be assessed against each of the six (6) criteria. Applications must achieve a high rating against **all** six criteria to be eligible for shortlisting. The six criteria will be given equal weight in the assessment process.

### *International Review Panel*

NHMRC will establish an independent panel of distinguished international and national leaders in the field to review submissions. Panel members will have experience at the highest level in outstanding academic health centres world-wide.

The International Review Panel will

- provide NHMRC with advice on the submissions and which particular centres show the leadership characteristics indicated above at an internationally competitive level.
- advise NHMRC which centres show potential to achieve such characteristics, and
- advise NHMRC the actions that could be taken to further encourage development of leadership centres.

Depending on the number of submissions, NHMRC may establish a short-list of submissions for interview. It is anticipated that NHMRC will host the International Review Panel in the fourth quarter of 2014 to consider short-listed submissions and, where necessary, to interview representatives of the group<sup>5</sup>. NHMRC expects to conduct interviews over a 3-day period and only a limited number of submissions will be shortlisted.

Groups making a submission will be provided with written feedback on their submission based on the advice provided by the International Review Panel.

## **Outcome of the review**

The NHMRC Council will consider the recommendations of the International Review Panel including any centres proposed for recognition as an NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre.

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<sup>5</sup> Representatives of the Centre attending an interview will be required to do so at their own expense.