



Ideas Grants Outcomes 2021: Factsheet



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Ideas Grants

- The Ideas Grant scheme is the second largest scheme in NHMRC's grant program, accounting for approximately 25% of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA).
- The Ideas Grant scheme was developed as part of a major reform of NHMRC's grant program implemented in 2019.
- The 2021 Ideas Grant round is the third round for this scheme and funds grants commencing in January 2022.
- The outstanding work of peer reviewers enabled the round to be completed and outcomes released in early November.
 - This year, 706 peer reviewers provided almost 13,000 individual, independent reviews of 2639 grant applications.
 - 85.6% of applications received the target of five reviews; 13.9% received four reviews and the remainder received three reviews.
 - This year, reviewers were required to provide written comments against each assessment criterion in order to justify the scores provided, and as a feedback mechanism to applicants, who were provided with the assessor comments.
 - NHMRC reviewed applications with outlier scores and sought clarification from assessors where necessary.
- This year's funding for Ideas Grants totals \$239,230,859.
 - This includes \$23.8 million in structural priority funding.
- The objective of the Ideas Grant scheme is to support innovative research projects addressing a specific question(s).
- The expected outcomes of the Ideas Grant scheme are:
 - innovative and creative research
 - funding of researchers at all career stages, and
 - funding of any area of health and medical research from discovery to implementation.
- The amount of funding awarded for an Ideas Grant is based on assessment of the requested budget. Applications must clearly justify the requested duration and budget amount and how each element of the budget will support the proposed outcomes of the research.

Ideas Grant Outcomes

- 248 applications from institutions across the country will be funded in this round.
- The teams represent diversity in career stages, research disciplines, disease focus and location where the research will be conducted.

Funding round	2019	2020	2021
Total number of applications received	2739 [^]	2995 [^]	2639 [^]
Total number of applications applying for NHMRC funding	2651 [*]	2889 [*]	2503 [*]
Number of grants awarded	294 ^{**}	283	248
Percentage of applications awarded	11.1% [°]	9.8% [°]	9.9% [°]
Mean budget for awarded grants	\$822,258.82	\$917,747.57	\$964,640.56

[^] Twenty eight applications were withdrawn or ruled ineligible in 2021 and two applications were withdrawn after the round closed in both the 2019 and 2020 rounds.

^{*}Excludes applications that did not request NHMRC funding.

^{**}Includes one application that was funded by the Australian Communications and Media Authority for research on the health effects of Electromagnetic Energy.

[°]Note that the funded rate is calculated based on the total number of applications applying for NHMRC funding (excluding those that were ineligible or withdrawn). Each year NHMRC receives several applications that only request funding from our funding partners, Cancer Australia and the Cancer Councils. The funded rate based on all applications that went through peer review is 9.5%.

Outcomes by Broad Research Area (BRA)

- NHMRC is committed to supporting a broad range of research from discovery science through to clinical, health services and public health research.
- Basic Science received the greatest allocation of Ideas Grants funding, representing 72.6% of awarded grants and 71.3% of the awarded budget.

Broad Research Area	Year	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded	Total value
Basic Science	2019	1821	221*	12.1%	75.2%	\$173,947,106
	2020	1899	191	10.1%	67.5%	\$169,807,794
	2021	1730	180	10.4%	72.6%	\$170,681,336
Clinical Medicine and Science	2019	566	45	8.0%	15.3%	\$40,231,653
	2020	675	59	8.7%	20.8%	\$57,272,149
	2021	560	43	7.7%	17.3%	\$45,554,129
Health Services	2019	117	12	10.3%	4.1%	\$8,263,881
	2020	125	10	8.0%	3.5%	\$10,869,947
	2021	79	10	12.7%	4.0%	\$9,720,103
Public Health	2019	147	16	10.9%	5.4%	\$19,301,455
	2020	190	23	12.1%	8.1%	\$21,772,673
	2021	134	15	11.2%	6.0%	\$13,275,291

*Includes one application that was funded by the Australian Communications and Media Authority for research on the health effects of Electromagnetic Energy.

Funded Rates by Gender of Chief Investigator A (CIA)

- The difference in funded rates between male and female CIAs is 0.1%.
- NHMRC has identified research led by women as an area of structural priority and has funded an additional 5 applications led by female CIAs using structural priority funding, on top of the base funding allocation for Ideas Grants.

CIA Gender	Year	CIAs on eligible applications	CIAs on grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded
Female	2019	1108	123	11.1%	41.8%
	2020	1232	121	9.8%	42.8%
	2021	1071	106	9.9%	42.7%
Male	2019	1517	169	11.1%	57.5%
	2020	1635	160	9.8%	56.5%
	2021	1407	141	10.0%	56.9%
Not Stated	2019	26	2	7.7%	0.7%
	2020	22	2	9.1%	0.7%
	2021	25	1	4.0%	0.4%

Funded Rates by Gender for all Chief Investigators (CIs)

- This year, the funded rate for all female CIs (CIA-CIJ) was higher than for all male CIs (CIA-CIJ).

CI Gender (CIA-CIJ)	Year	CIs on eligible applications (CIA-CIJ)	CIs on grants awarded (CIA-CIJ)	Funded rate
Female	2019	3006	361	12.0%
	2020	3717	391	10.5%
	2021	3043	328	10.8%
Male	2019	4501	523	11.6%
	2020	5253	512	9.7%
	2021	4304	446	10.4%
Intersex or Indeterminate	2019	2	0	0.0%
	2020	2	0	0.0%
	2021	1	0	0.0%
Not Stated	2019	297	35	11.8%
	2020	360	34	9.4%
	2021	380	46	12.1%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research and Researchers

- NHMRC is committed to allocating at least 5% of the MREA each year to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.
- 36.7% of applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health have been awarded funding, representing 4.4% of awarded Ideas Grants.
- 28.1% of applications from researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent have been awarded funding, representing 3.6% of awarded Ideas Grants.
- NHMRC has funded additional applications in both of these categories using structural priority funding, on top of the base funding allocation for Ideas Grants.

Indigenous Identified/Indigenous Focused	Year	Applications	Grants awarded	Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused research	2019	29	6	20.7%	2.0%
	2020	47	13	27.7%	4.6%
	2021	30	11	36.7%	4.4%
Applications with one or more researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent in their teams (CIA-CIJ)	2019	42	9	21.4%	3.1%
	2020	47	12	25.5%	4.2%
	2021	32	9	28.1%	3.6%
Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research with researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent in their teams (CIA-CIJ)	2019	17	5	29.4%	1.7%
	2020	33	9	27.3%	3.2%
	2021	20	4	20.0%	1.6%

Note: There is overlap in these figures as applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health also had researcher(s) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent in their teams, as shown in the third row.

Outcomes for CIAs by Career Stage and Gender

- 13% of the awarded grants are led by early-career and mid-career CIAs (within ten years post-PhD).

Career Stage	Year	Applicants	Grants awarded				Funded rate	Proportion of grants awarded
			Female	Male	Not Stated	TOTAL		
<10 years post-PhD	2019	782	32	27	-	59	7.5%	20.0%
	2020	792	37	33	1	71	9.0%	25.1%
	2021	607	20	13	-	33	5.4%	13.3%
≥10 years post-PhD	2019	1766	88	136	2	226	12.8%	76.9%
	2020	2015	84	122	1	207	10.3%	73.1%
	2021	1829	86	126	1	213	11.6%	85.9%
No PhD/ unknown*	2019	103	3	6	-	9	8.7%	3.1%
	2020	82	0	5	0	5	6.1%	1.8%
	2021	67	-	2	-	2	3.0%	0.8%

*No PhD listed in applicant's CV and Profile

Outcomes for all CIs by Career Stage and Gender

- Just under one-quarter of CIs (CIA, CIB etc.) awarded grants are early-career and mid-career researchers (within ten years post-PhD).

Career Stage	Year	Applicants	Grants awarded				Funded rate	Proportion of CIs awarded grants
			Female	Male	Not Stated	TOTAL		
<10 years post-PhD	2019	2161	98	114	6	218	10.1%	23.7%
	2020	2657	141	121	6	268	10.1%	28.6%
	2021	1969	112	83	1	196	10.0%	23.9%
≥10 years post-PhD	2019	4381	215	323	9	547	12.5%	59.5%
	2020	5394	209	333	7	549	10.2%	58.6%
	2021	4632	185	312	4	501	10.8%	61.1%
No PhD/ unknown*	2019	1264	48	86	20	154	12.2%	16.8%
	2020	1281	41	58	21	120	9.4%	12.8%
	2021	1127	31	51	41	123	10.9%	15.0%

*No PhD listed in applicants' CV and Profile

In conclusion

- The Ideas Grant scheme is one of NHMRC's largest funding schemes.
- The third year of funding for this scheme has supported 248 applications with the funded rate for female CIAs almost equal to that of male CIAs, and approximately 13% of awarded grants led by an early to mid-career researcher.
- The scheme will continue to be run annually, creating opportunities for researchers at all career stages and across a broad range of research topics.