



Independent Research Institutes Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIISS) Funding Policy

2010

1 Introduction

The Independent Medical Research Institutes Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIISS) commenced in 2005 following an Australian Government budget decision to allocate funds for overhead infrastructure support to NHMRC-accredited independent medical research institutes managing NHMRC research funds. This reflected reviews that found infrastructure costs for medical research institutes were substantial.

IRIISS is funded from the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA).

2 Objectives

IRIISS aims to develop and maintain infrastructure to support high quality health and medical research by:

- (a) contributing to infrastructure costs associated with NHMRC competitively awarded research grants managed by NHMRC-accredited independent medical research institutes; and
- (b) providing infrastructure support to NHMRC-accredited independent medical research institutes that is similar to that provided to universities by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) through the Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG) Scheme.

3 Description

IRIISS payments can be used to support the following types of overhead infrastructure, where that infrastructure is used to support a health and medical research activity:

- (a) non-capital aspects of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria and experimental farms;
- (b) the purchase, installation, maintenance and hire and lease of equipment; and
- (c) salaries of research support staff (including research assistants, accounting and administrative staff and technicians) employed to provide general support for a research activity. IRIISS payments can be used to support the salary of a research assistant supporting a number of research projects, but not the salary of a research assistant dedicated to a particular project.

Items **not** regarded as elements of research infrastructure for the purposes of IRIISS, and which cannot be funded are:

- (a) capital works eg the construction of buildings;
- (b) rental of accommodation;
- (c) salaries or stipends of researchers; and
- (d) salaries of staff supporting specific research at the institute level; and travel costs directly associated with individual projects with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in international consortia.

4 Eligibility

For a medical research institute to be eligible to receive IRIISS funding in a particular year it must meet all of the following criteria.

- (a) The institute must be a NHMRC-accredited independent medical research institute on the annual census date of 30 June. Applications for accreditation must be lodged with the NHMRC by 31 March in order to be assessed before the census date in that year;
- (b) The institute must be managing NHMRC research funds in that particular year; and
- (c) Ethics and all other clearances necessary for the NHMRC funded research attracting IRIISS funding must have been obtained and notified to the NHMRC before 30 June as IRIISS will only be paid on grants that have commenced paying.

Details of how a medical research institute can apply to become a NHMRC-accredited independent medical research institute can be found on the NHMRC website – see www.nhmrc.gov.au.

5 Calculating and Paying IRIISS Funding

There will be a single annual payment for IRIISS, based on a census of NHMRC grants active on 30 June each year. Active grants are those that are paying and include all competitively awarded NHMRC research grants being administered by eligible independent medical research institutes, including awards continuing from previous years as well as those commencing in the year the support is being provided. IRIISS will not be paid on grants that have been withdrawn, relinquished, suspended or terminated.

Where sufficient funds are available, IRIISS recipients will be paid 20 cents for every dollar of competitively awarded research grants that are paying at the time of the annual census. Otherwise payments will be scaled back to the available IRIISS funding.

For payments to eligible independent research institutes to occur, the following must be in place:

- (a) a Funding Agreement between the eligible independent medical research institute and the NHMRC that covers this type of grant;
- (b) an executed Schedule to the Funding Agreement, which sets out the value of payments; and
- (c) an acquittal, in the form specified by the NHMRC, of all previous IRIISS payments.

Once these conditions have been met, payments will occur as part of the next scheduled run of the NHMRC payments system.

6 Maintenance of State and Territory Government Support

It is recognised that most State and Territory Governments provide infrastructure support for medical research institutes. The intent of IRIISS is for the Commonwealth to supplement rather than replace on-going State and Territory contributions. Independent medical research institutes in each jurisdiction will not be eligible for IRIISS payments if their State or Territory Government decreases the overall level of infrastructure support that it provides.

To assist the NHMRC to monitor State and Territory funding, eligibility for IRIISS is conditional on eligible institutes providing information on the level of funding they are receiving from their State or Territory Government.

7 Management

Medical research institutions do not have to apply for IRIISS payments. Following the 30 June census, the NHMRC will calculate the level of IRIISS payment for eligible medical research institutions. NHMRC will then advise successful institutions of the amount available to them and provide a Schedule to the Funding Agreement, two copies of which are to be signed and returned for execution. Once this has been done, payments will be made.

The intention is to make each IRIISS payment before the end of the calendar year to which it relates.

Institutes receiving IRIISS payments will be required to provide an annual acquittal statement in a form specified by the NHMRC.

8 Further Information

Enquiries about IRIISS can be directed to:

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