



**Australian Government**  

---

**National Health and  
Medical Research Council**



## Call for submissions for accreditation by NHMRC as a Centre for Innovation in Regional Health

---

*Encourage leadership in health research and translation of direct relevance and benefit to regional and remote areas of Australia.*

*Accrediting leading centres of collaboration in health and medical research, research translation, research-infused education and training, and outstanding health care in regional or remote areas.*

Submissions must be emailed to  
[AdvancedCentres@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:AdvancedCentres@nhmrc.gov.au) by  
8pm AEDT, Monday, 18 March 2019

# Contents

1. Background and objectives .....	2
2. Who can apply?.....	3
3. Evaluation Criteria.....	4
4. Preparing a submission .....	4
5. Submission requirements.....	7
6. Review of Submissions.....	8
7. Outcome of the review .....	9
8. Reporting .....	9
9. Questions .....	9

## 1. Background and objectives

The translation of health and medical research continues to be a key strategic theme of NHMRC for the period 2018–19 to 2021–22 in supporting NHMRC’s mission of ‘building a healthy Australia’<sup>1</sup>. One of NHMRC’s activities is to continue to recognise leading centres of excellence and collaboration in health and medical research, research translation, research-infused education and training and outstanding health care. This will help to create a self-improving health system so that health services in Australia can quickly take advantage of cutting-edge research and that the research agenda can be shaped by the needs of end-users, such as health care providers and health care consumers.

Australia faces unique health care challenges due to population spread over a large geographic area and the health disparities that exist between metropolitan, regional and remote populations. There is considerable potential for collaborative approaches to drive innovation in health care delivery, capacity in translation, planning and policy.

The aim of NHMRC’s Centre for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRH) initiative is to encourage leadership and collaboration in health research and translation and promote the development and use of innovative and evidence-based models of health care practices and policies that are of direct relevance and benefit to regional and remote areas of Australia.

NHMRC, through its CIRH initiative, wishes to identify and celebrate exemplars of outstanding collaboration in health and medical research, research translation, research-infused education and training, and the delivery of outstanding health care in regional or remote areas. To achieve recognition as a CIRH, groups are required to demonstrate competitiveness at the highest international level across all relevant areas of health care. They must have strong connections to communities, consumers

---

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC Corporate Plan 2018–19

and health professionals and their health and research priorities, and have governance and processes in place to support a self-improving health system to achieve broad and sustained impacts.

NHMRC is now inviting submissions from groups with a demonstrably strong record of achievement and international levels of excellence in delivering research- and evidence- based health care in regional and remote Australia.

The CIRH initiative is not a funding initiative, nor is it designed to achieve total geographic coverage in Australia. Through accreditation, NHMRC is recognising the value of leadership, collaboration and excellence in research, translation, and training of health professionals in an evidence-based environment, at international levels of excellence.

## **2. Who can apply?**

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

Whilst recognising the value of co-location, NHMRC will accept submissions from groups for which the geographical location of partners and the settings in which health care, research and training are conducted make it necessary to cross borders or utilise virtual linkages and networks.

If a NHMRC accredited Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre (AHRTC) or CIRH is already established in the area that is the focus of your group's submission, your submission should demonstrate why a new centre is proposed, including how you would work together and complement the existing AHRTC/CIRH.

A CIRH is expected to be driven by health services, as health services have a key role in identifying health care and health system priorities as well as informing research that can address identified problems. Accordingly, the submitting group must have at least one health care delivery partner (likely a hospital or health network) that is undertaking at least one health care delivery component.

The partner(s) undertaking the health care delivery component are responsible for forwarding the joint submission to NHMRC on behalf of all the other partners. The health care delivery partner lodging the submission is not required to be a NHMRC registered Administering Institution.

### ***2.1 Duplicate submissions***

Groups cannot seek accreditation as both an AHRTC and a CIRH in response to this call (i.e. the same submission that proposes the same partnership cannot be submitted for CIRH and AHRTC accreditation). Groups should apply for the form of recognition that best aligns with their activities, achievements and future goals. For CIRH accreditation, the predominant focus should be the improvement of regional and remote health and health systems.

### ***2.2 Duplicate partners***

NHMRC understands that there may be reasons why partners, including health care delivery partners, are involved in more than one NHMRC accredited AHRTC or CIRH, or submission for accreditation. For partners involved in more than one centre or submission for accreditation (duplicate partner), your submission must state the role of that partner and explain how its roles in multiple AHRTC/CIRHs are complementary and do not conflict or dilute the efforts across multiple centres.

## **3. Evaluation Criteria**

Submitting groups will be assessed on the ability to demonstrate excellence against each of the six accreditation criteria. Groups should provide evidence of:

1. Outstanding leadership in research- and evidence-based clinical care that enhances the quality of health care in regional and remote Australia
2. Excellence in innovative biomedical, clinical, public health and/or health services research that addresses the challenges and opportunities of health care provision in regional and remote Australia
3. Programs and activities to accelerate translation of 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.

## **4. Preparing a submission**

This section provides guidance on the information that is to be included in a submission. Page limits are provided to ensure applications are focussed.

### ***4.1 Accreditation criteria***

Submissions must address each of the following criteria separately:

- 1. Outstanding leadership in research- and evidence-based clinical care that enhances the quality of health care in regional and remote Australia**

Submissions should address the leadership activities of the centre in providing

clinical care to regional and/or remote areas, and especially how local health care practices and policies are research- and evidence-based. Leading regional health care centres/services are often required to manage the most complex cases and difficult settings, due to the outstanding clinicians and facilities available. The submission may include examples of how the centre manages these cases.

The submission may include examples of how the centre uses research to improve the treatment and management of individual cases and population health interventions, including over large geographical areas, and how it integrates research into multiple health care services, including hospital-based and primary care.

Responses against this criterion should encompass plans and vision for further growth in leadership, including by sharing best practice and creating productive linkages with other centres.

(Maximum 5 pages)

## **2. Excellence in innovative biomedical, clinical, public health and/or health services research that addresses the challenges and opportunities of health care provision in regional and remote Australia**

Submissions should provide evidence of research excellence, benchmarked at the highest 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
- evidence of multi- and cross-disciplinary approaches
- plans for the future development of excellence in research.

Submissions should demonstrate research activities of specific relevance to the population, or geographical region, in which they provide health care services. Submissions should also demonstrate the breadth of excellence of published research.

References should be included as a single list and do not count towards the page limit for this criterion. References must include a list of all authors.

(Maximum 4 pages)

## **3. Programs and activities to accelerate translation of research findings into health care and ways of bringing health care 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 the presentation of research questions to

researchers

- a culture of research translation for the continuous improvement in health care, including primary health care
- track record in important clinical trials and health services research
- engagement of end-users, including community and consumers and providers of health care in research
- programs that connect researchers with end-users (including community, consumers and health professionals) to identify research gaps and priorities and co-design research
- leverage to attract additional funding from government, business or philanthropy.

(Maximum 4 pages)

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

Submissions should demonstrate how education and training:

- build the research and research translation capacity of health professionals
- provide opportunities for health professionals to train in and to conduct research
- involve research and translation leaders in teaching and training
- demonstrate 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, that is focussed on their local, national and international leadership roles and key achievements in research translation). Health professional leaders are not required to have clinical qualifications.

In addressing this criterion, include a summary table containing the full names of the Health Professional Leaders and their major affiliation or employing institution.

#### **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 between the partner organisations, and other relevant organisations, that maximise the research, translation and educational opportunities and minimise duplication of scientific and administrative costs.

Describe any collaborative links to large metropolitan health/research/education centres (this could include an NHMRC accredited AHRTC) that the group has established to utilise existing capabilities and research conducted outside the proposed centre to improve local practices.

(Maximum 3 pages)

#### ***4.2 Governance***

Submissions must demonstrate that governance arrangements are in place that are enabling the group to achieve the objectives of an NHMRC-designated CIRH.

The submission should describe leadership commitments between the proposed partners and (ideally) have a clear prioritisation framework for research and translation that has been developed in consultation with consumers.

While it is not a pre-requisite, groups are encouraged to seek endorsement of the proposed partnership from a state or territory government. Where endorsement is obtained, provide a letter as evidence, as an appendix to the submission.

(Maximum ½ page)

#### ***4.3 Intended impact***

In a series of no more than five statements, describe the major impact(s) you would expect the centre to achieve as a consequence of planned activities. The impact statements should relate to the broad aims of the CIRH initiative and will be used to assist with reporting requirements (see section 8) and demonstrate a centre's pathway to impact.

(Maximum ½ page)

#### ***4.4 Partner organisations***

List the partner organisations that comprise the submitting group.

As described in section 2.2, please identify duplicate partners and state the role of each duplicate partner and provide a rationale to explain how the roles are complementary and do not conflict or dilute the efforts across multiple centres.

(Maximum 1 page)

## **5. Submission requirements**

### ***5.1 Formatting requirements***

- All written material must be in at least 11 point font. Footnotes should be avoided and not used to provide claims against submission criteria. If used, footnotes may be in 9 point font.
- All documentation must be submitted in PDF format. Each PDF file must be less than 2MB in size.
- Submissions must not contain any multimedia or video files.
- The method of referencing must include the following minimum information: *Surname, Initials [all authors], Year, Title, Journal Title, Volume, Page(s), DOI [if assigned], and (if relevant) web link*. Web-links can **only** be used as part of this referencing.

## ***5.2 What and how to submit***

Two (2) electronic files should be emailed to NHMRC at [advancedcentres@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:advancedcentres@nhmrc.gov.au) in PDF format, containing:

1. A submission which directly addresses information requested in sections 4.1-4.4 (*Criteria for Submissions, Governance, Intended Impacts and Partner Organisations*) within the page limits specified.
2. A short cover letter from the Head of the submitting health care delivery partner, and co-signed by the Heads of all other partner organisations. The cover letter should contain:
  - i. Contact details (email and mail addresses, phone numbers) for the Head of the submitting partner.
  - ii. A table listing the names of partner organisations.
  - iii. A brief summary of the submission (maximum of 1.5 pages in length).

NHMRC will confirm the receipt of your application in writing. NHMRC may seek information or request additional information to clarify submission content, including on behalf of the International Review Panel.

## **6. Review of Submissions**

NHMRC expects only a small number of groups seeking accreditation to be performing at an international level. Submissions will be assessed against each of the six (6) criteria. Applications must meet the requirements set out in sections 2-5 above, and achieve a high rating against **all** six evaluation criteria to be eligible for shortlisting. The six criteria will be given equal weight.

### ***6.1 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 partnerships, sustainable health systems, and research translation and implementation.

The International Review Panel will:

- provide NHMRC with advice on the submissions and identify which groups have demonstrated the required characteristics at an internationally competitive level
- advise NHMRC which groups show potential to achieve such characteristics, and
- advise NHMRC on the actions that could be taken to encourage development of high performing collaborations.

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 second quarter of 2019 to consider short-listed submissions and, where necessary, to interview representatives of the group<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Representatives of the submitting group attending an interview will be required to do so at their own expense.

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

## **7. Outcome of the review**

The NHMRC Council will consider the recommendations of the International Review Panel including any groups proposed for NHMRC accreditation as a CIRH.

The Chief Executive Officer will make the final determination on centres to receive NHMRC accreditation, taking into consideration the recommendation from NHMRC Council. Accreditation will be awarded for up to five (5) years.

## **8. Reporting**

CIRHs will be required to report periodically to NHMRC on their performance. The reporting requirements for each CIRH will primarily relate to centre achievements, and progress in relation to its stated activities and intended impacts (see section 4.3).

## **9. Questions**

Any questions relating to the call for submissions for NHMRC CIRH accreditation must be emailed to NHMRC at: [advancedcentres@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:advancedcentres@nhmrc.gov.au)