



Western Australian
Future Health Research
& Innovation Fund

Major Research Application Support

Guidelines and Conditions

This program has periodic review cycles, please refer to the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund [website](#) for closing dates.

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1. Introduction

The Major Research Application Support (MRAS) is a Program of the Western Australian (WA) [Future Health Research and Innovation \(FHRI\) Fund](#).

The FHRI Fund provides a secure source of funding to drive health and medical research, innovation and commercialisation and through these activities, improve the health and prosperity of all Western Australians. It also provides an opportunity to diversify the economy, create jobs, improve the sustainability of the health system and position WA as a leader in research and innovation.

This Program contributes to the [FHRI Fund 2021/22 to 2023/24 Priority](#): Provide cash commitments for submission to competitive co-funding programs, making Western Australian-led applications more competitive and, therefore, increasing the State's share of national and international competitive funding.

The expected outcomes are in alignment with the following objectives of the [Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012](#) (the Act):

- improving the health and wellbeing of Western Australians
- improving Western Australia's economic prosperity
- advancing Western Australia to being, or maintaining Western Australia's position as, a national or international leader in research and innovation activities.

The Program is administered by the Office of Medical Research and Innovation (OMRI), WA Department of Health (Department of Health). Queries may be directed to DOH.OMRI@health.wa.gov.au.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Program is to provide in-principle financial support for research applications being submitted to nationally and internationally competitive grant funding rounds to boost their chance of success.

The aims of the Program are to:

- Promote high-quality research.
- Enable opportunities for the translation of research findings into new knowledge and improved human health and wellbeing.
- Enhance WA's standing as a leader in health and medical research.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- Improve success rates for relevant external major competitive research funding programs (External Program).
- Increase competitive grant income brought into WA and expended in WA.

3. Program description

The MRAS Program establishes a funding pool to provide cash commitments for grant applications to External Programs that require co-funding.

The MRAS Program will support applications for research:

- that build WA capability and capacity in research
- that address a significant health issue in WA
- that attract external, competitive funds into WA
- from which findings could be translated into measurable benefits.

The Program encourages applications that include projects with the primary purpose of addressing Aboriginal¹ health and/or regional Western Australia health issues, as these are recognised as areas of importance in the Act and FHRI Fund Governance Framework.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all partners in the proposed research are adequately aware of and involved in the development of the application to the External Program.

The MRAS applicant will be responsible for the MRAS application process and complying with all reporting requirements, if successful.

The administering institution will be responsible for the governance and financial management of any funding awarded.

4. Eligibility

To be eligible for the MRAS Program all of the following criteria apply:

- Applications must be submitted through an administering institution which:
 - has an active Australian Business Number
 - has a physical and operational presence in WA.
- The MRAS applicant must:
 - be the:
 - Coordinating Principal Investigator on the External Program application
 - or
 - Co-lead on the External Program application for a large multi-state application
 - be an Australian citizen or permanent resident in Australia
 - reside in WA at a minimum of 50 per cent of the time during the period of the grant
 - be employed by the administering institution for the period of the grant
For the purposes of this Program, 'employment' includes the following:
 - (a) employee of the administering institution
 - (b) honorary position at the administering institution
 - (c) adjunct status at the administering institution that has an affiliation agreement with the employing entity.*Where (c) applies, the administering institution is required to clearly identify the employing entity.*
 - have no overdue reports for any OMRI or FHRI Fund grant funding programs from any years (excludes authorised extensions).
- The External Program must:
 - require co-funding
 - be for health and medical research
 - be provided via a scheme that is nationally or internationally competitive
 - be provided via a scheme that is nationally or internationally advertised and available to all potential applicants
 - have a well-defined mechanism for competition and selection.
- The External Program application must include:
 - a WA organisation as the administering, leading, or co-leading organisation
 - cash contributions from the External Program funder and other partners that together are at least equal to the MRAS amount requested

¹ Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

- a proposal that will result in the total expenditure in WA to be at least double the MRAS grant funding amount.
- Other organisations partnering on the External Program application must not be part of an industry that produces products or services that may contribute to poor physical health or mental wellbeing of the community.
- The funding must not constitute the entire financial base of the administering institution.
- Applications must be in accordance with Section 6 Application Instructions.

An applicant may submit more than one application to the MRAS Program.

The Office of Medical Research and Innovation (OMRI) reserves the right to request further information and make final decisions regarding eligibility.

Definitions to determine External Program eligibility

Health and medical research

For the purposes of the FHRI Fund, health and medical research is inclusive of:

- research to understand human health, wellbeing and disease, and the biological, behavioural, social and environmental factors that contribute to these
- research to measure the magnitude and distribution of a health problem
- research to develop solutions, interventions, products and technologies that could contribute to improving human health and wellbeing
- research to understand how interventions, policies and programs aimed at improving human health and wellbeing can be most effectively delivered.

Nationally/internationally competitive

Every application submitted for funding in a selection process must be assessed and rated against all other applications submitted in that selection process. Projects funded as a result of a direct approach from a funding body would not be considered as competitive.

Nationally/internationally advertised

All potential applicants must be given an equal opportunity to become aware of and apply to the scheme through the use of any combination of direct contact; newspapers; journals; magazines; internet; or any other printed or electronic media.

Available to all potential applicants

There must not be preferential treatment of any applicant during the assessment process based solely on the type of institution nor its geographical location. Each potential applicant must have an equal chance to submit an application.

Scheme

A scheme is an administrative process that allocates funds using a discrete set of rules. Schemes can include grants and programs.

Well-defined mechanism for competition

The scheme has publicly available rules stating how assessments are conducted, including provisions to manage conflicts of interest.

5. Program funding

Successful MRAS applicants will be provided an in-principle cash commitment for use in the External Program application. There is no minimum or maximum limit per MRAS grant for submissions in the assessment period closing 27 July 2022.

Applications seeking an MRAS cash commitment above \$1 million are required to provide additional information to clearly justify, with robust evidence, that the budget requested is necessary. Applications proposing a budget up to \$1 million do not require this additional information (refer to section 6 Application instructions).

The cash amount requested in the MRAS application must be at least matched by the cash amount requested from the External Program funder and other partner cash. In-kind contributions from other parties to the External Program application are not counted in this amount.

While some of the funding awarded through the External Program may be spent outside WA, the amount expended in WA must be at least double the MRAS funding amount.

Funding will only be made available for the scope of work described in the MRAS Application Form, or with any modifications approved by OMRI. The Department of Health will not underwrite any recurrent or capital costs beyond the funding awarded through this Program.

Other sources of funding should be included in the Application Form.

OMRI reserves the right to negotiate reductions to the requested MRAS grant funding amount on a case-by-case basis.

No funding will be disbursed until evidence is provided to OMRI that the External Program application has been successful and an appropriate funding agreement is executed.

Funding is offered subject to FHRI Fund budget availability, which could be varied in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

6. Application instructions

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Assessment of applications will take place at certain times each year to enable multiple applications to be considered on a competitive basis. Refer to the FHRI Fund website for application closing dates and allow 6-8 weeks for notification of outcomes.

Convening review panels to assess applications outside the terms listed above will be at the discretion of OMRI. Applications could also be assessed at other times in consideration of the closing date of the funding opportunity.

While best endeavours will be made to accommodate closing dates for applications to External Programs, MRAS applicants are advised that it is incumbent on them to provide MRAS applications well in advance of the External Program closing date to allow time for the assessment of applications and approval of in-principle commitments.

There are 2 different Application Forms for the assessment period closing 27 July 2022:

- Application Form for proposals up to \$1 million that was provided when the MRAS Program first opened.
- Application Form (published on 21 July 2022) for proposals above \$1 million, which includes additional sections, such as a budget table, budget justification and other sources of co-funding.

The instructions below must be followed when making a submission:

- The Application Form available from the [FHRI Fund website](#) must be utilised.
- The application must be completed in Arial font 11 point or larger.

- Applications must be submitted through the administering institution grant administration (or equivalent operation/finance) office and applicants are responsible for complying with any internal deadlines for this.
- Electronic signatures are acceptable. The onus is on the applicant to ensure approval to use an electronic signature has been obtained.
- The application is to be emailed to DOH.OMRI@health.wa.gov.au by the administering institution as a **single** Adobe Acrobat PDF or Microsoft Word file, not exceeding 2MBs, including CVs, and bibliographic references (if applicable). The application and email subject line should be titled as follows:
Applicant SURNAME, First name – MRAS
e.g. SMITH, Alex – MRAS
- Applications must be complete and include requested certifications at the time of submission.

Acknowledgment of receipt of applications will be provided via email to the administering institution and applicant within 5 working days of the submission.

Applications including commercially sensitive information should be marked as commercial-in-confidence, noting that the Activity Title and Activity Summary section in the Application Form may be used for publicity purposes.

Queries regarding the application process should be directed by email DOH.OMRI@health.wa.gov.au.

7. Selection process

Assessment process

Funding will be awarded on merit, based on a process of assessment and selection to ensure limited MRAS funding is only committed to the highest-quality applications. The assessment process shall be conducted by a review panel comprising of experienced researchers, experts and consumer representation.

Conflicts of interest that may arise will be treated in accordance with the WA health system [Managing Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidelines](#).

Initial assessment of applications seeking cash commitments greater than \$1 million

Applications seeking more than \$1 million will be assessed according to the questions below. Proposals that score A or B for all 5 dimensions from all review panel members will be scored and ranked according to the Assessment Criteria that apply to all applications. Proposals that do not score A or B for all 5 dimensions from all review panel members will not be considered further.

- Does this proposal address unmet needs of WA? [A - yes, critical needs; B - yes, significant needs; C - yes, somewhat significant needs; D - unsure; E - no]
- Is the project's total budget justified? [A - yes, highly justified with all the components well thought through; B - yes, with reasonable and high-level justifications provided; C - unsure, because at least one or more important components are missing; D - no, there is a significant under- or over-estimate; E - no, budget not provided in any reasonable detail]
- Have other sources of co-funding been explored? [A - yes, either significant co-funding from other partners secured or it is shown that co-funding is not feasible; B - yes, some level of co-funding secured or explored; C - unsure, because at least one or more obvious sources are not mentioned; D - no, there is significant work to be done in this area; E - no, this has not been addressed at all]

- iv. Is there robust and independent evidence to support 1, 2 and 3 above? [A - yes for all three; B - yes for two, insufficient evidence for one; C - yes for one, insufficient evidence for two; D – no, insufficient evidence for all three; E – no, this has not been addressed at all]
- v. If this proposal is funded, will it be value for taxpayer money? [A - excellent value; B - very good value; C - good value; D - unsure; E - no]

Assessment of all eligible applications

All applications must meet the eligibility requirements and will be assessed based on the criteria and weightings set out in the table below.

Assessment Criteria	%
Potential impact of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the issue/opportunity in WA (relevance/scale). • How the proposed research will address the issue or opportunity. • The expected benefits to the WA community. • Potential for translation and implementation of research findings into policy and/or practice, commercialisation and/or proposed pathway for implementation of new processes, products and/or services. 	30
Research proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothesis, research questions and objectives. • Methodology, including realistic measures of outcomes, approvals, milestones, and novel approach. 	30
Track record and potential of MRAS applicant and team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRAS applicant's track record and how this is relevant to the External Program application. • Relevance and strength of qualifications of the investigators and policy and practice partners and their availability to conduct the activity. • Collective gain of the team to the project including collaboration with policy and practice partners. • Access to required resources, including expertise. 	25
Consumer involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of appropriate levels of effective consumer involvement (e.g. patients, carers, community members) throughout the design and development of the research proposal. • The plan for ongoing consumer involvement in the activity, including their roles and how their lived experience perspectives will inform the activity (refer to Section 8). 	10
Alignment with focus areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project's primary purpose is directly aligned with one or both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal health issues ○ regional WA health issues. <p><i>Note: Applications are either scored 5 (adequately addresses one or both of the above) or 0 (does not adequately, or does not seek to, address either of the above).</i></p>	5

Selection of recipients

Based on the review panel assessments, the Department of Health will determine and approve the commitment of MRAS funds. Subject to the External Program application being successful, grants will be provided in accordance with the Department of Health financial and procurement processes and delegation authorities.

8. Consumer involvement

In line with the NHMRC definition, consumers are people who have lived experience of a health issue. They include patients, their friends, families, carers and members of the general public. Consumers can also be people who represent the views and interests of a consumer organisation, a community or a wider constituency.

There is increasing recognition of the benefits of involving consumers in research and innovation. Effective consumer involvement can ensure research and innovation is relevant to the WA community and improves translation into policy and practice.

Applicants should engage with health consumers during the development of funding applications and embed them in the proposed activity by including them in the team where appropriate and providing a detailed description of their role and contribution.

Consumer involvement should incorporate:

- Clearly defined relationships with health consumers or community groups who have 'lived experience' of the issue the activity addresses.
- Demonstrated understanding of the benefits derived from involving people with a lived experience.
- Inclusion of consumers in the activity where appropriate.
- Plans to involve consumers in the activity throughout the delivery timeline.
- Budget strategy with funds allocated to support, implement and acknowledge consumer involvement (e.g. stakeholder training opportunities, honoraria and payments, additional time to support involvement activities, administration support and consultations and events associated with involvement activities).

Guidance on consumer involvement can be found at the [Consumer and Community Involvement Program](#) website and the [NHMRC Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research 2016](#).

9. Contractual arrangements

Letter of commitment

A letter of commitment, specifying the committed funding amount, will be provided by the Department of Health to successful MRAS applicants, for use in their External Program application. If a specific format or template is required by the External Program funder, the successful MRAS applicant will provide this for completion by the Department of Health.

Agreement

Grants will be offered in accordance with the External Program funder's multi-institutional/collaboration agreement or equivalent or a Department of Health Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding, as appropriate.

The Department of Health reserves the right to withdraw an offer of award to an administering institution if the Agreement cannot be agreed between the parties.

Payment instalments

The payment schedule will be developed to accommodate the funding requirements of the External Program funder.

10. Reporting

The MRAS applicant and administering institution are responsible for meeting reporting requirements over the duration of the activity and at its conclusion. OMRI acknowledges that the External Program funder may have its own reporting requirements. Where feasible and appropriate, reports prepared for the External Program funder may be accepted by OMRI as meeting MRAS financial and activity reporting requirements. Where required, report template forms will be provided by OMRI, which must be used if the External Program funder's reporting requirements do not address MRAS reporting requirements.

A copy of all reports provided to the External Program funder, either as a requirement of the External Program or for any other reason, must be forwarded to OMRI.

OMRI reserves the right to request interim reports at any stage during the activity.

Any unexpended funds related to the MRAS funding must be returned to the Department of Health. Any over-expenditure is the responsibility of the administering institution and no claim may be made against the Department of Health.

Community Stakeholder Brief

In order to provide feedback to stakeholders, a one-page *Community Stakeholder Brief* which includes an outline of activity, its outcomes, and next steps is to be provided to all participating consumer groups (including Aboriginal communities) and a copy submitted to OMRI, at the conclusion of the activity.

11. Publicising and acknowledgements

All details and information regarding MRAS applications will be kept confidential until outcomes of the External Program application have been announced.

The Minister for Medical Research and/or the Department of Health will publicly announce recipients, including the title of the activity. The Department of Health will work with the administering institution to determine announcement dates, noting that the External Program publicity conditions, if any, take precedence.

Acknowledgment of FHRI Fund support must be made as opportunities arise in publications, conference presentations, public discussion, press statements etc, as appropriate. The preferred citation is: "This activity is/has been supported by the Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund, which is an initiative of the WA State Government".

12. Complaints

Applicants who feel that their interests have been adversely affected by an action taken by OMRI in administering the Program may lodge a complaint. Complaints can only be considered when they refer to the administrative process and not to the funding decision. Complaints must be submitted via email (marked Confidential) to: Deputy Director General (OfficeoftheDDG@health.wa.gov.au).

13. Confidentiality

Plain language summaries, Activity titles and funding applicant/recipient statements provided on applications or reports may be used for publicity purposes as stated on the relevant templates.

All other information provided in applications and reports will be maintained confidentially by OMRI and review panels. If requests are received by OMRI to make public any aspect

of the activity, other than the aspects listed above, the authorisation of the administering institution will be sought.

Applicants are advised that the Department of Health is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*. This provides a general right of access to records held by State Government agencies. In addition, information pertaining to the receipt of State Government financial assistance may be tabled in the Parliament of Western Australia.

14. Publications

Researchers are requested to forward copies of publications resulting from a funded project to OMRI. In order to maximise knowledge exchange, researchers are asked to comply with the NHMRC 'Publication and dissemination of research: a guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research', which can be downloaded from the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research page](#)

15. Evaluation

OMRI will evaluate the MRAS Program, and the administering institutions, MRAS applicants, team members, consumers and participating entities will be required to contribute to this.



This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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