



Western Australian
Future Health Research
& Innovation Fund

Major Research Application Support

Guidelines and Conditions

**Minimum Data Form due by:
1:00 pm (AWST) Tuesday 28 November 2023**

**Application due by:
1:00 pm (AWST) Tuesday 12 December 2023**

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1. Introduction

The Major Research Application Support (MRAS) Program 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 Priority Goal](#):

- Provide cash commitments for submission to major 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 Programs)
- 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 Australian health issues, as these are recognised as areas of importance in the Act and FHRI Fund Governance Framework. The Program also encourages applications with the primary purpose of addressing a FHRI Fund Strategy Focus Area which include:

- burden of diseases in WA
- living with COVID-19 and Long COVID
- mental health.

Funding will be awarded through a competitive and merit-based process.

It is the MRAS 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 (Activity Lead) will be responsible for the MRAS application process, notifying the OMRI of the outcome of the External Program application and complying with all reporting requirements, if successful.

The Responsible Entity* will be accountable for the governance and financial management of any funding awarded.

** It is acknowledged that the term Administering Institution has traditionally been used by universities and research institutes, however the term Responsible Entity is inclusive of industry and reflects that grant agreements are the responsibility of the contracted entity.*

4. Eligibility

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

- The Responsible Entity must:
 - have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
 - have a physical and operational presence in WA
 - be a WA university, WA research institution, WA public health service provider or a WA public-private partnership provider.
- The Activity Lead must:
 - be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, a permanent resident of Australia, or have an appropriate work visa in place for the period of the Activity
 - be based in WA for a minimum of 80 per cent of the period of the Activity
 - have no overdue reports for any OMRI or FHRI Fund grant funding programs from any year (excludes authorised extensions)
 - ensure that an OMRI or FHRI Fund grant has not been awarded for any component of the Activity
 - have a position or title at the Responsible Entity for the period of the Activity
The Activity Lead will be required to specify which of the following applies:
 - (a) *employee of the Responsible Entity; or*
 - (b) *honorary or adjunct title at the Responsible Entity.*

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.

In the case of (b), if the Activity Lead is employed by another entity (the Employer), this entity must have a physical and operational presence in WA, and confirmation must be provided that either:

- i. an affiliation agreement exists between the Responsible Entity and the relevant Employer; or*
- ii. the intention is for this Activity to be subcontracted to the relevant Employer.*

- The External Program must:
 - require co-funding as an eligibility criterion
 - 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
 - a request for cash contributions from the External Program funder and other partners that together are at least equal to the MRAS amount requested
 - a proposal that will result in the total expenditure in WA being 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 grant funding must not constitute the entire financial base of the Responsible Entity.
- Applications must be submitted in accordance with the 'Application instructions' section of this document.

An applicant may submit more than one application to this Program.

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
- measure the magnitude and distribution of a health problem
- develop solutions, interventions, products and technologies that could contribute to improving human health and wellbeing
- 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. 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.

There is presently no minimum or maximum limit per MRAS grant. This applies to all MRAS rounds to the end of the 2026 calendar year.

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 included in the External Program application. In-kind contributions to the External Program application are not counted in this amount.

The total of the External Program cash contribution, other partner cash contribution and MRAS cash contribution, must be spent in WA unless goods and services expenditure items are not available in WA and/or it is beneficial to WA if goods or services are procured from outside WA. The expenditure in WA must be at least double the MRAS funding amount.

Relevant External Program funding information should be included in the Application Form.

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

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 or budget item details (refer to section 6 'Application instructions').

All budget items should be adequately described and justified as consideration is given to budgets during the assessment process.

Applicants should calculate budgets accurately, as requests for additional funding will not be considered.

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

6. Application instructions

There are 2 different Application Forms:

- Application Form for proposals up to \$1 million
- Application Form for proposals above \$1 million, which includes additional sections, such as a budget table, budget justification and other sources of co-funding.

MRAS review panels may be convened (at the discretion of OMRI) outside the normal application period where an External Program opportunity becomes available that has an application closing date that is incompatible with the normal MRAS schedule. Potential MRAS applicants are advised to contact OMRI as soon as possible regarding any such opportunities. For applications reviewed outside the applicable funding cycle, please ensure the MRAS application is submitted no less than 6 weeks prior to the External Program closing date to allow time for assessment and approval of in-principle commitments.

MRAS applications will not be considered if:

- there is insufficient time to review the MRAS application and obtain approval of in-principle commitments before the External Program application period closes
- the External Program application period has closed.

The instructions below must be followed when making a submission:

Minimum Data Form

- The Minimum Data Form (MDF) available from the [FHRI Fund website](#) must be submitted by **1:00 pm (AWST) Tuesday 28 November 2023** to be eligible to submit an Application Form.
- The MDF does not need to be submitted through the Responsible Entity and may be emailed directly by the applicant to DOH.OMRI@health.wa.gov.au.
- The email subject line must be titled as follows:
Applicant SURNAME, First name – MRAS 2023.11 MDF
e.g. SMITH, Alex – MRAS 2023.11 MDF

Application Form

- **Application Forms will only be accepted if a Minimum Data Form has been submitted by the required date/time above.**
- The Application Form available from the [FHRI Fund website](#) must be submitted by **1:00 pm (AWST) Tuesday 12 December 2023**.
- The application must be completed in Arial font 11 point or larger.
- 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 as a **single** Adobe Acrobat PDF or Microsoft Word file, not exceeding 5 MBs, including CVs, and bibliographic references (if applicable). The application and email subject line must be titled as follows:
Applicant SURNAME, First name – MRAS 2023.11
e.g. SMITH, Alex – MRAS 2023.11
- Applications must be complete, include requested certifications and be submitted by the closing date/time. Applicants are responsible for complying with internal deadlines.

Acknowledgement of receipt of the Minimum Data Form and the Application Form will be provided via email to the Responsible Entity and Activity Lead within 5 working days of the closing dates.

Queries regarding the application process should be directed by email to 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.

The assessment process shall be conducted by a review panel comprised of experienced researchers, experts and consumer representation.

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

Applications must meet the eligibility requirements and will be assessed based on the criteria below.

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

Applications seeking more than \$1 million will be shortlisted based on the criteria below to determine fit with the MRAS program.

Proposals that score B or higher for all 5 areas below from all review panel members will proceed to the next stage and 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 areas from all review panel members will not be considered further. The 5 preliminary assessment questions are:

Shortlist Criteria (for applications over \$1 million)

- i. 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]
- ii. 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]
- iii. 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 provide value/return on investment for the FHRI Fund cash contribution?
[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 in Section 4 and will be assessed based on the criteria and weightings set out in the table below.

Assessment Criteria	%
<p>Significance of Activity</p> <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 (e.g. reduce inequities, improved health outcomes, economic, social and environmental benefits) 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
<p>Activity Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hypothesis, questions and objectives methodology, including realistic measures of outcomes, approvals, milestones, and novel approach. 	30
<p>Track record and potential of Activity Lead and team</p> <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
<p>Consumer involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of appropriate levels of effective consumer involvement (people with a lived experience of a health issue e.g. patients, carers, community members) throughout the design and development of the proposed activity plan for ongoing engagement in the activity, including their roles and how their lived experience perspectives will inform the activity through formal and informal processes (refer to Section 8). 	10
<p>Alignment with focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the primary purpose of the application directly addresses Aboriginal and/or regional WA health issues, burden of diseases in WA, living with COVID-19 and Long COVID and mental health. <p><i>Note: Applications are either scored 'yes' (adequately addresses one or more of the above) or 'no' (does not adequately, or does not seek to, address any of the above).</i></p> <p><i>A 'yes' score will equate to 5% and a 'no' score will equate to 0%.</i></p>	5

Selection of recipients

Following panel assessment, MRAS applications that are seeking commitments greater than \$1 million and that are found to be suitable for funding will go through an additional recommendation step by the FHRI Fund Advisory Council (Advisory Council) to assess the impact on the overall FHRI Fund budget of funding the application.

Based on the review panel assessments and the Advisory Council's advice regarding the budget impact of applications being considered for funding, 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.

OMRI reserves the right to offer lower funding rates than requested and/or request modification to the Activity on a case-by-case basis.

8. Consumer involvement

In line with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) definition, consumers are people who have lived experience of a health issue. They include patients and potential patients, carers, and people who use health care services. 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. 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](#).

It is encouraged that all team members complete the free online 30 minute [Consumer and Community Involvement in Health Research](#) course (or equivalent).

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. If the External Program does not mandate a specific format or template, the MRAS applicant will provide guidance to the Department of Health regarding the information to be included in the letter, preferably in a template with standardised wording.

A copy of the External Program application is to be submitted to OMRI prior to submission to the External Program.

Agreement

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

The Department of Health reserves the right to withdraw an offer of award to a Responsible Entity 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 Activity Lead and Responsible Entity 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 a progress report at any point.

Any unexpended funds related to the MRAS funding must be returned to the Department of Health. Any over-expenditure is the responsibility of the Responsible Entity 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 the Activity, its outcomes, and next steps is to be provided to all participating consumers and a copy submitted to OMRI with the Final Report.

11. Publicising, acknowledgements and publications

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

Acknowledging there is an embargo period for successful applicants, MRAS applicants are encouraged to contact the OMRI ASAP once they have been advised by the External Program that they have been successful. This is to ensure the grant awarding process for the applicant's MRAS grant can be initiated in a timely manner.

The Minister for Medical Research and/or the Department of Health will publicly announce recipients, including the title of the Activity. All other parties must withhold announcement/media coverage until after OMRI advises this has occurred.

The Department of Health will work with the Responsible Entity to determine announcement dates, noting that the External Program publicity conditions, if any, take precedence.

Acknowledgement of FHRI Fund support must be made in publications, conference presentations, public discussion, press statements etc.

In order to maximise knowledge exchange, funding recipients must comply with the NHMRC's '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, and the NHMRC's [Open Access Policy](#).

All peer-reviewed publications that are supported in whole or in part by the FHRI Fund must be made immediately open access, that is, without any embargo period at the time of first online publication, regardless of whether such publication is an advanced or early online publication or the Version of Record. Funding recipients are encouraged to upload to a pre-print site any draft publication or report resulting in whole or in part from the funded Activity prior to submission to a peer-reviewed publication (if permitted by the publisher) The funding recipient must notify OMRI of all publication DOIs. If the paper is peer-reviewed and published, the funding recipient must notify OMRI of the publication DOI. The corresponding author's ORCID should also be notified to OMRI.

If successful, the Activity Lead or a suitable team member are encouraged to submit an abstract to, and attend, the annual *Science on the Swan* conference following the first year of the grant. However, this will not apply if submission of an abstract will breach confidentiality provisions, restrict the ability to publish results or to obtain patents.

12. Confidentiality

Activity title, Activity Lead, funding amount, Responsible Entity, plain language summaries and sections indicated on applications or reports may be used for publicity purposes.

All other information provided in applications and reports will be maintained confidentially by OMRI, review panels, evaluation panels and the FHRI Fund Advisory Council. If requests are received by OMRI to make public any aspect of the Activity, other than the aspects listed above, the authorisation of the Responsible Entity will be sought, notwithstanding information requested under the [Freedom of Information Act 1992 \(WA\)](#) or information pertaining to the receipt of State Government financial assistance tabled in the Parliament of Western Australia.

13. Evaluation

OMRI undertakes evaluations of Funding Programs, which will include unsuccessful applications. All parties in the application, including team members and consumer representatives, are required to contribute to the evaluation.

14. 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).



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