



# Partnership Projects 2024 Guidelines

<b>Opening date:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	17:00 ACT local time on 27 November 2024
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance are to direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)</li><li>▪ Email: <a href="mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au">help@nhmrc.gov.au</a></li></ul> <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after</p> <p>13:00 ACT local time on 3 April 2024 for Peer Review Cycle 1.</p> <p>13:00 ACT local time on 7 August 2024 for Peer Review Cycle 2.</p> <p>13:00 ACT local time on 27 November 2024 for Peer Review Cycle 3.</p> <p>Note: NHMRC's Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within two working days. This timeframe may be longer during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p> <p>Submission of a registration form and activation of a Sapphire account must occur at least 72 hours before application close, noting that account activation processes cannot be guaranteed in less than this time.</p>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Targeted competitive

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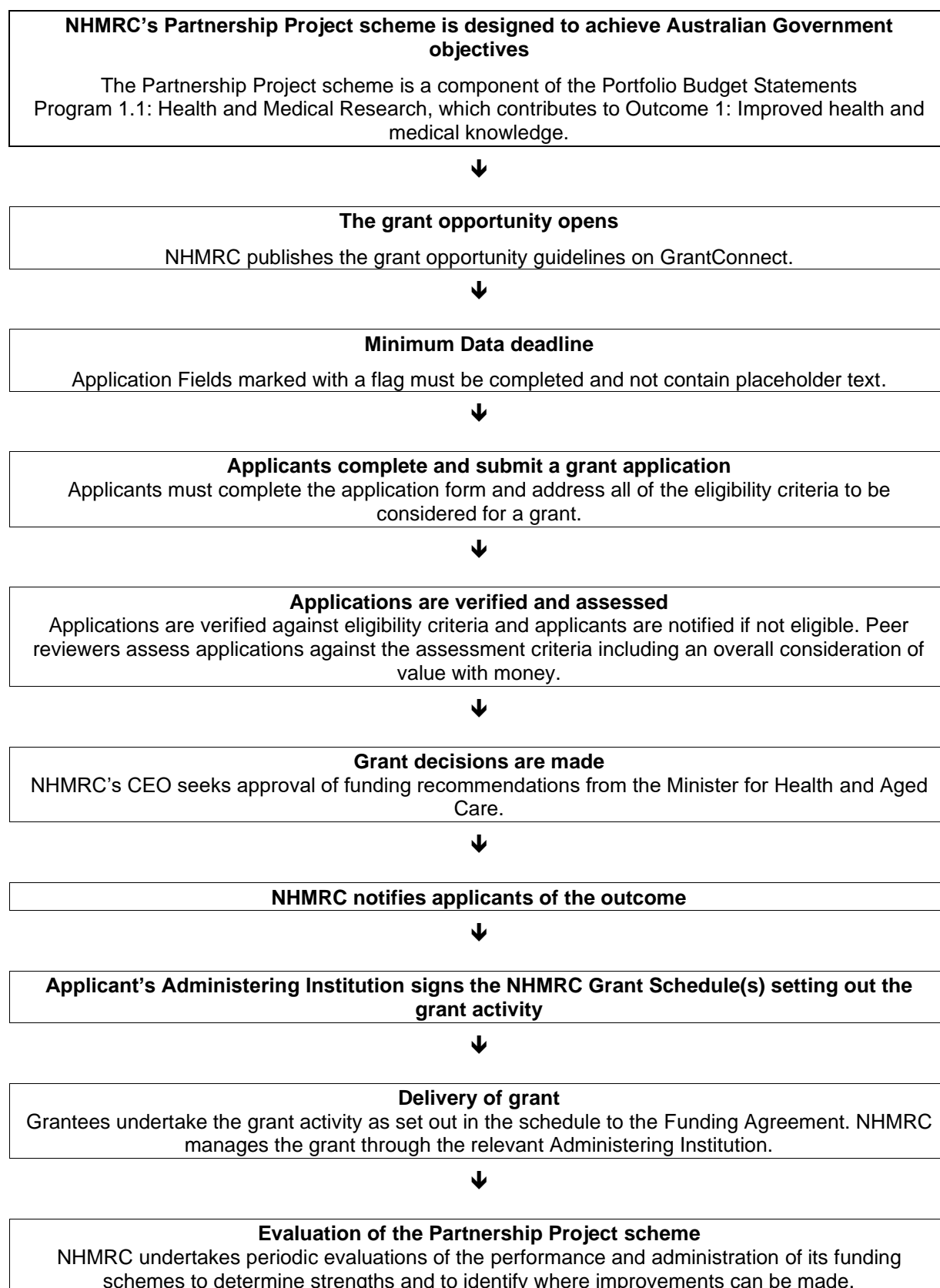
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## 1. Partnership Projects 2024 processes



## 1.1. Introduction

These grant opportunity guidelines (guidelines) contain information for the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant scheme/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grants will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

GrantConnect ([www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

The Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

Commonwealth funding for this grant opportunity, including where future or additional funding opportunities are indicated, is subject to the relevant Commonwealth Government funding policy and priorities at the time of notification and accordingly may be subject to change. This may affect the funding available, and its timing, provided under this grant opportunity. Any such changes will be notified as soon as possible.

NHMRC recognises the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australia's health and medical research community. NHMRC's [Relative to Opportunity Policy](#) specifies that circumstances associated with the pandemic and other calamities are considered, where applicable, in assessment of an applicant's track record. In their application, applicants may outline the interruption and impact on their research productivity.

### 1.1.1. About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and the integrity of, health and medical research. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program in accordance with the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) and the CGRGs.

NHMRC awards grants through several research funding schemes to advance health and medical knowledge and to improve the health of all Australians. NHMRC invests in the highest quality research and researchers, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: basic science research, clinical medicine and science research, public health research and health services research.

## 2. About the grant program

Funding for the program will be provided from the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), which is underpinned by section 51 of the NHMRC Act.

The Partnership Project scheme supports collaborations, within the Australian context, that translate research evidence into health policy and health practice, to improve health services and processes.

The Partnership Project scheme aims to support the work of healthcare policy and service delivery implementation agencies by supporting the translation of research outcomes into policy and practice and the evaluation of current policy and practice to identify gaps in knowledge.

This type of research is normally conducted outside of Universities and Medical Research Institutes. It is for this reason that Universities and Medical Research Institutes are generally not eligible to partner with researchers through the grant program. Universities and Medical Research Institutes can continue to participate as an Administering or Participating Institution.

The Partnership Project scheme enables timely collaborations between researchers and partner organisations by allowing applicants to apply at any time during the year. On average, three rounds of assessment are undertaken each year. The commencement date for awarded grants is aligned with the timing of the relevant peer review cycle.

The Partnership Project scheme will address the delivery, organisation, funding and access to services and programs that affect the health of Australians. Research may involve preventative programs, primary and community health care, hospitals, community services, the health workforce and infrastructure.

The objectives of the Partnership Project scheme are to:

- meet the need for a more effective integration of research evidence into health policy and service delivery
- create partnerships among policy makers, managers, service providers and researchers
- provide support to answer often complex and difficult questions that policy makers, managers and service providers face when making decisions and implementing policies that affect Australians' health and health care
- be highly responsive to the priorities of government, the community and health professionals
- enable applicants to apply for funding at any time during the year to allow researchers and Partner Organisations to develop timely collaborations.

The intended outcomes of the Partnership Project scheme in relation to translation into policy and practice are:

- studies of mechanisms of knowledge transfer and exchange which will lead to improved Australian health outcomes through improved health services
- research involving preventative programs, primary and community health care, hospitals, access to services, workforce, infrastructure and funding
- application of existing evidence to develop advice
- increased reach and knowledge of how to implement through partnerships

and in relation to evaluating current policy and practice and identifying gaps in knowledge:

- identification of opportunities to improve the performance of programs or services
- the evaluation of new approaches to services and programs, their dissemination and uptake
- monitoring and review of current policy and practice to gauge its impact and determine whether change is necessary.

The Partnership Project scheme will not fund the evaluation of clinical interventions on individual patients, e.g. new treatments, diagnostic techniques, pharmaceuticals or surgical procedures. Such research is supported through other NHMRC grant schemes.

Projects that are concerned with investigating the impact of systemic features of health service delivery (e.g. funding, planning, organisation, regulation and performance management) on health outcomes are encouraged.



Applications that address health services and programs to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, or other strategic priorities for investment, are also encouraged.

## 2.1. Partnership Project Structure

Applications for Partnership Projects open on 10 January 2024 and can be submitted at any time during the year, up until 27 November 2024. This is to allow researchers and Partner Organisations to develop timely collaborations.

Peer review of applications will occur in three Peer Review Cycles (PRC):

- Peer Review Cycle 1 – July 2024
- Peer Review Cycle 2 – November 2024
- Peer Review Cycle 3 – March 2025

For further details regarding key dates of each PRC refer to Section 7.

## 2.2. Key changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity:

- The requirement to use gender-neutral language has been removed.
- The Community Engagements section of an applicant's Sapphire Profile will no longer be required (Appendix E, section 6.5). Community engagements can be included in Chief Investigator (CI) Track Record (Appendix E, section 7.8).
- The Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity will have 3 peer review cycles.

## 2.3. NHMRC structural priorities

NHMRC's [Corporate Plan](#) outlines strategic priorities and major health issues for the period covered by the Plan, including how NHMRC will address these issues, and a national strategy for medical research and public health research. Each year, NHMRC also identifies structural priorities for funding to deliver against certain strategic priorities. Information on NHMRC's structural priorities is provided in [Appendix A](#).

# 3. Grant amount and grant period

## 3.1. Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity is \$31.6 million. NHMRC's Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes.

Applications must be joint submissions from an Administering Institution and one or more Partner Organisations. Partner Organisations must make a combined total contribution of at least the same value (in cash and/or in-kind) as is sought from NHMRC. The level of funding requested from NHMRC must not exceed the total contribution from the Partner Organisations. The maximum amount of funding that can be requested from NHMRC for a Partnership Project grant is \$1.5 million.

The amount of funding for a Partnership Project 2024 grant will be based on assessment of the requested budget. Applications must clearly justify the requested duration and budget and how they will support the proposed outcomes of the research. Peer Reviewers will consider this information and may recommend the reduction of the duration and/or budget to ensure the research aims and objectives can be achieved while ensuring value with money. A reduced budget does not reduce the scope of the proposed grant activity.

### 3.2. Grant period

A Partnership Project grant can be requested for between 1 and 5 years depending on the proposal.

## 4. Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC Administering Institutions is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) and Administering Institution must ensure applications and grants meet all eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be ineligible and may be excluded from further consideration.

Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information to assess whether the eligibility requirement has been met.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities or other NHMRC funding schemes will not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity.

Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants of the decision.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before the submission of minimum data. Grant offers may be withdrawn if eligibility criteria are not maintained. Action may also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

### 4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

#### 4.1.1. Chief Investigators, Associate Investigators and Partner Investigators

The maximum number of CIs allowed on a Partnership Projects 2024 application is 10.

##### **Chief Investigator 'A'**

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia, or have an appropriate work visa in place. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.

##### **Chief Investigators**

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. CIs are expected to remain on the grant activity for the duration of the grant, unless a variation is approved by NHMRC in accordance with the [NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy](#). NHMRC will only approve a change in CIs in exceptional circumstances and a variation request must not be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

##### **Associate Investigators**

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 AIs may be named. Up to 10 can be entered in Sapphire.

##### **Partner Investigators**

The inclusion of at least one named Partner Investigator from each of the Partner Organisations is mandatory. Additional information on the assessment of named Partner Investigators is available at Section 6.

## 4.2. Multiple applications/grants

Applicants applying as a CI may apply for and hold other NHMRC grants (subject to any limits set for holding grants in other NHMRC grant schemes).

Applicants are not allowed to submit the same or a substantially similar application in the same or another PRC until the outcome of their application is known (including outcomes under embargo). Any such application will be deemed ineligible and excluded from consideration. Applicants may apply concurrently with significantly different project plans in the same or following PRCs. Letters of Support from Partner Organisations must reflect the new project plan (i.e. not that in the previous application).

## 4.3. Funding limits

The maximum amount of funding that can be requested from NHMRC for a Partnership Project grant is \$1.5 million.

Requested NHMRC funding that exceeds the Partner Organisations' contributions will be reduced to match the Partner Organisations' contribution.

To maximise research translation, it is intended that Partner Contributions should be a combination of policy/service delivery funds and research funds. Organisations that are contributing funds should themselves benefit from outcomes of the research.

Government (including state government) contributions may be appropriate and valuable contributions. However, Partner Contributions cannot be drawn from other major Commonwealth research funding vehicles, for example the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) or the Australian Research Council.

## 4.4. Who can be a Partner Organisation?

NHMRC invites applications involving Partner Organisations whose decisions and actions affect health, health policy and health care delivery in ways that improve the health of Australians. Organisations that are capable of implementing policy and service delivery and would normally not be able to access funding through most NHMRC funding mechanisms are highly valued as partners. They include organisations such as:

- those working in federal, state, territory or local government – in the health portfolio or in other areas affecting health, such as economic policy, urban planning, education or transport
- those working in the private sector such as employers, private health insurance providers or private hospitals
- non-government organisations and charities
- community organisations such as consumer groups
- healthcare providers
- professional groups.

Partnerships with an overseas Partner Organisation are acceptable provided the objectives of the Partnership Project scheme are fully met.

Each Partner Organisation must demonstrate, through the application and Partner support letter, how they will function as a policy/practice partner for the purpose of the particular application.

There is scope for investigators from the policy and/or practice Partner Organisation to be included in the application as members of the applicant team. The assessment of Partner Organisations will be

on the basis of their relevant experience that could support the partnership and facilitate the translation of the research findings.

It is for each applicant to consider the most appropriate Partner Organisation(s) for their particular project. The Partnership Project Peer Review Panel (PRP) will assess the appropriateness and value of proposed partnerships. There is no limitation on the number of Partner Organisations named on a Partnership Project application.

#### 4.4.1. An NHMRC Administering Institution as a Partner Organisation

Consistent with the description and objectives of the scheme, which aims to create partnerships to improve the translation of research evidence into health policy and health practice, NHMRC Approved Administering Institutions (Administering Institutions) cannot be named as a Partner Organisation on a Partnership Project application. Applications that name Administering Institutions as Partner Organisations may be deemed ineligible.

However, Administering Institutions that are primarily involved in delivering health policy and/or health services are permitted to be named as a Partner Organisation, provided they obtain a waiver from NHMRC.

Requests for waivers need to be made through the Research Administration Office of the Administering Institution and must be emailed to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au) by the relevant date. The waiver request must clearly outline why the Administering Institution should be considered as a Partner Organisation. NHMRC will determine whether a waiver will be granted and will provide written advice concerning the decision. Waivers granted will be valid for the year of the Grant Opportunity.

Administering Institutions that do not obtain a waiver may be listed as a Participating Institution, if appropriate. However, any contributions will not be considered 'partner funding' and therefore matched funding will not be provided by NHMRC.

Any entity that falls under the "umbrella" of an Administering Institution that has not obtained a waiver is considered to be part of that Administering Institution and cannot be named as a Partner Organisation. Such entities include those:

- with the same Australian Business Number/Australian Company Number as an Administering Institution
- under the governance of an Administering Institution
- that are not a legal entity of their own and fall under the auspices of an Administering Institution.

An Administering Institution cannot partner with themselves (including their own entities), regardless of whether a waiver has been obtained.

#### 4.4.2. Who cannot be a partner organisation?

The intent of the Partnership Project scheme is to establish partnerships between researchers and the implementing organisation whose primary function is service-led rather than academically led, and that the Partner Organisation should directly benefit from the partnership.

Consequently, Research Translation Centres (RTCs) and Partnership Centres cannot be a Partner Organisation. However, one of their service delivery agencies may be named Partner Organisation.

### 4.5. Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if NHMRC identifies that:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in these guidelines
- it, or the CIA/any CI named on the application, [contravenes an applicable law or code](#), or
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the MREA.

An application will be excluded if the CIA/any CI named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect consequential action taken by NHMRC in response to findings of a serious breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code) (including a finding of research misconduct, where this term is used) or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the *NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy* available from the [NHMRC website](#).

Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA and Administering Institution certification of the application.

If a decision is made to exclude an application from further consideration, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO). The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision. Decisions to exclude an application may be reviewable by [NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints](#).

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1. Eligible grant activities and expenditure

Funding provided by NHMRC for a grant activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that grant activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#).

#### 5.1.1. Salary support

Salary support is not offered for CIs or AIs through this scheme. These salaries could be sought from a Partner Organisation(s) or Participating Institutions. Salary support contributions made by a Partner Organisation(s) or Participating Institutions will not be matched by NHMRC, with the exception of Partner Investigator salaries.

Partnership Project grants can be used to provide salary support for research support staff based overseas (see section 5.2).

### 5.2. Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

Partnership Project 2024 funds are provided to support research costs in Australia. Funding can be used to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas, including salary support for overseas-based research support staff, if the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia. In doing so, the CIA must clearly demonstrate that the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia.

See *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#) for further guidance on the expenditure of funding for a grant activity.

### 5.3. Funding of the Partnership

Under the Partnership Project grant opportunity, NHMRC will provide funding to an equal or lesser value of the funding committed by the policy/practice Partner Organisation(s) identified in the application, provided that it is justified and is consistent with the Partnership Project grant opportunity. The funding requested from NHMRC should cover research expenses not already paid for by the Partner Organisation(s), and not exceed \$1.5 million. NHMRC reserves the right to adjust budgets and not to match partner support where it would be inappropriate or is not justified (see sections 3.1, 4.3 and 12.1.1). Partner funding can be provided as cash and/or in-kind. While there is no mandated ratio of cash vs. in-kind contribution, cash contributions provide strong evidence of the Partner Organisation's commitment to the research and its eventual outcomes and are strongly encouraged.

Partner Organisations must make a combined total contribution of at least the same value (in cash and/or in-kind) as is sought from NHMRC. Detailed explanation of the purpose of the cash contribution and justification of in-kind contributions will be required. Funding committed by the Partner Organisation must be declared and confirmed in a Letter of Support to be provided as part of the application. A value must be placed on each contribution, for either cash or in-kind. Where no value of support is stated, NHMRC will not list the organisation as a Partner Organisation in the event that the application is funded. Partner Organisations should not offer funding from sources yet to be confirmed, funding that has already been provided prior to the application being submitted and from funding provided by NHMRC under other grant opportunities.

*What can be claimed as a cash contribution?*

- The salary costs of new staff employed and dedicated to work on the research.
- Funds provided as salary support to the Administering Institution.
- Funds to pay for proposed travel.
- Funds to purchase new equipment.
- Cash to fund direct research costs for the project.

*What can be claimed as in-kind contributions?*

- Salaries or proportions of salaries of established staff who will be released to work on the research.
- Use of existing equipment owned by the Partner Organisation for the project.
- Use of facilities and materials owned by the Partner Organisation in conducting the research.

Further information regarding cash contributions and how the Partner Organisation's in-kind contribution can be valued is included in the Partner Contribution Guidelines at [Appendix D](#).

### 5.4. Duplicate funding

NHMRC may compare the research proposed in grant applications with grants previously funded, currently funded and funded by other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council or Department of Health and Aged Care) and published research. NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research aims of the research activities. If NHMRC subsequently does not consider the research activities to be sufficiently different, the applicant will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

## 6. The assessment criteria

Applications for the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity are assessed by peers against the assessment criteria listed below and the score descriptors in [Appendix B](#).

Track records are assessed [Relative to Opportunity](#), taking into consideration any career disruptions, where applicable.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will be considered when assessing research output and track record.

In addressing the assessment criteria, applicants should consider how the proposal addresses the associated points described below.

### Criterion One

#### **Track Records of the Chief Investigators, Partner Organisations and Partner Investigators, Relative to Opportunity (25%)**

##### **Chief Investigators**

It is expected that researchers named as Chief Investigators will have an excellent record of achievement and encompass a broad spectrum of achievements, including but not limited to:

- a record of having worked successfully with policy and/or practice organisations
- demonstrable effects of previous research on healthcare practices and policy
- other related service achievements (such as research development, health or clinical policy or practice and influential advice to health care authorities)
- books and other relevant forms such as government reports
- publications in peer-reviewed journals
- invitations to present work nationally or internationally.

A maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIA to CIJ) may be included in the application.

##### **Partner Organisations and Partner Investigators**

Partner Organisations and named Partner Investigators will be assessed by the PRP. Up to half of the criterion weighting will be determined by the experience and relevance of the Partner Organisation and Partner Investigators to the Research Proposal.

It is expected that Partner Organisations named on an application have:

- the capacity to use the findings to influence policy decision making and health system performance – this will be assessed by reference to, for example, the roles and/or areas of responsibility of the organisation or the Partner Organisation's demonstrated record of achievement in effecting such changes
- experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service
- expectations that align with the goals of the Chief Investigator team.



The inclusion of at least one named Partner Investigator from each of the Partner Organisations is mandatory.

The assessment of these Partner Investigators will be on the basis of:

- relevant experience and authority to support the partnership
- demonstrated evidence of leadership in the relevant field
- experience of translating research findings into policy and/or practice
- demonstrated evidence of successfully implementing change in a field relevant to the proposal.

Partner Investigators can also be included as Chief Investigators at the discretion of the CIA. In these situations, the individual will be assessed against both the Chief Investigator and Partner Investigator criteria.

## **Criterion Two**

### **Scientific Quality of the Proposal and Methodology (25%)**

Assessment of scientific quality will include the following considerations:

- the clarity of hypotheses and objectives
- strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design and/or the appropriateness and the robustness of the proposed methodology
- feasibility
- demonstrated commitment to service delivery
- must be research focused on translating evidence into policy and practice or evaluating current policy and practice and identifying gaps in knowledge.

## **Criterion Three**

### **Relevance<sup>1</sup> and likelihood to influence health policy and practice (25%)**

Assessment will focus on the extent to which the findings from the research are likely to have a significant influence on health and wellbeing through changes in the delivery, organisation and funding of services that affect health. This will include consideration of factors such as the extent to which:

- the aims and concepts of the project are innovative
- the project is likely to yield new methods and techniques for addressing issues
- the project has the potential to contribute significantly to health policy and decision making
- the Partner Organisation(s) have the capacity to use the findings to influence policy decision making and health system performance – this will be assessed by reference to, for example, the roles and/or areas of responsibility of the organisation or the Partner Organisation's demonstrated record of achievement in effecting such changes
- the application addresses issues which are of national or regional significance in improving health or health care.

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<sup>1</sup> Relevance is the extent to which the application addresses the needs of the healthcare system or an affected population.



## Criterion Four

### Strength of the Partnership (25%)

Assessment will focus on the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to develop and/or sustain a strong partnership. Factors such as the following will be considered:

- evidence of co-development of the proposal
- the cash and/or in-kind commitment of the partner(s)
- the roles of staff in the Partner Organisation(s) or agencies in the research process
- previous evidence of effective working relationships with Partner Organisations
- the proposed governance or partnership arrangements
- shared decision making / leadership.

Applications should show how the team will foster and maintain a collaborative approach between the researchers and decision makers, over the course of the initiative.

In evaluating the strength of the partnership, applications will be assessed on the extent to which the proposal is achievable through the provision of skills, linkages, infrastructure and milestones. NHMRC will also take into account value with money in the justification for equipment and facilities and other items of expenditure to sustain the partnership.

Guidance on characteristics of a strong Partnership Project application is provided at [Appendix C](#).

## 6.1. Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

As part of NHMRC's stated commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has requirements and processes designed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research is of the highest scientific merit and is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data, must refer to the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- [Road map 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research](#)
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#), and
- [Keeping Research on Track II](#), which is a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) can be put into practice in research.

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity-building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Qualifying applications must address NHMRC's *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as follows:

- Community engagement – the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.

- **Benefit** – the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
- **Sustainability and transferability** – the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue, the proposal needs to address the relationship between costs and benefits.
- **Building capability** – the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

Peer reviewer(s) with specific expertise in Indigenous health research will evaluate how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* and ensure the research is being undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner. This evaluation is not given a numerical score but is a yes/no determination that will be taken into consideration in the overall assessment of the application, using the assessment criteria outlined in Section 6 (it does not alter the weighting of the assessment criteria). Confirmation of qualifying applications will be used for reporting measures by NHMRC.

## 7. How to apply

### 7.1. Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

	<b>PRC1</b>	<b>PRC2</b>	<b>PRC3</b>
Applications open in Sapphire	10 January 2024	21 March 2024	25 July 2024
NHMRC Approved Administering Institutions waiver due date	6 March 2024	10 July 2024	30 October 2024
Minimum data due in Sapphire	20 March 2024 (5pm ACT local time)	24 July 2024 (5pm ACT local time)	13 November 2024 (5pm ACT local time)
Applications close in Sapphire	3 April 2024 (5pm ACT local time)	7 August 2024 (5pm ACT local time)	27 November 2024 (5pm ACT local time)
Anticipated peer review period*	16-18 July 2024	19-21 November 2024	18-20 March 2025
Anticipated notification of outcomes*	November 2024	March 2025	July 2025

\*Date is indicative and subject to change.

Applications must be submitted electronically using Sapphire (unless otherwise advised by NHMRC).

Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and all CIs on an application to register for an account in Sapphire. Applicants who are not registered can submit a new user request via the login page of Sapphire.

Applicants should refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for detailed user instructions or contact their RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further assistance.

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

## 7.2. Application Extensions

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted by email to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au) before the application closing date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or cyclones
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family,<sup>2</sup> is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions will be for a maximum of seven calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent peer review processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed, especially as eligibility decisions for some NHMRC schemes depend on an applicant's success with other schemes.

Requests for extensions submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

## 7.3. Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will be ineligible. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Applications containing placeholder text (including in the application title) such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" at minimum data will be ineligible.

Applicants are discouraged from making any changes to minimum data fields following the minimum data deadline as NHMRC uses minimum data to identify appropriate peer reviewers to assess the application. Incorrect minimum data may result in less suitable peer reviewers assessing the application.

Minimum data fields for Partnership Projects 2024 are outlined in [Appendix E](#) (Section 3) and within Sapphire.

Partnership Project applications that do not meet minimum data by the relevant date will be rolled over into the next peer review cycle of the Grant Opportunity. Partnership Project applications which are not submitted by the close date will be rolled over into the next peer review cycle of the Grant Opportunity. In the final peer review cycle of the Grant Opportunity, applications not meeting minimum data will be cancelled and applications not submitted to NHMRC by the Grant Opportunity close date will be marked as unsubmitted and will not roll over into the following year's Grant Opportunity.

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<sup>2</sup> Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).

**Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.** RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications are only to be certified once complete and ready for submission.

## 7.4. Application requirements

The application must contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. Further information on what can and cannot be included in the application is provided in [Appendix E](#).

All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be ineligible.

Additional requirements and guidance for each component of the application are outlined in [Appendix E](#).

## 7.5. Attachments to the application

NHMRC requires the following documents with your application:

- Grant proposal
- Letter(s) of support

You must attach supporting documentation to the application in line with the instructions provided in [Sapphire](#) or [Appendix E Guide to Applicants](#). Only attach requested documents. NHMRC will not consider information in attachments that it does not request.

## 7.6. Consumer and community involvement

The *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Statement's purpose is to guide research institutions, researchers, consumers and community members in the active involvement of consumers and community members in all aspects of health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd (CHF) and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.

To complement the statement, NHMRC has released a Toolkit with resources on consumer and community involvement in, and expectations of, health and medical research. Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers and to use this Toolkit throughout all stages of research, including the planning and preparation of grant applications, the conduct of research and the evaluation of outcomes.

Further information on CHF, the Statement and the Toolkit is available on the [NHMRC website](#). Consumer and community involvement in the proposed research will be considered, as relevant, as part of the applicable assessment criteria (see Section 6).

## 7.7. Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC Administering Institution using Sapphire.

Certification is required firstly by the CIA and then by the Administering Institution RAO by the specified due date or the application will be ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

**Once submitted to NHMRC, the application is considered final and no changes can be made.**

#### 7.7.1. CIA certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA before submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct.
- All eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the grant activity have familiarised themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements, in accordance with the guidelines.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time.
- The Head of Department of the Administering Institution (and Participating Institution/s, if applicable) will ensure the appropriate facilities will be available.
- The research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.

#### 7.7.2. Certification from other Chief Investigators (CIB-CIJ) and Associate Investigators

By accepting an invitation to participate on an application, Chief and Associate Investigators certify that, at the time of application submission, they:

- agree to be named on the application
- endorse application certification by the Chief Investigator A and submission for endorsement by the Administering Institution's RAO
- have familiarised themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies
- agree to participate in the manner described in the application and to the handling of personal information contained within the application as described in the *NHMRC Privacy Policy*
- have met all eligibility and other application requirements.

#### 7.7.3. Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution before submitting an application:

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- CIA is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time of accepting the successful grant.

- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
- Where the CIA is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant and will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the funding period.
- Approval of the grant activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained before the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO is authorised to certify and submit applications.

## 7.8. Retracted publications

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, the applicant must promptly notify their RAO. The RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity of the retraction by email ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)) with an explanation of the reasons for the retraction.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's track record, the applicant must immediately record that information in their Profile in Sapphire.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, the applicant should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, an applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the RAO must advise NHMRC in writing (to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)), clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

## 7.9. Withdrawal of applications

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC.

An application may be 'marked for deletion' by the applicant in Sapphire before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the grant opportunity has closed. The application will not be deleted while the grant opportunity remains open for application submission.

## 7.10. Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's RAO.

All policy enquiries must be submitted in writing by the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC's Research Help Centre. Policy enquiries from applicants will be re-directed to the RAO. Frequently asked policy questions will be addressed via the scheme's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, which will be updated on GrantConnect as required and should be reviewed before submitting a query.

### **NHMRC's Research Help Centre details:**

Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

Email: [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)

Refer to the [Research Help Centre webpage](#) for opening hours.

## 8. The grant selection process

### 8.1. Assessment of grant applications

NHMRC considers applications through a targeted competitive grant process. Applications are required to meet eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) by independent peer reviewers.

As per section 11 of the CGRGs, the extent to which applications represent value with relevant money is considered as part of the broader score descriptors in [Appendix B](#). This consideration guides assessment of applications against the scheme's objectives and intended outcomes (Section 2), the relative value of the grant sought, the quality of the proposed research and the track record or capability of the applicant(s).

#### 8.1.1. Who will assess applications?

NHMRC's peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application to ensure that only the highest quality research that provides value with money is recommended for funding.

Applicants must not seek to identify or make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment, in keeping with NHMRC's principles of impartial and independent peer review. Seeking to influence the process or outcomes of peer review may constitute a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

#### 8.1.2. Partnership Projects 2024 assessment process

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness. Peer review processes are fair and seen to be fair by all involved.
- Transparency. All stages of peer review are transparent.
- Independence. Peer reviewers provide independent advice. There is also independent oversight of peer review processes by independent Chairs and Observers.
- Appropriateness and balance. The experience, expertise and operation of peer reviewers are appropriate to the goals and scale of the funding vehicle.
- Research community participation. Persons holding taxpayer-funded grants should willingly make themselves available to participate in peer review processes, including mentoring of junior researchers, whenever possible.
- Confidentiality. Participants respect that confidentiality is important to the fairness and robustness of peer review.
- Impartiality. Peer review is objective and impartial, with appropriate processes in place to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest (CoI).
- Quality and excellence. NHMRC will continue to introduce evidence-based improvements into its processes to achieve the highest quality decision-making through peer review.

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see Section 6). Some applications may be discussed by peer reviewers. The overall scores



from assessments will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is on the [NHMRC website](#).

## 8.2. Who will approve grants?

In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC's CEO makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC. The Minister, acting on the advice of the CEO, determines expenditure from the MREA (subsection 51(2) of the NHMRC Act).

## 9. Notification of application outcomes

NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible, following the approval of grants. Advice of outcomes may occur before the approval of grants if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons.

NHMRC may advise applicants and their Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome under embargo. This means that the information must not be made public until the embargo is lifted. During the embargo period, applicants must not publicise the information or post comments about their or the grant opportunity's grant outcomes in public domains such as social forums, websites, journals or newspapers. The [NHMRC website](#) provides further information on what can and cannot happen where information on a grant is released under embargo.

## 10. Successful grant applications

CIAs whose applications are approved for funding will have access to a letter of offer through Sapphire. Administering Institutions responsible for administering approved applications will also have access to the letter of offer and to the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online signing/acceptance process within Sapphire.

NHMRC's CEO or delegate may withdraw or vary an offer of a grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue.

### 10.1. Information required from grantees

Grantees may be required to supply additional information about their grant activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant opportunity guidelines or letter of offer.

### 10.2. Obligations and approvals

NHMRC-funded grant activities must comply with applicable guidelines, laws and approval requirements. For further information see the [NHMRC website](#).

Institutions applying for NHMRC funding (both Administering and Participating Institutions) must also be aware of their obligations under the [National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse – Grant Connected Policy](#). Relevant institutions that have been named in an application for the Redress Scheme or named in the Royal Commission, and have not joined the Redress Scheme, will be ineligible to receive NHMRC funding.

Note: NHMRC-funded research with ethics and biosafety considerations must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies.



### 10.3. NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. Schedule(s) are accepted by the Administering Institution electronically in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found on the [NHMRC website](#). A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution is in place, and
- the appropriate Schedule to the Funding Agreement is executed in accordance with clause 2.3 of the Funding Agreement.

#### 10.3.1. Responsible and ethical conduct of research

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Under the Funding Agreement, NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Further information about the Code can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

### 10.4. NHMRC policies

Under the Funding Agreement, it is the responsibility of Administering Institutions and CIs to be aware of, and comply with, all relevant legislation and policies relating to the conduct of the grant activity.

For further information see the [NHMRC website](#).

### 10.5. Payments

Payments will commence once all outstanding obligations (e.g. conditions, eligibility rules or data requirements specified in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant opportunity guidelines or letter of offer) have been met by the CIA and the Administering Institution.

### 10.6. Suspension of grants

NHMRC funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, requests made by the CIA. Variations will generally only be granted if allowed in the grant opportunity guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC, in circumstances as set out in the Funding Agreement, including when there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of an alleged breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (including research misconduct, where this term is used).

### 10.7. Tax implications

All amounts referred to in these guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation matters associated with the grant.

## 11. Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on the [GrantConnect website](#) within 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by the CGRGs.

## 12. How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1. Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees are to report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the grant activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant opportunity guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant are to be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in Sapphire. For information on grant variations see the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Note that CIs are expected to remain on the grant for the full funding period and NHMRC will only approve changes to CIs in exceptional circumstances. Before a CIA applies for a grant variation, they and the relevant RAO will need to confirm that all CIs have agreed to the variation, noting the impact that it may have on their suite of grants and their eligibility to hold/apply for other grants. Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

#### 12.1.1. Change to grant Partner(s) and/or Partner contribution

Following the award of a grant, if a Partner Organisation withdraws or reduces their funding contribution, the RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity by email ([postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au)) providing a detailed explanation of the contribution/s which will no longer be available, and the consequent effect on the grant relevant to the original proposal and outcomes of the research project.

- Partner contributions must be 50% or greater of the total value of the project funds.

If Partner contributions fall below 50% of the total value of the grant, NHMRC will reduce its funding to an equal contribution provided that the CIA and Administering Institution provides assurance that the project, as peer reviewed, will remain viable with the reduced funding.

- Additional Partner Organisations can be added to a grant (as a standalone addition or as a replacement).

If the grant cannot progress to achieve the original outcomes, NHMRC may ask that a variation request to change the research plan be submitted by the CIA through NHMRC's grant management system. The change in research plan variation should describe the revised approach under the circumstances affecting the grant.

### 12.2. Reporting

Administering Institutions are required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

#### 12.2.1. Financial reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant or upon transfer to a new Administering Institution, a financial acquittal is also required. Refer to [the NHMRC website](#) for details of format and timing.

#### 12.2.2. Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each grant activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on the [NHMRC website](#). While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met before commencement of a new grant.

Information included in the Final Report may be publicly released. Use of this information may include publication on [the NHMRC website](#), publicity (including release to the media) and the promotion of research achievements.

The Administering Institution is also required to provide NHMRC with any other report in respect of any research activity within the timeframe, in the format and containing the information requested by NHMRC. All information provided to NHMRC in reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funded research projects or funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

### 12.3. Evaluation of the Partnership Project scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its grant opportunities to determine their effectiveness and to identify where improvements can be made.

### 12.4. Open Access Policy

All recipients of NHMRC grants must comply with all elements of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* as a condition of funding. NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

## 13. Probity

### 13.1. Complaints process

Applicants or grantees can lodge a formal complaint about an NHMRC process related to funding via their Administering Institution's RAO and in writing to NHMRC Complaints Team at: [complaints@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:complaints@nhmrc.gov.au). Complaints must be lodged within 28 days of the relevant NHMRC decision or action. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision.

If applicants or grantees are dissatisfied with the response from the NHMRC Complaints Team, they can raise their concerns with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints. Note that the Commissioner of Complaints does not undertake a merits review. Refer to NHMRC's Complaints Policy and the Commissioner of Complaints [webpage](#) for further information.

Applicants or grantees can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC and, where relevant, the Commissioner of Complaints.

### 13.2. Conflicts of Interest

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that interests of any kind are dealt with consistently, transparently and with rigour, in accordance with sections 16A and 16B of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (made under the subsection 29(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)).

Applicants are not required to declare actual or perceived interests.

To manage any conflicts of interest with applicants, NHMRC requires peer reviewers to declare interests, actual or perceived, and sign deeds of confidentiality. Peer reviewers declare any direct or indirect, pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest, which is reviewed by NHMRC, before being granted full access to an application. Any peer reviewer who is determined by NHMRC to have a 'high' conflict of interest will not be able to participate in the review of that application.

By managing any conflict, NHMRC maintains objectivity, impartiality and integrity in the assessment of applications. Further information about the conflict of interest process is available in the Partnership Projects 2024 Peer Review Guidelines.

### 13.3. Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. The [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#) details the types of personal or sensitive information that may be collected by NHMRC and how it will be handled. Applicants need to familiarise themselves with the NHMRC Privacy Policy before providing personal information to NHMRC.

Information that is generally regarded as confidential information is application information and any other information specifically identified as such by applicants and grantees, and will be received by NHMRC on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidentiality.

NHMRC may disclose personal and/or confidential information to:

- overseas entities, Australian, State/Territory or local government agencies, organisations or individuals where necessary to assess an application or to administer a grant
- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the grant scheme effectively
- employees and contractors of NHMRC to research, assess, monitor and analyse schemes and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for relevant purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in reports and consultations
- NHMRC approved Administering Institutions' Research Administration Offices
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

In addition, NHMRC will provide certain limited personal information of the Chief Investigator/s included in an application to Administering Institutions for the purpose of certification of eligibility requirements.

### 13.4. Freedom of information

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government's transparency and accountability requirements. Freedom of Information laws facilitate the general public's access to documents held by national government agencies, including application and funding documentation relating to NHMRC researchers. This right of access is limited where documents, or parts of documents, are exempt under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Researchers are to familiarise themselves with NHMRC's Freedom of Information procedures before submitting an application. Further information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, NHMRC's Freedom of Information application process and relevant contacts can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

## 14. Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent	<p>Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice given on the AIATSIS website (<a href="https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality">https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality</a>). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li> <li>• identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and</li> <li>• being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.</li> </ul>
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.
Associate Investigator (AI)	An investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on outputs (e.g., publications).
Chief Investigator (CI)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Chief investigator A (CIA)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017</i> (CGRGs)	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date on which the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the grant is announced, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
final year	The final 12 calendar months of a grant.

Term	Definition
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the NHMRC Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. It is available on the <a href="#">NHMRC website</a> .
grant	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant activity	Defined as “Research Activity” in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant opportunity guidelines	All the documents published on GrantConnect under the grant opportunity. Also referred to as guidelines in this document.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	A group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program. This is referred to as a scheme in this document.
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government’s whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov.au">www.grants.gov.au</a></p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities (such as NHMRC) must publish grant opportunities on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant. For NHMRC’s purposes, grants are awarded to the Administering Institution for the benefit of the grant recipients (however described).
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	A ‘Special Account’ established under section 49 of the NHMRC Act, through which Government appropriated funds are used to pay NHMRC grants.

Term	Definition
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	<p>The MRFF was established in 2015 by the <i>Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015</i> (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health and Aged Care website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund">https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund</a></p>
Partner Investigator	An investigator nominated by the Partner Organisation, who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on outputs (e.g., publications).
peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs (schemes). A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program (scheme) associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Probity Event	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Sapphire	NHMRC's electronic, secure system that allows research administrators, applicants, assessors, grant holders and NHMRC staff to manage all aspects of the granting lifecycle.
Schedule	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and</li> <li>• the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>



## Appendix A. NHMRC structural priorities

### A1 NHMRC structural priorities

Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to help achieve its broader goals. Applications that meet structural priorities may be funded in order of merit, supplementary to applications within the budget for the grant opportunity, based on advice from NHMRC's Research Committee. NHMRC's current structural priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers
- Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

No structural priorities apply to the Partnership Project scheme.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers**

NHMRC is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourages applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Accordingly, NHMRC is committed to allocating at least five per cent of the annual allocation from its Medical Research Endowment Account to research directed at improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Support for health and medical research and research translation is central to achieving improvements in this area. It is also important to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how this diversity relates to health issues in these communities.

Applicants identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent are asked to indicate this in their Sapphire profile.

Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice provided on the AIATSIS website (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality>). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely:

- being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and
- being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence, consistent with AIATSIS guidance, of a Chief Investigator A's identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and must provide this evidence to NHMRC, if requested.

#### **Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators**

As the Australian Government's lead agency for funding health and medical research, NHMRC is committed to achieving gender equity in its grant program. Funding outcomes have highlighted the underrepresentation of female chief investigators across many of NHMRC's funding schemes. By providing structural priority funding for female lead investigators, NHMRC is seeking to give more outstanding female researchers the opportunity to receive funding and to encourage more to apply. Non-binary lead investigators are included in the gender equity structural priority to recognise that non-binary people in the research workforce, like women, may have been affected by systemic disadvantage<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Non-binary applicants and applicants who use a relevant term to describe their gender in the "I use a different term" free text field within their Sapphire profile will be included with female applicants for the purposes of structural priority funding.



## Appendix B. Partnership Projects 2024 Score Descriptors

The following descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the four Assessment Criteria. Note that all criteria have equal weighting. Peer Review Panel members will provide a score (1-7, whole numbers only), for each of the four criteria listed below, for each grant application.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will be considered when assessing research output and track record.

<b>Criterion 1. Track records of the Chief investigators, Partner Organisations and Partner Investigators, relative to opportunity (25%)</b>	
<b>Score &amp; Performance indicator</b>	<b>Score descriptors</b>
<b>7 Exceptional</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have an exceptional record of achievement in research translation and impact</li> <li>• demonstrate extensive experience and success in collaborative research, evaluation and implementation of evidence into health policy, health practice and/or service delivery</li> <li>• demonstrate extensive experience working in partnership with health service providers or health policy agencies</li> <li>• have been stellar, in terms of publications, and other recognition</li> <li>• have strong national and international reputations</li> <li>• hold leadership positions in highly regarded scientific or professional societies</li> <li>• have track records that are highly relevant to the proposed research</li> </ul> <p>The Partner Organisation(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is highly relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• demonstrates extensive experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• has a very strong national or state/territory-wide reputation</li> <li>• has clear expectations that strongly align with the goals of the CI team</li> <li>• is highly likely to integrate outcomes into a health system or clinical practice, with evidence of becoming self-sustaining</li> <li>• is ideally placed to engage support from stakeholders including end-users and the wider community, and facilitate high uptake at all levels.</li> </ul> <p>PI(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates extensive experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• demonstrates previous strong successful relationships with researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have an outstanding record of achievement in research translation and impact</li> <li>• are recognised for their experiences and successes in collaborative projects focussed on the design, research, evaluation and implementation of evidence into health policy, health practice and/or service delivery</li> <li>• demonstrate experience working in partnership with health service providers or health policy agencies</li> <li>• have track records that are very relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• are well recognized for their contribution to their field of research</li> <li>• have established national and some international reputations</li> <li>• have established positions of leadership, or are emerging leaders in their field</li> <li>• hold leadership positions in well regarded scientific or professional societies.</li> </ul> <p>The Partner Organisation(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is highly relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• demonstrates experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• has strong national or state/territory-wide reputations.</li> <li>• has clear expectations that align with the goals of the CI team</li> <li>• is highly likely to integrate outcomes into a health system or clinical practice</li> <li>• is well placed to engage support from stakeholders including end-users and the wider community, and facilitate high uptake.</li> </ul> <p>PI(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• demonstrates previous successful relationships with researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>5 Excellent</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have an excellent record of achievement in research, translation and impact</li> <li>• are populated with some expertise in research translation in policy/practice/implementation, health</li> </ul>

	<p>systems and service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have track records that are relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• are recognized for their contribution to their field of research</li> <li>• have established national reputations and their research appears frequently at national meetings.</li> </ul> <p>The Partner Organisation(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• demonstrates experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• has well-established national or state/territory-wide reputations</li> <li>• has expectations that align with the goals of the CI team</li> <li>• is likely to integrate outcomes into a health system or clinical practice</li> <li>• will have capacity to engage support from stakeholders including end-users and the wider community, and facilitate uptake.</li> </ul> <p>PI(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates experience and some success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• demonstrates previous relationships with researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Very Good</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a solid record of achievement in research, translation and impact</li> <li>• show expertise in research translation in policy/practice/implementation, health systems and service delivery</li> <li>• have track records that are relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• have made contributions to the field of the proposal</li> <li>• have emerging national reputation.</li> </ul> <p>The Partner Organisation(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is somewhat relevant to the proposed research</li> <li>• demonstrates some experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• has a very good reputation at least at a state/territory level</li> <li>• has some expectations that align with the goals of the CI team</li> <li>• may integrate outcomes into a health system or clinical practice will have some capacity to engage support from stakeholders including end-users and the wider community, and potentially facilitate uptake.</li> </ul> <p>PI(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates experience in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service</li> <li>• demonstrates previous relationships with researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Good</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have published a number of good works in a field relevant to this application in the last five years, but is less productive than might reasonably be expected</li> <li>• show good but limited expertise in research translation in policy/practice/implementation, health systems and service delivery</li> <li>• are deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research</li> <li>• have limited track records in the field of the proposed research.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Satisfactory</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a satisfactory record of achievement</li> <li>• have not published more than a few works in relevant fields of research</li> <li>• are underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program</li> <li>• have track records that do not relate well to the proposed research.</li> </ul>
<b>1 Weak or Limited</b>	<p>The CI team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields</li> <li>• do not have the expertise or capacity to successfully complete more than a small fraction of the program of research</li> <li>• do not have relevant track records in the field of the proposed research.</li> </ul>

<b>Criterion 2. Scientific quality of the proposal and methodology (25%)</b>	
<b>Score &amp; Performance indicator</b>	<b>Score descriptors</b>
<b>7 Exceptional</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensively and convincingly addresses the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>has objectives that are well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed</li> <li>builds on knowledge gained through previous research</li> <li>is a near flawless design</li> <li>is without question highly feasible</li> <li>introduces major advances in concept of translational research</li> <li>includes rigorous translational research design</li> <li>consistently uses best practice in implementation science methods including: the use of theoretical frameworks, justifiable, robust measures for monitoring and evaluation; best practice models for changing practice and behaviour modification; rigorous engagement plans and identified champions; policy change and influencing mechanisms; and long-term sustainability strategies</li> <li>demonstrates broad and meaningful involvement of consumers, community, and/or research end-users throughout the research.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strongly addresses the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>has objectives that have clear intent and logic</li> <li>is appropriate for the experience level of the applicant and team</li> <li>is outstanding in design</li> <li>is highly feasible</li> <li>introduces some advances in concept or translational research</li> <li>includes most aspects of best practice research implementation science methods that will assist the project. These aspects may include: research design using implementation science frameworks, measures, monitoring and evaluation; models of change practice and behaviour modification; engagement plans and champions; policy change and influence; and long-term sustainability strategies</li> <li>demonstrates meaningful involvement of consumers, community, and/or research end-users in all key aspects of the research</li> </ul>
<b>5 Excellent</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses all, or almost all, of the objectives of the scheme.</li> <li>has clear objectives</li> <li>is excellent in study design</li> <li>will likely be successfully achieved</li> <li>includes several but not most aspects of best practice implementation science methods that will assist the project. These aspects may range from: research design using implementation science frameworks, measures, monitoring and evaluation; models of change practice and behaviour modification; engagement plans and champions; policy change and influence; and long-term sustainability strategies</li> <li>demonstrates consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in a number of key aspects of the research.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Very Good</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses a number of the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>is sound in terms of its objectives</li> <li>contains several areas of concern in the study design</li> <li>raises some concerns about successful completion/feasibility</li> <li>includes some but insufficient aspects of best practice implementation science methods that will assist the project. These aspects may include: research design using implementation science frameworks, measures, monitoring and evaluation; models of change practice and behaviour modification; engagement plans and champions; policy change and influence; and long-term sustainability strategies</li> <li>demonstrates consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in a number of aspects of the research.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Good</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not convincingly address any of the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>is satisfactory in terms of its objectives but may not be successful with all of them</li> <li>contains several areas of significant concern in the study design</li> <li>raises several concerns about successful completion/feasibility</li> <li>is not particularly innovative or novel</li> <li>does not include sufficient implementation science methods</li> <li>demonstrates limited consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in the research.</li> </ul>

<b>2</b> <b>Satisfactory</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not address the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>• shows several unsatisfactory objectives and is likely to only achieve a few of the objectives</li> <li>• contains many areas of significant concern in the study design</li> <li>• contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible in several areas</li> <li>• only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or previously well used approaches</li> <li>• does not include sufficient implementation science methods</li> <li>• demonstrates minimal consumer, community, and/or research end-user involvement in limited aspects of the research.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Weak or Limited</b>	<p>The Research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not address the objectives of the scheme</li> <li>• shows weak objectives and the methodology is unlikely to achieve them</li> <li>• contains a study design which is inadequate in a number of areas</li> <li>• raises major concerns about the feasibility of the research plan</li> <li>• is not innovative or significant</li> <li>• does not include sufficient implementation science methods</li> <li>• does not demonstrate consumer, community and/or research end-user involvement in any aspect of the research.</li> </ul>

<b>Criterion 3. Relevance and likelihood to influence health policy and practice (25%)</b>	
<b>Score &amp; Performance indicator</b>	<b>Score descriptors</b>
<b>7 Exceptional</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will deliver against the intended outcomes of the scheme</li> <li>• address one (or more) highly-prioritised health issue(s) of significance nationally or across one or more state/territory</li> <li>• will translate into health outcomes in the knowledge-base, policy and/or practice of clinical medicine, public health or changes in health policy</li> <li>• will be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national meetings</li> <li>• will almost certainly result in highly influential publications</li> <li>• will most likely become highly integrated into a health system or clinical practice, with evidence of becoming self-sustaining</li> <li>• will have a very high likelihood of becoming a highly effective, generalisable model at a national level or across at least one state /territory that will prove to be beneficial to the health system</li> <li>• will receive high-profile coverage from media and the public in general</li> <li>• will generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will deliver against most of the intended outcomes of the scheme</li> <li>• address a health issue of major importance of national or regional significance</li> <li>• are likely to be integrated into a health system or clinical practice, with some level of follow-up, and is integrated into current practice behaviours</li> <li>• will be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national meetings</li> <li>• are likely to result in highly influential publications</li> <li>• have a likelihood of becoming a highly effective, generalisable model that will prove to be beneficial to the health system</li> <li>• will demonstrate high levels of engagement and support from stakeholders</li> <li>• are likely to have uptake at all levels and receive high-profile coverage from media and the public in general</li> <li>• contribute to a high degree of involvement of end-users and the wider community</li> <li>• generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development</li> <li>• contribute to translating knowledge and research output into practice in at least one area of health</li> <li>• will receive accolades and recognition.</li> </ul>
<b>5 Excellent</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will deliver outcomes which are relevant to the intended outcomes of the scheme.</li> <li>• address a health issue of considerable significance</li> <li>• will most likely be integrated into clinical practice, at least in localised areas</li> <li>• could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national specialty meetings</li> <li>• are likely to result in influential publications</li> <li>• are likely to become a highly effective, generalisable model that will prove to be beneficial to the localised health arenas</li> <li>• will be feasible, although ongoing support from stakeholders will be required to ensure sustainability</li> <li>• will have support from stakeholders</li> <li>• will require ongoing resourcing to ensure that the project is managed effectively</li> <li>• will contribute to translating knowledge and research output into practice in at least one area of health.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Very Good</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will deliver outcomes which are of relevance to a number of the intended outcomes of the scheme</li> <li>• address a health issue of some importance</li> <li>• may have some novel aspects while others underpin or extend existing knowledge</li> <li>• will likely to result in some strong publications</li> <li>• will most likely form a pilot study for implementation in the future</li> <li>• will require significant support for its implementation</li> <li>• will need regular relationship management of the stakeholders to ensure that the momentum of the project is kept up</li> <li>• will involve end-users and the wider community, although it may not be highly generalisable</li> <li>• will contribute to the knowledge base of the topic area.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Good</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not convincingly deliver against the intended outcomes of the scheme.</li> <li>• address an issue of some importance to health</li> <li>• may extend existing knowledge</li> <li>• may result in some influential published research</li> <li>• will most likely form a pilot study for implementation in the future</li> <li>• will require significant work to engage stakeholders and ensure that the project is successful</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will require significant modifications to the framework to ensure that its aims are generalisable with other areas of health</li> <li>• have little involvement of end-users and the wider community.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Satisfactory</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are unlikely to deliver against the intended outcomes of the scheme</li> <li>• address an issue of only marginal concern to health</li> <li>• provide a program of research which will at best, only incrementally advance current knowledge</li> <li>• may result in published research that is unlikely to be influential</li> <li>• may form a pilot study for a larger study in the future</li> <li>• will require significant work to engage stakeholders and to ensure that the project achieves some of its goals</li> <li>• have virtually no involvement of end-users and the wider community.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Weak or Limited</b>	<p>The proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will not deliver against any of the intended outcomes of the scheme</li> <li>• does not address an issue of concern to health</li> <li>• will not advance current knowledge in the field</li> <li>• is unlikely to result in any publications</li> <li>• has no involvement of end-users and the wider community.</li> </ul>

<b>Criterion 4. Strength of the partnership (25%)</b>	
<b>Score &amp; Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Score descriptors</b>
<b>7 Exceptional</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates that a strong relationship between the researchers and Partner Organisation(s) already exists or will be developed</li> <li>demonstrates existing shared governance and decision making capability.</li> <li>can be used as an exemplar for what successful partnerships could achieve in terms of creating leaders, leverage, networking and delivering policy and practice developments in health</li> <li>contributes to a high degree of team integration and cohesiveness</li> <li>shows high probability of exceptional collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health in localised areas and Australia</li> <li>is clearly evident from the conceptual stages of the proposal to the final application, as the partners are highly integrated into the proposal.</li> <li>would see the partners intimately involved at all stages of the proposed research</li> <li>is shown by shared policy/practice goals and significant cash and in-kind resource contributions</li> <li>illustrates capacity building, networking and infrastructure building activities that will extend beyond the life of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Outstanding</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates that a relationship between the researchers and Partner Organisation(s) already exists or will be developed</li> <li>demonstrates existing or highly plausible shared governance and decision making capability</li> <li>is evident from the conceptual stages of the proposal to the final application, as the involvement of the partners are integrated into the proposal. This proposal is therefore co-developed</li> <li>shows that the project plan was developed by a collaborative process between the researchers and their decision making partners</li> <li>is reflected in the likelihood that the project will build capacity to do or use research within the partner or the target decision making organisations</li> <li>is shown by shared policy/practice goals and appropriate cash and/or in-kind resource contributions</li> <li>clearly illustrates how the systems established will contribute to a high probability of being sustainable</li> <li>shows high probability of outstanding collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health in localised areas and Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>5 Excellent</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates that some relationship between the researchers and Partner Organisation(s) exists or will be developed</li> <li>demonstrates potential shared governance and decision making capability</li> <li>is evident in the final application, as the partners are involved in some key areas of the proposal, showing some co-development</li> <li>shows excellent team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences</li> <li>is reflected in the likelihood that the project will build skills and capacity within the partner or the target organisations</li> <li>shows elements of shared policy/practice goals and resource contributions with an appropriate cash and/or in-kind balance</li> <li>will grow and become sustainable if further resource commitments are found to embed the outcomes of the research for the long term</li> <li>has articulated measures for integrating new researchers into teams</li> <li>shows high probability of excellent collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health in localised areas and major centres in Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Very Good</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates the potential of a relationship between the researchers and Partner Organisation(s) will exist</li> <li>demonstrates some shared governance and decision making capability</li> <li>shows very good team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences</li> <li>would be reasonably effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges</li> <li>is reflected in the likelihood that the project will build skills and capacity within the partner or the target organisations</li> <li>shows limited contributions in terms of cash/in-kind support</li> <li>likely to become sustainable if further resource commitments are found to embed the outcomes of the research for the long term</li> <li>has articulated measures for integrating new researchers into teams</li> <li>shows probability of collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health in localised areas and some major centres in Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Good</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows good team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences</li> <li>shows some prospects for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will provide good capacity building/career development opportunities</li> <li>• shows limited contributions in terms of cash/in-kind support</li> <li>• may be unsuitable to achieve the goals of this project</li> <li>• shows probability of some collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Satisfactory</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is satisfactory in terms of complementary skills and experiences, and how it would contribute to the success of the project</li> <li>• shows limited prospects for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges</li> <li>• will provide some building/career development opportunities</li> <li>• shows minimal contributions in terms of cash/in-kind support</li> <li>• is most likely unsuitable to achieve the goals of this project</li> <li>• shows minimal collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Weak or Limited</b>	<p>The proposed partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not show complementary skills and experience, and how it would contribute to the success of the project</li> <li>• does not show prospects for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges</li> <li>• will not provide capacity building/career development opportunities</li> <li>• shows limited contributions in terms of cash/in-kind support</li> <li>• will not achieve the goals of this project</li> <li>• shows no collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health.</li> </ul>



## Appendix C. Characteristics of Strong Applications

Applicants must ensure they address the Assessment Criteria described at Section 6. The research question or problem that the Partner Organisation(s) need answered or solved must be clearly stated in the application and in the Letters of Support from Partner(s). This is required to aid in the assessment of the application.

Successful applications will demonstrate that an effective partnership between the Administering Institution and the Partner Organisation(s) has been or will be established or maintained.

Strong applications will have many of the following characteristics:

- be of a high scientific quality
- demonstrate that strong relations between researchers and Partner Organisations exist or will be developed
- address issues of national or regional significance (rather than local-only significance)
- demonstrate that researchers and Partner Organisations will come together to identify research projects, conduct research, interpret its findings and promote the use of those findings to influence policy and practice for health
- have cash contribution commensurate with the Partner Organisation's commitment
- be led by researchers with strong established records of achievement
- demonstrate broad and meaningful involvement of consumers, community and/or research end-users throughout the research
- have a demonstrated successful pilot if appropriate
- be of sufficient scope to achieve significant outcomes
- be led by researchers who have a history of attending health policy and/or practice orientated events and are familiar with the environment in which the Partner Organisation(s) operate
- show evidence of collaboration with policy and/or practice agencies in the health sector
- show evidence of long-term professional relationships with policy and/or practice agencies in the health sector
- have a demonstrably high chance of success
- Partner Organisation(s) will have access to highly skilled research personnel
- an understanding of the needs of the health sector
- that the partnership promotes regular interactions and encourages feedback
- engagement strategies with stakeholders/communities
- examples of time spent with Partner Organisations
- propose original research likely to generate knowledge that will have an impact on relevant management and/or policy decision-making; impacts can include:
  - improved primary care, hospital care, aged care, management systems and better preventative strategies
  - new or improved health diagnostics, technology, products, health service delivery, processes or applications by end-users
  - development of health advice, guidelines and reports targeted at clinicians and end-users
  - improved end-user accessibility to health services or clinical practice

- research informed health policy advice to government on public health or health service delivery matters
- collaboration outcomes such as end-user involvement in activities (e.g. establishment of expert committees to provide advice to government)
- increased evidence-informed educational outputs
- more effective and safer care
- the elimination of inadequate and ineffective procedures and treatments
- better or earlier diagnoses, treatment or cures of diseases
- enhanced health through relevant capacity building measures (e.g., increased community engagement, increased data linkage measures)
- reduced health risks or enhanced skills base.

## Appendix D. Partner Contribution Guidelines

Partner Organisation contributions can be either cash or in-kind.

The Partner Organisation(s) named on the application must provide at least 50% of the research costs. NHMRC will only fund an amount equal to that of the Partner Organisation contributions.

These guidelines are to be used in determining the value and adequacy of cash or in-kind contributions from Partner Organisations.

- The onus is on the NHMRC-approved Administering Institution to establish the merit and value of the in-kind contributions which should reflect current market values.
- In-kind contributions that are shown to be essential to the project will be given full recognition in evaluating the total value of the contribution.
- In-kind contributions may include scientific liaison and management, direct technical support, access to equipment, salaries, software, involvement of a consumer representative in research projects, travel and use of facilities.
- Cash and/or in-kind contributions will only be recognised if they are essential for the project.

This list is not all-inclusive.

### Cash Contributions

Category	Accepted (Funding may be matched by NHMRC)	Not Accepted (Funding will <u>not</u> be matched by NHMRC)
Payments for new staff	Payment from the Partner Organisation to employ new staff to work directly on the project.	Payments from partners that are not functioning as a Partner Organisation for the purpose of the application.
Salary support (non CI/AI) to Administering Institutions	Funds provided as salary support to the Administering Institution by Partner Organisations.	Funds from partners that are not functioning as a Partner Organisation for the purpose of the application.
Payments for research costs	Payment from the Partner Organisation to fund the direct costs of the research and equipment. These payments must be essential for the project.	Payments for research and equipment that is not required for the project.
Partner Investigators	Payments from Partner Organisations concerning Partner Investigators.	Payments from Partner Organisations concerning Chief Investigators / Associate Investigators.

## In-Kind Contributions

Category	Accepted (Funding may be matched by NHMRC)	Not Accepted (Funding will <u>not</u> be matched by NHMRC)
Partner Investigators	Salary costs concerning Partner Investigators named as CIs and Als.	
Access to databases not in the public domain	Internal costs of access.	Costs of collecting the database.
Analytical and other services	Internal rates.	Commercial rates.
Equipment / materials	Contributed – Used - fair market value.  Contributed – New - selling price to most favoured customer, if stock item.  Cost of manufacture if one of a kind.  Unit cost of production for commercial products.	List price or discounted list price.  Development costs.
Patents and Licences	Licences acquired from third parties for use by the research team in the project.	Patents.  Licensing acquired from the university.
Salaries (non-Chief Investigators/Associate Investigators)	Typical salary costs (including on-costs) at internal rates for established staff to work on the project.	External charge-out or consultant rates.  Costs relating to administrative support where overheads have been included in salary costs.
Contributed software	Copying costs.  Licensing costs.  Documentation costs.  Cost of training and support software.	Development costs.
Travel	Travel costs associated with field work.  Travel costs to meet with Partner Organisation(s).	
Use of facilities	Internal rates.	Commercial rates.

# Appendix E. Partnership Projects 2024 Guide to Applicants

## 1. Preparing an Application

The following sections provide additional advice about parts of the application that are specific to Partnership Projects grant opportunity.

- Refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.
- Partnership Projects 2024 scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in Sapphire (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, refer to Section 7 'How to apply' in the grant opportunity guidelines.

### 1.1 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grant Applications

Information provided to generative artificial intelligence (such as natural language processing models and artificial intelligence technology tools) becomes part of a public database and may be accessed by unspecified third parties.

If you use generative artificial intelligence to assist with the drafting of your application, you must ensure you are aware of the potential risks involved, such as those related to security, confidentiality, intellectual property, privacy, the accuracy of information generated and possible plagiarism.

## 2. Application Requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completed mandatory sections of 'My Profile' ([Appendix E](#) Section 5) and 'My Profile' Requirements for Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity ([Appendix E](#) Section 6).
- Completed application form ([Appendix E](#) Section 7)
- Grant Proposal as an attachment ([Appendix E](#) section 7.8)
- Partner letter(s) of support as an attachment(s) ([Appendix E](#) section 7.10)

Applications must comply with all requirements as set out in the grant opportunity guidelines. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements may result in non-acceptance or exclusion of your application (refer to Section 4 'Eligibility criteria' of the guidelines).

## 3. Minimum Data Requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information and are discouraged from making changes to this information after the minimum data due date. NHMRC uses this information to identify peer reviewers who are best suited to assess the application. Minimum data are indicated in Sapphire by a flag (🚩) and are comprised of:

- Administering Institution
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health research focus (yes/no)
- Project synopsis
- Privacy agreement
- Research Classification:
  - Broad Research Area
  - Field(s) of Research
  - Peer Review Areas

- Research Keywords
- Chief Investigator A (complete CIA Role and Name)

Minimum data must be entered into Sapphire by 17:00 (ACT local time) of the specified Peer Review Cycle (PRC) due date (see section 7.1 of the Guidelines). Applicants are to refer to section 7.3 'Minimum data requirements' of the guidelines for further information.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.

RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications only require certification once complete and ready for submission to NHMRC.

## 4. Key Changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the Partnership Projects 2024 application form:

- Inclusion of information on using generative artificial intelligence to assist with the drafting of an application (see Appendix E, section 1.1).
- Updated definitions for the 4 Broad Research Areas (BRAs) have been included in the Sapphire Application form (see Appendix E, sections 5.4 and 7.4).
- Updated guidance for completing Fields of Research, Peer Review Areas and Research Keywords. Applicants will be required to enter percentages against each Field of Research (up to 3) totalling 100% (see Appendix E, section 7.4).
- The Community Engagements section of an applicant's Sapphire Profile will no longer be required (Appendix E, section 6.5).
- 'Grant Proposal' requirements (Appendix E, section 7.8) have been updated with the following change:
  - Community engagements can be included in Chief Investigator (CI) Track Record.

## 5. 'My Profile' Requirements

Within your profile in Sapphire, there is mandatory information that must be provided and/or updated before an application is submitted (refer to Section 7 'How to apply' of the guidelines). This information includes personal details, academic/research interests and peer review information.

Mandatory Profile information is indicated by a red asterisk in Sapphire (\*). This requirement applies to all Chief Investigators (CIs) named on the application. You will need to verify that each of the CIs has completed and/or updated their profile before an application is certified, noting that an error message will appear when a CI is added as a team member if they have not completed all mandatory fields in their profile. Existing NHMRC grant holders cannot commence or be named on an application until all mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete.

### 5.1 About My Profile

Provide your primary institution name under Primary Institution. If this is an Administering Institution, the RAO will have access to view your profile (including your gender). You may also allow the RAO to edit your profile.

Note: to update your Primary Institution name in Sapphire, go to 'Account Settings', 'Personal details' and click on 'Primary Institution'.

### 5.2 Personal Information

Provide your most current details in this section. It is important that your title, names, gender, phone and email details are up to date as these are the details on which NHMRC relies when contacting you.

## 5.3 Academic Information

Indicate whether you have a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and, if applicable, the pass date (year) of your thesis (not the date of conferral).

## 5.4 Peer Review Information

Select a Broad Research Area that best aligns with your expertise.

**Basic Science Research:** seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use, but is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

**Clinical Medicine and Science Research:** seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

**Health Services Research:** seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

**Public Health Research:** seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

Accurate and up-to-date peer review information helps reduce peer review burden and ensures applications are allocated to the reviewers with the most relevant expertise. When completing this section, consider your relevant skills and expertise to review grant applications, rather than the field of your current research.

Select 5-10 Research Keywords most applicable to your main area of research. You can also provide further detail about your research interests or areas of expertise. This could include, but is not limited to, your research methodologies, areas of student supervision and areas in which you have published.

Select 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best describe your research interests, 1 being the most relevant and 3 being the least relevant.

You can add as many Fields of Research as required to describe your expertise. Indicate when you started your research in that field, the classification of the research (e.g., primary), and whether the research is current or terminated. Individuals are encouraged to list all relevant Fields of Research. Only current Fields of Research will be displayed.

Note: An opportunity is provided in the application to select research areas, fields of research and keywords that best describe your research proposal, as opposed to your personal research interests. The above information about your personal research interests will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

## 5.5 Unavailability Calendar

Peer review is an integral part of NHMRC funding schemes. NHMRC grant recipients have obligations to contribute to the assessment of applications (as outlined in the *NHMRC Funding Agreement*). If you are not available to act as a peer reviewer, include a statement detailing your reasons and the period for which you are unavailable. To maintain the list of available peer reviewers within Sapphire, NHMRC requests that all applicants update their availability routinely. This will avoid unnecessary contact if you are unavailable.

## 5.6 Contributions to NHMRC

Indicate the role you have contributed to NHMRC, if you have previously participated in an advisory, peer review, guideline development or other NHMRC activity requiring expert input via formal appointment.

Click '+' to start a new entry to specify the below:

Select a 'Contribution Role', from the drop-down menu

Indicate the year in which you held the Contribution Role.

Indicate the number of times you acted in that role in each year.

You will need to create a new entry for each type of contribution in a particular year.

## 6. 'My Profile' Requirements Specific to the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity

The following sections provide advice about parts of the application that are specific to the Partnership Projects 2024 grant opportunity. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, you are only required to complete the sections outlined below. If you enter more information than is required, only the required information will be imported into your application.

It is important that relevant 'My Profile' information (for all CIs) is up to date at the time of application submission, as it is used to contact applicants, imported into the application and used by peer reviewers. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile and to capture grant outcomes. 'My Profile' information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made to 'My Profile' (for any CI) after Chief Investigator A (CIA) certification will not appear in the submitted application.

Instructions for entering 'My Profile' information in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Note: You are required to list research outputs in relevant subsections of your profile. You are encouraged to link the entered research output to NHMRC Grant IDs, where applicable.

### 6.1 My Grants

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

NHMRC grants accepted by you are automatically pre-populated. However, you will need to verify this information and notify the help desk if there are any discrepancies.

### 6.2 Other Funding

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

Click '+' to start a new entry of any previous and/or current funding from sources other than NHMRC, including offers received for future funding. Provide as many details as you can in the spaces provided. Ensure that your role is clearly defined on each grant. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.



## 6.3 Career Disruptions (within the last 10 years)

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly and recognises that some applicants will have had career disruptions that need to be considered when evaluating their track record and eligibility. If applicable, applicants should use this opportunity to declare any career disruptions that may be relevant to their career history.

The period of career disruption may be used to determine an applicant's eligibility for a grant opportunity or to allow additional track record information to be considered during assessment.

### Career Disruption

A Career Disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities. For guidance on what constitutes a Career Disruption and how it is considered, refer to the [NHMRC website](#).

Career Disruption claims will not be considered for applications that fail to comply with the following requirements:

The last 10 years of Career Disruptions will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

#### Disruption Type

To enter a Career Disruption, click '+'. Select a 'Disruption type' from the drop-down menu.

#### Impact

Provide a brief explanation of the impact the Career Disruption(s) has had on your research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to your career stage. Include the percentage (%) full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Career Disruption. Do not describe the nature of the Career Disruption in this field.

Note that the information in this field will be provided to peer reviewers.

#### Additional Research Outputs

Provide details of outputs other than publications that you would like to claim in relation to this Career Disruption.

#### Dates

Nominate the periods when you have had a disruption (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

## 6.4 Relative to Opportunity (within the last 10 years)

If applicable, you can use this section to provide details of any Relative to Opportunity considerations and the effect they have had on your research and research achievements, including (but not limited to) interruptions due to calamities, e.g. bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last 10 years of Relative to Opportunity information will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

#### Circumstances

Provide a brief explanation of the type of Relative to Opportunity circumstance.

### Impact

Provide a brief explanation of the impact this has had on your research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to your career stage.

### Date

Nominate the periods when you have had a Relative to Opportunity circumstance (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

## 6.5 Community Engagements

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

Click '+' to start a new entry for any community engagement that you have been involved in.

You may wish to consult the Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research which has been developed to recognise the contribution that consumers can make to health and medical research and their right to do so. The Statement is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

## 6.6 Workload

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

Outline your professional workload in this section. Only outline your **current** workload. It must not include any intended changes in your division of hours/week, should your grant application be successful.

Provide the hours per week associated with your current professional responsibilities in the following categories: Teaching Load; Clinical Load; NHMRC Research Load; Other Research Load; and Administrative Responsibilities.

## 6.7 Publications

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications. Only the top 10 publications over the last 10 years as provided by Chief Investigators in the application form will be used for peer review purposes. It is, however, recommended that applicants continue to update their list of publications in this section as these data are used by NHMRC for peer review assignment and internal reporting and evaluation purposes.

Publication information can be entered into Sapphire manually or by data import. Supported formats are ORCID import, EndNote® Library import, and RIS import via .xml file.

Further details on how to upload publications are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#). Applicants are advised to check and manually edit data imports as required. To manually create a new entry, click the '+' button.

NHMRC accepts ten types of publication: Accepted for Publication; Books/Chapters; Editorials; Journal Articles (Original Research); Journal Articles (Review); Letters to the Editor; Preprints; Research Report – commissioned by Government, Industry or Other; Technical Report; and Text Book.

A preprint is a complete and public draft of a scientific document, yet to be certified by a journal through peer review.

To be considered in this category, a preprint:

- must be available in a recognised scientific public archive or repository such as arXiv, bioRxiv, Peer J Preprints, medRxiv
- should be uniquely identifiable via a digital object identifier (DOI); for preprints that are incrementally updated as work progresses, each version should have a unique DOI and only the latest version of the work should be included in the grant application.

If the work contained in a preprint is subsequently published in a peer reviewed journal, this should be updated in the publication list in Sapphire to avoid double reporting of outputs (recognising that, upon publication, many authors retain an Open Access 'post-print' or archive copy of their work in order to preserve and make available the intellectual content of their work).

## 7. Application Form Requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to Partnership Projects 2024 and must be completed as part of your application. Step-by-step instructions for entering application details in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

### 7.1 Creating an Application

Click '+ New Application' to create an application.

#### **Grant Opportunity**

Select the grant round you wish to apply for, e.g. 2024 Partnership Projects PRC1 grant opportunity for funding commencing in 2024.

#### **Application Title**

The application title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and needs to accurately describe the nature of the research proposal.

### 7.2 Application Details

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements.

#### **Application Identification Number (APP ID)**

Each application will have its own unique Application Identification Number (Application ID), which is automatically generated by Sapphire and pre-filled in the application. Use this Application ID number (e.g. 2345678) to identify your application when referring to it in any correspondence.

#### **Administering Institution**

Select your Administering Institution by entering three characters to start searching. There can be only one Administering Institution for each application. You must ensure that the institution you choose as your Administering Institution is the correct institution for your application. If in doubt, contact the RAO at your proposed Administering Institution.

#### **Grant Duration**

This section may contain pre-filled information that cannot be edited. If not, select the requested duration of your grant (in years) with reference to any limits specified in the grant opportunity guidelines.

## **Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Health Research**

This question enables you to identify research that specifically investigates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues. It is also designed to enable NHMRC to identify those research proposals that will require assessment of the proposed research against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

Only select 'Yes' if you can demonstrate that at least 20% of your research effort and /or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

If you have answered 'Yes' to this question, you will be required to provide details of how your application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* in the application form. Your application may be assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*, using information you provide in the following text boxes: 'Community Engagement', 'Benefit', 'Sustainability and Transferability' and 'Building Capability'.

This information will be provided to peer reviewers if your application is confirmed by an assessor with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as meeting the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

### **Project Synopsis**

The synopsis should accurately, and briefly, summarise the research proposal. This information may be used to assign applications to peer reviewers. It may also be considered in the peer review process.

### **Plain English Summary**

Describe the overall aims of the research and expected outcomes in simple terms that could be understood by the general public. Avoid the use of highly technical terms. This information may be used in grant announcements, media releases and other public documents, and by funding partners (where applicable) to determine whether the research proposal meets their priorities for funding.

### **Privacy Agreement**

NHMRC, as an agency subject to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), is required to notify you about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. We do so by referring you to the NHMRC Privacy Policy ([NHMRC Privacy Policy](#)). Ensure that you have carefully read and understood the Privacy Policy before completing the application. If you require further clarification, contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer via email ([NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au)) or letter (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601).

### **Have you read and understood the NHMRC Privacy Policy?**

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

In addition, and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 8 in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), we seek your consent to send your personal information (consisting of an "Assessor Snapshot Report") overseas, for the purposes of peer-review of this application if required. NHMRC uses the expertise of some peer assessors who reside overseas. While we make every effort to protect your personal information, assessors outside Australia are bound by their own country's laws and consequently we cannot provide assurance that your information will be handled in accordance with the same standards as required by the Privacy Act 1988, or that you would have similar remedies if your personal information is released in breach of local privacy laws.

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

### **Partner organisation consent**

Do you give consent to provide your application and assessment results to other partner organisations?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

If you wish to be considered for funding by a partner organisation, select 'Yes'. By selecting 'Yes' you are consenting to NHMRC providing your application and/or assessment information to potential funding partners if your application fits the funding partner's research funding objectives. For a list of funding partners, refer to this grant opportunity's information on [GrantConnect](#).

## 7.3 Participating Institutions

In some cases, the institution that will administer your application may differ from the institution in which you will actually conduct the proposed research or your proposed research may be conducted at a collaborating institution in addition to your administering institution. For example, many universities administer research that will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. Information on 'Participating Institutions' is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application and for grant administration purposes.

### Research Institution

List the Participating Institution and department where the proposed research will be conducted.

To add more than one Participating Institution, press '+' and complete the required information. If the Participating Institution does not appear in the list, email the institution name to the Research Help Centre ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)).

### Research Effort (%)

If the research will be conducted at more than one institution, enter the Research Effort percentage (%) allocated to each Participating Institution and department. The percentages (%) entered must total 100%.

Note: If some or all of the proposed research will be carried out at your Administering Institution, create an entry with the Administering Institution and choose a percentage up to 100%. At least one institution must be listed.

## 7.4 Research Classification

The details entered in this section will be used in the peer review process to assist with the allocation of your application to the most relevant peer reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile.

Definitions for the 4 Broad Research Areas (BRAs) have been added to the application form in Sapphire to assist applicants in selecting the most appropriate BRA. These definitions will appear as help text (🔍) under Research Classification in the application.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

**Broad Research Area:** Select a Broad Research Area that best describes the research outlined in your grant proposal. For example, research in the very early stages of developing a vaccine against a parasite should be categorised as basic science research instead of public health research.

**Basic Science Research:** seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in

vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use but, is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

**Clinical Medicine and Science Research:** seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

**Health Services Research:** seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

**Public Health Research:** seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

#### **Field(s) of Research:**

Click '+' to add rows for each Field of Research (FoR) that best describes the area of research of the application. The choice of FoRs and their proportions will assist in assigning appropriate assessors to the application.

- Select up to 3 Fields of Research that best reflect the nature of the research in the application.
- Allocate a percentage (%) against each FoR.
- Ensure the total percentage (%) equals 100%.

#### **Peer Review Areas:**

Select 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best reflect the application's areas of research. PRAs must not be duplicated.

#### **Research Keywords:**

Select 5 Research Keywords that are most applicable to the application's main area of research.

#### **Burden of Disease:**

Select up to 3 Burden of Disease types that best describe the area of research of the application.

- Click '+' to add rows for each additional Burden of Disease.
- You must allocate a percentage (%) of time against each.
- The percentage (%) total must not exceed 100%.

## **7.5 Research Team**

You can include a maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIs) and 10 Associate Investigators (AIs) in your research team. For further information of the eligibility requirements for CIs and AIs, refer to Section 4 'Eligibility criteria' of the guidelines.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. List all members of the Research Team, including CIs and AIs. Complete a separate entry for each member of the team by clicking '+' to add rows.

All CIs/AIs must have a Sapphire account in order to be listed as part of the Research Team. CIs/AIs who cannot be located using the search function will need to complete registration.

Note: Click 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' to invite a Chief/Associate Investigator to complete Sapphire Registration and/or share your application with view or edit access. Enter the email address, select the corresponding access option from the drop-down menu and click 'Save and send'. Users will receive an email invitation to be assigned to the application with appropriate access rights. Click '+ Add another user' to invite any additional Investigators.

Ensure that you have the correct email addresses for your colleagues before commencing your application.

### **Chief Investigators (CIA-CIJ)**

The 'Role' and corresponding 'Name' fields for Chief Investigator A must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. If you are naming yourself for a CI/AI role, 'Invitation Response' status will automatically change to Accepted.

Indicate whether the Chief Investigator A will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant and outline their background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal.

Click '+' to add rows for additional CIs. Click the 'Role' drop-down menu to select a role for the CI.

To add a CI to your research team, enter their email address. Outline the background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal for each additional Chief Investigator.

If you add a CI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by CIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added CIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

### **Associate Investigators (AIs)**

Click '+' to Add Rows for AIs. To add an AI to your research team, enter their email address.

'Position' is optional. 'Relevant background and expertise' is optional.

If you add an AI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by AIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added AIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

## **7.6 Top 10 Publications**

Applicants are required to nominate up to 10 of their best publications from the past 10 years (taking into account any career disruptions) immediately prior to the scheme close date. You are to provide an explanation for each publication entry. Each explanation should explain why the publication has been selected, including its quality and contribution to science, and your contribution to the publication.

You may include field weighted metrics and citation metrics within the explanation field for the 10 best publications from the last 10 years. Where possible, references to publications within the provided entry fields should be provided as a complete citation. Where this is not possible, include sufficient citation information to locate the publication such as authors, publication title, journal name, year and digital object identifier.

Publications will be assessed against the score descriptors at [Appendix B](#).

#### Top 10 in 10

Provide the details of (up to) 10 of your best publications in the last 10 years.

Each publication should be provided separately, i.e. one publication per free-text field. The explanation should outline why the publication was nominated, its quality and contribution to science, and your contribution to the publication:

- Publication 1 - 10 (max. 200 characters for citation)
- Explanation (max. 2000 characters).

## 7.7 Ethics

If you answer “Yes” to any of the questions, you will need to obtain ethics approvals and supply evidence of these to your research office in the event your application is funded. For further information, see *Ethics and Integrity* on the [NHMRC website](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au).

## 7.8 Grant Proposal

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

- Links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online; where links are included, provide the URL in full (e.g. the NHMRC website <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au>). Applicants are asked not to use URL shorteners as this may create a security risk.
- Publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, consistent with the recommendations in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. If included, these metrics will be disregarded by peer reviewers when assessing an application.

The grant proposal must be written in English and submitted in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, using NHMRC’s Grant Proposal template, which will be available on GrantConnect. Applicants must use this template. The grant proposal must be uploaded into Sapphire.

### Grant Proposal (Upload)

To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the ‘Upload New’ button followed by the ‘Choose File’ button. Select the PDF file you wish to upload and then click ‘Start upload’ to upload your Grant Proposal. Click ‘Save’ to ensure the application is submitted correctly.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

Naming and formatting requirements for the grant proposal, to ensure fairness and consistency across applicants, are listed in Table 1. Applications that fail to comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

Details to be addressed in the grant proposal and associated page limits are set out in Table 2. Applicants should note that peer reviewers will, as part of their assessment, consider the reproducibility and applicability of the proposed research and research design. Within the experimental design of the proposal, applicants need to include sufficient information to demonstrate that robust and unbiased results will be produced.



Table 1: Formatting Requirements

Component	Component Requirements
File format	The grant proposal must be saved and uploaded as a PDF file
File size	The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2 MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named using the following: Applicant's Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf E.g.: Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Header	Application ID and Applicant surname must be included in the header
Footer	Page number must be included in the footer
Font	NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12-point Times New Roman font. Applicants must ensure the font is readable.
Margins	Pages must have 2 cm top, bottom, left and right margins.
Line spacing	Single
Language	English

Table 2: Grant Proposal Components

Component	Page Limit
A. Introduction	1 page
B. Research Proposal	8 pages
C. Team Quality and Capability Relevant to this Proposal	1 page
D. CI Track Record of Translation	2 pages per CI
E. Track Record of Translation into Policy/Practice	1 page per CI
F. Associate Investigator (AI) Contribution	¼ page per AI

References	2 pages
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A brief description of each component is provided below.

### **Introduction** – maximum 1 page

The Introduction should describe the following:

1. Provide up to half a page of text describing the work to be undertaken using language that an educated reader who is not a specialist in the particular research field may understand.
2. Provide up to half a page of text describing how this application aligns with the objectives of the Partnership Projects funding scheme. Make particular reference to evidence in support of the proposal influencing policy and/or practice.

### **Research Proposal** – maximum 8 pages

All scientific information relating to the proposal must be contained in this section. The Research Proposal will be assessed by experts in the field and you should include any pilot or feasibility study data supporting the research planned. When drafting this section, applicants should keep in mind the assessment criteria and the detailed score descriptors which reviewers will use to evaluate the application. Refer to Section 6 of the Guidelines for further details. Consideration should also be given to the crucial design elements that enhance reproducibility of research findings.

The research proposal must address the essential components of your research and can include the following properties depending on the type of research:

Component	Properties
Aims	Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of hypotheses to be tested.
Background	Provide a rationale for the project.
Research Plan – methods and techniques to be used	Outline the research plan in detail, including the following where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detailed description of the experimental design</li> <li>• techniques to be used</li> <li>• details and justification of controls</li> <li>• details for appropriate blinding</li> <li>• strategies for randomisation and/or stratification</li> <li>• justification of sample-size, including power calculation</li> <li>• justification of statistical methods</li> <li>• strategies to ensure that the experimental results will be robust, unbiased and reproducible</li> </ul>

Component	Properties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details to achieve balance of male and female study participants, and male and female cell and animal models, including justification where it is not warranted</li> <li>• any ethical considerations</li> <li>• community involvement and/or plans to transfer knowledge to stakeholders or into practice</li> <li>• strengths and weaknesses of the study design and approach</li> <li>• role of the Partner Organisation</li> <li>• proposed governance or partnership arrangements.</li> </ul>
Timeline	Provide a detailed timeline for the expected outcomes of the Research Proposal along with justification for the duration requested.
Identified Risks	<p>Describe the scientific and/or technical risks associated with the research plan and how these will be managed. They could include risks and mitigations relating to the known or anticipated impact of COVID-19 on the research plan.</p> <p>Include details, if applicable, of how Associate Investigators (AIs) help to mitigate or control any risk.</p>
Outcomes and Significance	Describe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research plan, and the potential significance of the research.

References cited in this document are to be listed in the separate References section.

#### **Team Quality and Capability Relevant to this Proposal** - maximum 1 page

Provide a summary of the research team's quality and capability in this section. Applicants should detail the following:

1. The expertise and productivity of team members relevant to the proposed project.
2. The influence team members have in their specific field of research.
3. How the team will work together to achieve the project aims.

#### **CI Track Record of Translation** - maximum 2 pages per CI

For each CI, provide the overall track record for the last five years.

Applicants should use this section to identify aspects of their track record that are in addition to their top 10 publications from the last 10 years. This includes any relative to opportunity considerations they want assessors to take into consideration.

The following areas may be relevant:

- Career summary – including qualifications, employment and appointment history.
- Contribution to field of research – this may include the impact of previous research including translation of research into health outcomes.
- Patents – include whether the patent has been licensed, when it was licensed and to whom, and whether the licence has expired.
- Collaborations.
- Professional involvement – including committees, conference organisation, conference participation and community engagement.

#### **Track Record of Translation into Policy/Practice** – maximum 1 page per CI

Applicants should describe any of their research that has resulted in changes to organisational or government policy/practice in the last five years. The five year period refers to the date of translation, NOT the date of the original research.

For each CI, provide the following:

- If the research was translated into either policy or practice, then indicate the year of translation and provide details on the research itself.
- Indicate if the research was supported by NHMRC, another Australian funding source or an international funding source.
- Provide details of the organisation or government department which benefitted from the translation of the research. Indicate the year the change was translated/implemented, including details of the changes resulting from your research. Applicants can also provide details on what outcomes have occurred if known (this is optional).

#### **Associate Investigator (AI) Contribution** – maximum ¼ page per AI

For each AI named in the Research Team outline their contribution to the research project.

#### **References** – maximum 2 pages

References for the Research Proposal must:

- not exceed 2 pages
- provide a list of all references cited in the application in an appropriate standard journal format (NHMRC prefers the Author-date (also known as the Harvard System), Documentary-note and the Vancouver Systems)
- list authors in the order in which they appear in PubMed
- only include references to work cited in the Research Proposal
- be written in English.

## **7.9 Partner Organisation(s)**

All partners participating in this application are to be listed at Partner Organisation(s). Note that Administering Institutions cannot be included as a partner unless they hold an NHMRC approved Administering Institution partner waiver. Refer to section 4.4 of the Guidelines for further information.

### Partner Organisation(s)

Select your Partner Organisation by entering three characters to start searching. You must ensure that the Partner Organisation you choose is the correct Organisation for your application. If in doubt, contact the contact person at your proposed Partner Organisation.

Enter an abbreviation for the Partner Organisation to be displayed throughout the application.

If the partner organisation does not appear in the list, please email the organisation name, address and ABN (where applicable) to the Research Help Centre ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)).

Information provided in section 8.9. and 8.10 will be used primarily to assess Criterion 4 of the Partnership Projects 2024 Assessment Criteria: Strength of the partnership. It may also be used to assess Criterion 3: Relevance and likelihood to influence health policy and practice.

Assessment will focus on the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to develop or sustain a strong partnership. Factors such as the following will be considered:

- evidence of co-development of the proposal
- the financial and/or in-kind commitment of the partner(s)
- previous evidence of effective working relationships with Partner Organisations
- the proposed governance or partnership arrangements – applications should show how the team will foster and maintain a collaborative approach between the researchers and decision makers over the course of the initiative
- the roles of staff in the partner agency or agencies in the research process.

In evaluating the strength of the partnership, applications will be assessed on the extent to which the proposal is achievable through the provision of skills, linkages, infrastructure and milestones. NHMRC will also take into account value with money in considering the justification for equipment and facilities and other items of expenditure to sustain the partnership.

Applicants should include the value of support, in either cash or in-kind, providing justification of the contribution, confirmed by a Letter of Support that matches the figures entered in Sapphire.

Where no value for the contribution is stated, the organisation cannot be named as a partner. However, details of the involvement of the organisation may be included in the Research Proposal as a participating institution if the applicant believes that it may be beneficial for the application.

## 7.10 Partner Details

For each Partner Organisation, the details of the organisation, nominated contact, name(s) of the Partner Investigator(s), statements on the research question and outcomes of the research as it applies to the Partner Organisation, and Partner Letter of Support, as well as annual report and permission to publish, are entered in this section. Cash and in-kind contributions from each Partner Organisation are also entered in this section.

### Funding Partner Details

**The Partner Organisation name, address, country and ABN are displayed for each Partner Organisation. Check that the details are correct.** If not, please contact the Research Help Centre ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)) with the correct details, verified by a representative of the Organisation. If the ABN has not been automatically populated, enter the ABN (where applicable) in the text box. Please ensure that the ABN is accurate and matches the ABN listed in the Partner Letter of Support. Note that overseas organisations will not have an ABN and can be left blank.

Note that Administering Institutions cannot be included as a partner unless they have applied for and been granted a valid Administering Institution waiver from NHMRC (refer to section 4.4 of the Guidelines).

### Contact Name, Email, Phone

Provide the name and contact details (email address and/or telephone number) for the nominated representative at the Partner Organisation.

### Partner Investigator(s)

The inclusion of at least one named Partner Investigator from each of the Partner Organisations is mandatory.

### Partner Investigator(s)

Include the name(s) of the Partner Investigator(s) for each Partner Organisation.

**Additional Role:** If the Partner Investigator (PI) also holds the role of Chief Investigator or Associate Investigator within the Research team, please indicate this role (CI or AI) here. If the PI is neither a CI nor an AI on the proposal, indicate 'Neither'.

Include an entry for each of the Partner Investigators from the Partner Organisation.

Click '+' to Add Rows for additional PIs

Information about each named Partner Investigator is required to be provided in the Partner Letter of Support (as indicated below and in the Guide to the Partner Letter of Support, referenced below).

### Partner Statements

The Partner Organisation and named Partner Investigator(s) will be assessed by the peer review panel. Up to half of the criterion weighting will be determined by the experience and relevance of the Partner Organisation and Partner Investigator(s) to the Research Proposal. It is expected that Partner Organisations named on an application have the following:

- the capacity to use the findings to influence policy decision making and health system performance. This will be assessed by reference to, for example, the roles and/or areas of responsibility of the organisation or the Partner Organisation's demonstrated record of achievement in effecting such changes.

- experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service.
- expectations that align with the goals of the CI team.
- the inclusion of at least one named Partner Investigator from the Partner Organisation is mandatory. The assessment of these 'Partner Investigators' will be on the basis of:
  - relevant experience and authority to support the partnership
  - demonstrated evidence of leadership in the relevant field
  - experience of translating research findings into policy and/or practice and
  - demonstrated evidence of successfully implementing change in a field relevant to the proposal.

### Research Outcomes

State the research question(s) or problem(s) that the policy/practice partner needs answered or solved.

How does the partner expect to use the outcomes of this research?

### Letter of Support – maximum five A4 pages

Upload a Letter of Support from each policy/practice funding partner, using the Guide to Letter of Support available on GrantConnect. The letter should be signed by the nominated representative and confirm their commitment to the proposed research. This letter must be on the organisation's letterhead. Collaborating Partner Organisations are expected to make and justify a significant contribution in cash and/or in-kind to the project.

The nominated representative is the person who will be responsible for ensuring agency participation and funding. It does not need to be the Partner Investigator. The Letter of Support must be signed by a member of the Partner Organisation with the authorisation to expend the partner's money or resources. Please note that CIs and AIs should not sign the Letter of Support unless they are a member of the Partner Organisation and have the authorisation to expend the partner's money or resources.

**Partner letters** are to be a maximum of five A4 pages and should include the following information:

- Contact details for the nominated representative.
- Partner Investigator(s).
- Partner's registered ABN (ensure that the ABN is correct and matches the ABN in the Sapphire application form).
- A brief profile of the organisation.
- Details of the question or problem that the Partner Organisation needs answered or solved and how the Partner Organisation intends to use the outcomes of the research.
- Details of the proposed governance or partnership arrangements.
- Details of the cash and in-kind support that will be provided, including detailed justification of the in-kind amounts and the purpose of each contribution. It is recommended that this information is presented as a table similar to the example provided in the Guide to

Partner Letter of Support on the GrantConnect website. The commitments in each Letter of Support must match the data entered into Sapphire by the applicant.

- Consent for NHMRC to identify partners in successful applications in media releases, on the NHMRC website and in future NHMRC Partnership Project documentation (if consent is not given, please provide an explanation in the Sapphire application form comment box (see below) and in the Partner Letter of Support),
- Signature by a person with appropriate authority to commit the organisation.

### **Letter of Support - Upload**

To upload your Partner Letter of Support PDF, select 'Browse' to upload a new file. Select the PDF file you wish to upload. Click 'Save' or 'Save and return' to upload the document.

The PDF file must be named in a convention that is no more than 40 characters long (including spaces), and does not need to contain the application ID, for example, LoS\_PartnerName.pdf

A Letter of Support must be uploaded for each collaborating Partner Organisation.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants should open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document's name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

### **Annual Report**

Provide the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Partner Organisation's most recent Annual Report. If a URL is not available, attach a copy of the Annual Report (2MB limit).

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants should open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document's name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

If neither of these is available, please state why in the Partner Letter of Support.

### **NHMRC Website**

NHMRC publishes information on successful grants on its website. This may include the name(s) of partners on successful Partnership Project grants.

Indicate whether the partner has agreed to allow NHMRC to publish their name and that this is stated in the Letter of Support.

If the answer is "No", provide an explanation in the Publishing Approval Comments field.



## Funding Partner Contributions

Collaborating Partner Organisations are expected to make a significant contribution in cash and/or in-kind to the project.

The total contribution (cash and in-kind) of all funding partners must be equal in value or greater than the amount sought from NHMRC (refer section 3.1 of the Guidelines).

For each Partner Organisation, provide details of support including the cash value of each in-kind contribution. Refer to [Appendix D](#) of the Guidelines for more information. Provide justification for the use of these resources/funds in the Partner Letter of Support.

### Contributions

Enter cash contributions and in-kind contributions (in Australian Dollars \$AUD, exclusive of GST). Enter the in-kind contributions in the following categories: Human Resources, Data/Intellectual Property, Laboratory space/equipment, Infrastructure, Materials, Travel and accommodation, Other Resources.

Provide description/purpose for these contributions in the Partner Letter of Support.

### Funding Partner cash contributions (exclusive of GST)

You will need to create a separate entry for each contribution. Click the plus (+) button to enter each item contributed.

For 'Item name', enter a brief name/description of the item.

Enter the cost of the item contributed by the Partner Organisation for each year of the grant proposal. Only the relevant years should be completed.

The details about the item should be entered in both the Sapphire application form and in the Partner Letter of Support (see Guide to Partner Letter of Support).

### Funding Partner in-kind contributions (exclusive of GST)

Enter funding partner in-kind contributions (in Australian Dollars \$AUD, exclusive of GST) in the following categories: Human Resources, Data/Intellectual Property, Laboratory space/equipment, Infrastructure, Materials, Travel and accommodation, Other Resources.

You will need to create a separate entry for each contribution. Click the plus (+) button to enter each contributed item.

For 'Item name', enter a brief name/description of the item.

Enter the cash value of the item contributed by the Partner Organisation for each year of the grant proposal. Only the relevant years should be completed.

Details about the item cost and purpose should be entered in the Sapphire application form and in the Partner Letter of Support (**see Guide to Partner Letter of Support**)

The total for the cash and in-kind contributions will be calculated and shown in Sapphire based on the data entered in the fields.

## 7.11 Third Party Research Facilities

Applicants often need to receive services from research facilities to undertake their research.

Such facilities include but are not limited to: biospecimens and associated data from biobanks or pathology services, non-human primate colonies, the Australian Twin Registry, Cell Bank Australia, and the Trans-Tasman Radio Oncology Group and other organisations that provide clinical trials services.

Applicants will need to consult with research facilities to ensure that the services they require can be provided and that the charges included in the budget are accurate (refer to Direct Research Costs section). Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration must be submitted with the application.

Indicate whether you will be using services provided by a research facility to complete your research. If you select 'yes', then upload your letter from the research facility confirming their collaboration.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document's name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

## 7.12 Direct Research Costs

Details on permitted uses of NHMRC funds and setting of budgets can be found in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#).

### Salary

Salary contributions for research staff, including members of the research team, are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The level of PSP requested in an application must match the roles and responsibilities of the position in the proposed research and the percentage of the PSP requested must reflect the required time commitment. Applicants must fully justify all requests for PSPs.

Partnership Project applications apply the PSP rates relevant to the year of the Grant Opportunity. Further information about PSPs, including the levels, is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

This section only needs to be completed if you are seeking salary for a research role.

### Position function

Describe the function of the research position for which a salary is requested.

Note: A PSP is awarded based on a justified research function and it is not tied to an individual.

### Salary level

Indicate the PSP level for the research position based on the level of the work to be undertaken and the % of a full PSP package to be paid for each year of funding (in whole numbers only). Applicants must apply for the exact proportion of a PSP that is required for the research being proposed.

### Reason for salary

Provide detailed justification for the salary that is being requested for the research position. The PSP level and the percentage of salary must both be well justified.

Note: When awarding a budget, peer reviewers will consider whether the PSPs requested are fully justified and reasonable given the time commitment indicated for this application.

## **Other Research Costs**

Provide details on:

- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- the justification for the particular item requested.

This information must be aligned with the proposed aims of the study, be detailed on a yearly basis and be fully justified (including, in the case of equipment costing less than \$10,000, why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution).

## **Equipment**

Provide details on:

- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- the justification for the particular item requested.

Applicants can request funding to pay for equipment costing over \$10,000 that is essential for the research. The total equipment requested cannot exceed \$80,000. Individual items of equipment costing less than \$10,000 must be requested within the 'Other Research Costs' category.

Applicants must clearly outline the total value of all items of equipment for each year, why the equipment is required for the proposed research and why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution.

For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the RAO of the Administering Institution and be made available to NHMRC on request. The Administering Institution must be prepared to meet all service and repair costs for equipment funded.

Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where they are an integral component of a piece of laboratory equipment or are of a nature essential for work in the research field, for example, a computer which is dedicated to data collection from a mass spectrometer or used for the manipulation of extensively large datasets (i.e. requiring special hardware).

Note: NHMRC funds the direct costs of research based on advice from peer review. Applicants should provide detailed justification of budgets requested. Inadequately justified budgets may be adjusted.

Funding cannot be used for infrastructure, particularly land, buildings and fixtures.

### Entering Other Research Costs and Equipment Costs

You will need to create a separate entry for each cost. Click the plus (+) button to enter a cost.

For 'Item name', enter a brief name/description of the item.

Outline the cost of the item required for each year of the grant proposal. Only the relevant years need to be completed.

#### Justification

Provide a comprehensive justification for the cost.

## 8. Certifying Your Application

Once all 'My Profile' details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in Sapphire. Certification is required by both the CIA and Administering Institution. Refer to section 7.7 'Certification and Submission' of the guidelines for further details.

#### Before completing these steps:

- Review the application to ensure it is accurate and complete and meets all eligibility/application requirements.
- Applicants retain responsibility for confirming that their application satisfies the stated eligibility requirements.
- For funding schemes where the applicant has nominated a research budget, the summary tab automatically generates a summary of the requested budget from the relevant sections.
- A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at Section 10 of this Appendix.
- Ensure you have read and understood the assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings required of CIAs and Administering Institutions as part of this step. These are outlined in section 7.7 of the guidelines.
- Note that certification will lock down the application and prevent further editing. The final snapshot produced at this time will include relevant information from your 'My Profile'. Any subsequent changes to these areas of Sapphire will not appear in the application. If changes are needed after CIA certification but before submission to NHMRC, your RAO will need to reject the application in order for you to make the changes.
- Note that your personal information may be provided to another Administering Institution for the purpose of certifying the application where a researcher is either currently receiving NHMRC funding or is on a different and separate application for NHMRC funding.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Once submitted to NHMRC, your application will be considered final and no changes can be made unless the application is withdrawn for amendment before the closing date.

## 9. Checklist for Applicants

### Before creating an application:

- Ensure Sapphire Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete (indicated by a red asterisk \*).
- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines and [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).
- Check closing date and time for application lodgement.
- Update your Sapphire 'My Profile' in accordance with requirements set out in this document.
- Read the relevant ethical guidelines/associated documentation if ethics approval is required for the proposed application.
- Inform your RAO of your intention to submit an application.
- Be aware of any Administering Institution internal deadlines and requirements for submission.

### During the creation of an application:

- Check any minimum data requirements.
- Check eligibility requirements.
- Complete all parts of the application.
- Create and upload your Grant Proposal.
- Identify any Relative to Opportunity considerations, including Career Disruptions, where applicable, within your application.
- Consider any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander requirements for your application, including addressing any additional assessment criteria.
- Make sure all required attachments are uploaded.

### Before submitting an application:

- Read and understand the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#). Submission of an application indicates that the Administering Institution and research team understand and will comply with the principles and responsibilities set out in the Code.
- Check your compliance with formatting and page requirements.
- Ensure any approvals or licences are acquired or applied for.
- Check all information is correct and complete.
- Familiarise yourself with your obligations should you be successful.
- Certify the application and ensure RAO certification and submission occur before the closing date and time.

**Remember, your RAO is your primary contact for advice and assistance. RAOs will contact the Research Help Centre for further advice if required.**