



Major Project Grant Funding Expression of Interest

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING AN EoI – first round – Major Project Grant 2022

Expressions of Interest Open 25 June and Close 23 July 2021

The RHH Research Foundation has opened its call for Expressions of Interest in a Major Project Grant. Following consideration of EoIs, the top three Projects will be asked to submit a full application for the one Major Project Grant currently available for funding via the RHHRF. The Major Project Grant will be available for an amount not exceeding \$450k (GST exclusive) over three years, to be allocated on the basis of \$150k pa (+/- 20% each year). This is in addition to the Research Foundation's annual funding for Incubator and Project Grants which in 2022 are budgeted for at approx. \$40k and \$110k respectively.

The RHH Research Foundation and its Scientific Research Advisory Committee abide by the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and pursues a rigorous assessment process, with funds allocated on the basis of merit using a nationally-accepted approach predicated on competitive review by its Scientific Research Advisory Committee. This multidisciplinary panel draws upon diverse membership and is endorsed by the NHMRC. To support assessment, the Foundation has established the following **Guiding Principles**:

Principle One: Research applications should demonstrate the potential for benefit to the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, with a focus on those diseases and conditions relevant to the Tasmanian community.

Principle Two: Research applications should demonstrate building of local clinical research capacity at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH).

Principle Three: Research applications should enable research collaboration across disciplines and amongst researchers at various stages of their career path, particularly through alignment/partnership with other research experts/groups/centres/commercial bodies.

Principle Four: Research applications should demonstrate the potential for tangible and measurable benefits arising from proposed work, including one or more of the following:

- a) publication(s) in peer reviewed journals;
- b) a competitive research grant application to an external funding body;
- c) a health service delivery outcome (e.g. a clinical practice improvement) or a demonstrated major impact on policy development;
- d) development of a collaboration/partnership with an external research group or industry; and/or e) a patent application.

Each year the RHH Research Foundation will select broad research priorities which will serve as the guiding areas of focus for consideration of its grant investments. On this occasion, Expressions of Interest in a Major Project Grant will be reviewed to determine alignment with/capacity to address the following **Strategic Priorities**:

- Aged care (including diseases of the elderly);
- Chronic disease (including cancer);
- Health Service Delivery and Outcomes (including acute care); • A healthy start to life (including maternal and child health); and
- Social determinants of health (including mental health).

Important information – Submissions that do not meet the Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities will not be assessed.

Aims of the Major Project Grant

The aim of the Major Project Grant is to provide support and enable capacity building for an early to midcareer researcher and their team by providing salary, consumables and additional research staff within budget. With support from a senior mentor and broader research team, the Major Project Grant will facilitate the development of collaborative teams and research leadership. Therefore, while Major Projects will be led by a Chief Investigator A, they should also include a team of researchers (including a senior mentor) who will collectively enable delivery against strategic objectives. This team will be encouraged to engage with established research groups and other mentors where appropriate.

Funding Rules Specific to the Major Project Grant

Expressions of Interest (Eols) will be received in the first instance and the call for these will close at 5.00pm on Friday 23 July 2021.

The top three Eols will then be asked to submit a full application for one grant not exceeding \$450k (GST exclusive) over three years, to be allocated on the basis of \$150k pa (+/- 20% each year). This amount may include salary of a Chief Investigator A and other research assistants, as well as a PhD stipend (living allowance), as per the budget to be submitted with the Eol and potential subsequent full application.

The researcher identified as Chief Investigator A must be at early to mid-career level, defined as:

- Post-doctoral or equivalent (including Fellowship from a recognised specialty College), but no more than eight (8) years from the conferral date of most recent qualification; and
- Employment as Academic Level A-C, but no higher.

Each Chief Investigator A must only appear on one Major Project Grant Eol, including identification as a team member on any other submission. (i.e. An applicant can submit only one Major Project Grant Eol as Chief Investigator A, and is precluded from being involved as a team member on any other Major Project Grant at the same time; the rationale being that given the CIA has to lead their own project, it would be considered detrimental to their own project if they were to be involved simultaneously in any other Major Project Grant submission in the same year.)

A Chief Investigator A may submit an Eol which seeks to use the Major Project Grant funds to support more than one Chief Investigator's salary. However, given the CIA has to lead their own project, the Foundation will assess each Eol on its merits, including whether it is appropriately resourced.

A PhD student may apply for a Major Project Grant subject to the Foundation receiving confirmation that their Doctorate of Philosophy has been passed (i.e. the date of acceptance of the thesis) as at the Expression of Interest closing date.

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly, and recognises that some candidates will have had career disruptions that should be considered when evaluating their eligibility to apply for a Major Project Grant. Applicants may be eligible to apply for a Major Project Grant if they can demonstrate that their 'effective' number of years from the date of their most recent qualification falls within the eligibility range once Career Disruption is taken into account. For determination of eligibility, a Career Disruption is defined as prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to: pregnancy; major illness/injury; and carer responsibilities including parental leave. It does not include employment outside the research sector including time spent working in industry; clinical, administrative or teaching workload; relocation of laboratory or clinical practice setting or similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity. A Career Disruption is defined as: a continuous absence from work for 90 calendar days or more and/or continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined % FTE) due to circumstances classified as Career Disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more.

General Funding Rules for RHHRF Grants

All submissions must be developed using the relevant RHH Research Foundation's Grant forms (in this case the Major Project Grant Eol form) and should consider the general funding rules outlined below:

- All submissions will be assessed upon the merit of the proposed project, particularly the extent to which the proposal meets the Foundation's guiding principles; project scientific quality; significance, innovation; benefit to the Tasmanian community and team quality and capability relative to opportunity;
- The project and intended outcomes must demonstrate alignment with the RHHRF's strategic research principles and priorities (as noted above, submissions that do not meet the Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities will not be assessed);
- The project must demonstrate a scientific approach to investigation in terms of its feasibility, rationale, methodology, timeframes and innovation;
- The proposal must identify adequacy of resourcing, either solely through this grant program, or ideally through additional sources of funding/in-kind support;
- It is not the intention of the RHH Research Foundation's grants to duplicate funding received from other sources including the NHMRC but to support additional work or a new program of works. If the project is part of a larger program of work, applicants **must** describe additional funding received from any other funding body in section 3 of the RHH Research Foundation's Eol form (and Stage Two Submission template if applicable). Alternatively, if the project is under consideration for funding from any other funding body, applicants **must** provide details including the funding body, award type, name, category, date when outcome will become known and reference/application number if known in section 3;
- The proposal must demonstrate the manner by which the research findings may result in a health service delivery outcome, either directly or as a consequence of subsequent policy development/adjustment;

- The research team must include at least one paid member of staff/formal appointment to the RHH and this person must be actively engaged in clinical and/or health service delivery;
- The Foundation particularly draws your attention to the need to involve local health professionals in this investigation and strongly encourages demonstration of engagement with relevant clinicians involved in health service delivery in Tasmania, particularly those employed at the RHH;
- At least 80% of research (including investment of grant funds) must occur within Tasmania, involving local health professionals, unless a satisfactory rationale for this is provided;
- The Foundation also highlights the proportion of investigation that is to be (at least) carried out in Tasmania and therefore the need for residency in this state during carriage of this Major Project Grant;
- No more than 25% of grant funding should be applied to purchase of equipment unless a satisfactory rationale for this is provided; and
- No more than 2.5% of grant funding should be applied toward attendance at conferences unless a satisfactory rationale for this is provided.

Development and Submission by Friday 23 July 2021

In the first instance, applicants must use the RHHRF Major Project Grant EoI form in order to submit their application and this must be done electronically. The form is available online at www.rhhresearchfoundation.org or by emailing the RHHRF's office on research@rhhresearchfoundation.org.

In preparing submissions, applicants are urged to closely consult with research colleagues, as well as UTas' Grants Officers and/or relevant Department's Business Managers from within the RHH/THS. The aim of involving Grants Officers and/or BMs is to ensure that all applications fully consider aspects associated with ethics approval, budget items, current and future capacity, associated resource needs, other sources of support, etc. The Grants Officer and/or BM will then also support successful grant recipients in undertaking the various administrative elements associated with implementation and reporting against the project. The importance of this aspect of your submission's development and subsequent carriage cannot be overstated.

Once completed and signed by each member of the intended research team, the application must then also have certified support from the authorised delegate of the nominated institution. Certification of a grant application is only required from a representative of the CIA's nominated institution with appropriate delegated authority (eg Head of Department – RHH, Head of School – UTAS or Head of Institute – Menzies Institute for Medical Research), the rationale being that should the grant application be successful, it will be the CIA's nominated institution that will ultimately execute the relevant grant agreement with the RHHRF. It will also be noted that certification confirms the project will be accommodated in accordance with the proposal.

Competitive Review of EoIs

EoI submissions will be subject to independent review and assessment by the Foundation's NHMRC approved Scientific Research Advisory Committee.

The Committee will consider all Eols. Each will be reviewed against the rules stated above and then assessed on a scale of 1-7 against the following criteria (based on NHMRC Guidelines for Project Grants):

- Extent to which the proposal meets RHHRF guiding principles (25%);
- Project Scientific Quality (35%);
- Significance and/or innovation and/or impact (as defined above) (20%); and
- Team quality and capability relative to opportunity (20%).

Following its meeting on 21 September, the Committee will make a subsequent request to the Chief Investigators nominated in the top three proposals, asking them to submit a more detailed application. While a brief response will be provided to unsuccessful applicants, further feedback may be available upon request.

Eol Review  ***Full Submission***  ***Applic Review*** ***Selection = Sept – Dec 2021***

Immediately after the Committee's meeting in September, those who have been identified as moving to the next stage will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal by 23 October for consideration by the Committee on 30 November. An external assessor may also be invited to review the second stage submission. The Committee will then make its recommendation to the Board of the proposal to select for this Major Project Grant, allowing consideration at the Foundation's Board meeting on 16 December 2021.

The decision of the Board is final and it is intended that outcomes will be communicated to applicants in late December 2021. Again, while a brief response will be provided to unsuccessful applicants, further feedback may be available upon request.

Formal Grant Agreements will be developed between the RHH Research Foundation and the applicant's nominated institution (ie either UTas or the RHH/THS) and it is anticipated that these will be ready for execution in January 2022.

The RHH Research Foundation wishes to highlight that its grants program receives a considerable volume of submissions, well in excess of its financial capacity. Given the highly competitive nature of the research grants program, successful applicants are advised that failure to execute a Grant Agreement within ninety (90) days of its issue by the RHH Research Foundation will result in the offer of funds being rescinded, unless a request for extension is granted by the Scientific Research Advisory Committee.

It should be noted that funds can only be released by the RHH Research Foundation upon provision of evidence of ethics approval and execution of the formal Grant Agreement. To achieve this in a timely manner, researchers are encouraged to submit for any necessary ethics approval immediately upon advice of their application's successful status. The value of involving a Grants Officer/BM in facilitating these activities in a timely manner cannot be overstated.

Carriage of Grant Projects – January 2022 to December 2024

Grant funded projects should be completed over the three year period following execution of the contractual agreement, ideally over the period from January 2022 to December 2024 once Grant

Agreements are signed, ethics approval is gained and funds have flowed from the RHH Research Foundation to the researcher's nominated institution.

Should any aspects of the intended project change at any time, the RHH Research Foundation must be formally advised at the earliest opportunity. As part of the formal Grant Agreement researchers will be asked to provide regular progress reports and may also be asked to respond to requests for additional information for promotional purposes. A final report will be required in accordance with the Grant Agreement and it is currently estimated that this will be due by the end of February 2025. This will be received by the Scientific Research Advisory Committee, which will provide both a copy of the report and the Committee's response to the Board.

While extensions to timeframe for funded grants as outlined under the Grant Agreement are generally not available, contact should be made to the RHH Research Foundation via the Grants Officer/BM at the earliest opportunity should such a need arise. Extensions can only be made at the discretion of the Scientific Research Advisory Committee. The preferred timeframe for the receipt of extension requests is no later than six (6) weeks prior to intended project completion as outlined under the Grant Agreement.

It should also be noted that evidence of any subsequent publications, presentations, and/or additional funding will be sought as part of the Grant Agreement, together with formal acknowledgement of the RHH Research Foundation's involvement in funding the research project.

Assistance Available

Documentation around the RHH Research Foundation's Grants Program is available online or from the Foundation's office. While Grants Officers/BMs are an invaluable source of assistance, contact with the Foundation can be made at any time Mon-Fri before 4.30pm.

CLOSING DATE: The closing time for initial Expressions of Interest in this Major Project Grant is 5.00pm on Friday 23 July 2021.

FOR APPLICATION FORMS & ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT:

www.rhhresearchfoundation.org research@rhhresearchfoundation.org (03) 6166 1319