



Williams Oncology Research Grant

Expression of Interest

Guidelines for making an Eol – first round

Williams Oncology Research Grant 2021 - 2023

Expressions of Interest Open 26 June and Close 24 July 2020

The RHH Research Foundation has opened its call for Expressions of Interest for the Williams Oncology Research Grant. Through the generosity of a bequest from the late Nancy Williams the RHH Research Foundation has the opportunity to fund additional research to commence in 2021.

In executing Mrs Williams' wishes, the project to be funded under the Williams Oncology Research Grant must have a research focus in at least one of the following areas: prostate cancer, breast cancer, blood cancer and/or cancer epidemiology. In addition to a need to focus on at least one of those areas of investigation, it is vital that the present context of the proposed study can be linked back to medical research underway in Tasmania at the time of Mrs Williams' passing in December 2003. Evidence to support this will be required.

The Williams Oncology Research Grant will be a one-off grant available over the three-year period commencing in January 2021 for an amount not exceeding \$350k (gst exclusive), to be allocated on the basis of \$115k pa (+/- 20% each year). This is in addition to the Research Foundation's current annual funding for Incubator and Project Grants which in 2021 are budgeted for approx \$40k and \$110k respectively and its Major Project Grant which awards a grant for an amount up to \$450k.

The Foundation wishes to call for submissions from *only* those projects that are able to satisfy the core requirements under the bequest as outlined above. Following consideration of Eols, the top three projects will be asked to submit a full application for the Williams Oncology Research Grant currently available as one-off funding via the RHHRF.

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.

The RHH Research Foundation is committed to ensuring that the Grant is awarded to a project that fulfils the intent of the bequest. As such, all submissions received must demonstrate research into at least one of the following areas:

- Prostate Cancer;
- Breast Cancer;
- Blood Cancer; and/or
- Cancer Epidemiology

Important information – Submissions that do not meet the Guiding Principles and the prerequisites of the bequest will not be assessed.

Aims of the Williams Oncology Research Grant

In connecting the intent of the Williams' estate and the core purpose of the RHH Research Foundation, the aim of the Williams Oncology Research Grant is to provide support and enable capacity building for a 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 Williams Oncology Research Grant will facilitate the development of collaborative teams and research leadership. Therefore, while the project will be led by a Chief Investigator A, they should also include a team of researchers 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 Williams Oncology Research Grant

Expressions of Interest (Eols) will be received in the first instance and the call for these will close at 5.00pm on Friday 24 July 2020.

The top three Eols will then be asked to submit a full application for one grant not exceeding \$350k (GST exclusive) over three years, to be allocated on the basis of \$115k 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. A PhD student may apply for the Williams Oncology Research Grant, but it should be noted that the PhD candidate's supervisor/mentor must also be included in the research team.

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly and that the fundamental principle of merit is applied when assessing every grant along the general funding rules for RHHRF grants and the selection criteria for the Williams Oncology Research Grant.

General Funding Rules for RHHRF Grants

All submissions must be developed using the relevant RHH Research Foundation's Grant forms (in this case the Williams Oncology Research 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 and/or impact (as per the Australian Research Council's definition of "research impact" which can be found on the [ARC website](#) i.e. "*Research impact is the contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research*"); and team quality and capability relative to opportunity;
- The project and intended outcomes must demonstrate alignment with the RHHRF's strategic research principles (as noted above, submissions that do not meet the Guiding Principles and the prerequisites of the bequest 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 4 of the RHH Research Foundation's Eol form (and Stage Two Submission template if applicable) regarding "Other sources of direct or in-kind support". 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 4;

- 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 the Williams Oncology Research 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 24 July 2020

In the first instance, applicants must use the RHHRF Williams Oncology Research 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 Eols

Eol 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 22 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 2020

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 22 October for consideration by the Committee on 1 December. An external assessor may be invited to review the second stage submission. The Committee will then make its recommendation to the Board of the proposal to select for the Williams Oncology Research Grant, allowing consideration at the Foundation's Board meeting on 17 December 2020.

The decision of the Board is final and it is intended that outcomes will be communicated to applicants in late December 2020. 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 2021.

The RHH Research Foundation wishes to highlight that its grants program receives a considerable volume of submissions and the Williams Oncology Research Grant is offered as a single, one-off, three year grant. 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 execution of the formal Grant Agreement. To achieve commencement of the study 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 2021 to December 2023

The Williams Oncology Research Grant should be completed over the three year period following execution of the contractual agreement, ideally over the period from January 2021 to December 2023 once the Grant Agreement is 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 2024. 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 **Williams Oncology Research Grant** is 5.00pm on Friday 24 July 2020.

FOR APPLICATION FORMS & ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT:

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

RHHRF Research Support & Administration Coordinator (Claire Vicars) is also available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays via email at claire.vicars@ths.tas.gov.au or telephone (03) 6166 1320.