

Funding Announcements

MRFF Funding Opportunities

A large number of funding opportunities is currently available under the MRFF, seeking to address range of different diseases and issues, and in different health settings. The majority are administered by the NHMRC with applications closing in February and March 2020. They are presented below in order of application closing date.

Want to assist with assessing MRFF grants?

The Department of Health is currently seeking interest from a range of stakeholders to assist in MRFF grant review and assessment as a member of a Grant Assessment Committee. More information is available [here](#).

Bushfire Impact Research

The objective of the 2020 Bushfire Impact Research Grant Opportunity is to link researchers, institutions, policy makers and professional associations together to gather evidence on the physiological and mental health effects of bushfires and exposure to hazardous smoke over time.

Applications under Stream 1 of this grant opportunity must address evidence gaps related to the **physiological effects of prolonged exposure to the 2019-20 bushfire events and hazardous bushfire smoke**. Applications under Stream 2 of this grant opportunity must address evidence gaps related to building **mental health resilience following the 2019-20 bushfire events and exposure to hazardous bushfire smoke**. Applications can address Stream 1 or Stream 2, or both.

This \$5 million grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health. Applications close on **31 January**. Guidelines and application templates are available [here](#).

Rare Cancer Rare Disease and Unmet Need (RCRDUN)

The Minister for Health, the Honourable Greg Hunt used his address to the Research Australia 2019 HMR Awards to announce the latest round of funding under the RCRDUN. Funding is available for clinical trials in three priority areas and a more general category, with separate guidelines available for each (follow the links embedded in the list below):

1. **reproductive cancer, closing 5 February;**
2. **childhood brain cancer, closing 4 February;**
3. **neurological disorders, closing 5 February;** and

4. clinical trials in **other rare disease, rare cancers and areas of unmet need, closing 5 February**.

The **NHMRC** is administering the grants; click on the links above for more information.

Endometriosis Research

The Medical Research Future Fund – Emerging Priorities and Consumer Driven Research Initiative is providing support for research into **endometriosis**. The grant round is now open and closes on **5 February**. More information is available on the **NHMRC website**.

Ovarian Cancer Research

The Medical Research Future Fund – Emerging Priorities and Consumer Driven Research Initiative is providing support for research into **ovarian cancer**. The grant round is now open and closes on **5 February**. More information is available on the **NHMRC website**.

Childhood Brain Cancer Clinical Trials

To mark **Childhood Brain Cancer** Awareness Day (26 September), the Government has announced \$5 million in funding from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) for childhood brain cancer clinical trials. The grant round closes on **4 February**. More information is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Million Minds: Suicide Prevention

In a speech to the National Press Club on 14 August, the Minister for Health announced an \$8 million funding round from the Million Minds Mission to focus on suicide prevention. ‘They may be community programs; they may be national programs. But that focus on suicide prevention is directly addressing the issue which I consider and we consider to be a national tragedy, and a national challenge, and a national responsibility together.’ The grant round is now open and closes on **5 February**. More information is available on the **NHMRC website**.

Indigenous Led Research

\$13.5 million is available over three years for **Indigenous-led projects** to drive improvements in outcomes for four key health challenges: avoidable blindness and deafness, kidney disease, and adolescent mental health. Up to \$2 million is available per research project, to be led by Indigenous people and conducted through close engagement with Indigenous communities. Applications open on 13 December and close on **5 February**.

Tackling Anti-Microbial Resistance

The 2019 Tackling **Antimicrobial Resistance** and **Drug Resistant Tuberculosis** in Pacific Island Countries Grant Opportunity is to:

- support innovative, high-quality, collaborative research that focuses on interventions to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment of AMR and DR-TB
- promote effective translation of research into health policy and/or practice
- develop strategies that improve outcomes for individuals and communities in our region
- build collaboration between Australia and Pacific Island Countries
- transfer knowledge between Australia and Pacific Island Countries to build workforce capability
- increase knowledge and understanding of AMR and DR-TB
- leverage collaborations between research teams, policy makers, healthcare funders and the health delivery sector (e.g. education, community, industry and/or healthcare).

This \$8 million grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health. More information is available [here](#). The closing date is **5 February**.

Cardiovascular Health Mission

The first \$12 million of funding under the **Cardiovascular Health Mission** becomes available through the NHMRC from 13 December. This round will focus on three priorities:

- Preventing heart disease and stroke.
- Improving survival rates after an acute heart or stroke event.
- Improving survival after a cardiovascular event or stroke and preventing a recurrence.

More information is available [here](#). The closing date is **12 February**.

Pharmacogenomic research for mental health

\$7 million is available for research into the use of pharmacogenomics to improve mental health treatment outcomes and help reduce suicide. It will support research that aims to **improve or develop new pharmacogenomic tests** that will change how medications are prescribed for patients with mental health challenges.

The round will encourage research that combines new and existing technologies with large scale data, machine learning, clinical information or patient biomarkers, to result in better medication selection for individuals. Applications will be administered by the NHMRC; guidelines and applications documents are available [here](#). The closing date is **5 February**.

The **Preventive and Public Health Research Initiative – 2019 Targeted Health System and Community Organisation Research Grant Opportunity** supports research addressing five questions developed by:

- Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)
- Prostheses List Advisory Committee (PLAC)
- Advisory Committee on Medical Devices (ACMD)
- Advisory Committee on Medicines (ACM) or
- The Medicare Benefits Review Taskforce (MBS Review Taskforce).

The five **health system research** question topics for this grant opportunity are:

1. Cancer treatment population
2. Tools to value health change in paediatric populations
3. Efficient use of high cost pharmaceuticals
4. Digital breast tomosynthesis
5. Circumcision revision

This grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC and closes on **5 February**. Applications documents are available [here](#). Just over \$26 million is available.

The **2019 Preventive and Public Health Research Grant Opportunity** supports research that focuses on one or more of the following priority areas:

- **Maternal health and the first 2000 days**
- **Early childhood**, and
- **Exercise and nutrition**.

The objectives of this grant opportunity are to:

- foster new discoveries that lead to practice changes in community and clinical settings
- increase collaboration across academic disciplines, policy makers and health services to better understand the social, cognitive and emotional aspects of people's health choices
- develop guidance, tools and interventions to support Australians to adopt positive behaviour change and to live active and healthy lives, and
- improve health outcomes for Australians living with chronic and complex disease through innovative public health approaches, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

peoples and for, disadvantaged regional and rural and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

This grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC and closes on **5 February**. Applications documents are available [here](#). \$11,500,000 is available.

The **Primary Health Care Research Initiative** aims to enable or support an increase in Australia's evidence base in primary health care through **research to improve service delivery and patient outcomes, and translate this knowledge into action**.

The objective of this grant opportunity is to increase Australia's evidence base in primary health care research for the following priority primary health care research topics:

- the provision of primary health care services in residential aged care and to older Australians in the community
- lessons from comprehensive primary health care service for Indigenous Australians for the broader primary health care system
- mental health service provision by general practice
- application of precision medicine and genomics in primary health care
- rural and regional access to services
- workforce issues, including scope of practice
- voluntary patient enrolment and blended payments

This grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC and closes on **5 February**. Applications documents are available [here](#). \$5 million is available.

Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure

The Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure Program will seek to remove barriers to participating in clinical trials by:

- improving facilities, equipment, services and systems in rural, regional and remote Australia.
- reducing the burden, costs and risks for patients and their families related to clinical trial participation; and
- increasing research capacity.

\$100 million is available over 5 years (\$20 million per annum from 2020-21). Applications are through www.business.gov.au and the guidelines are now available [here](#). The minimum grant is \$5 million. Applications close on **3 March**.

2019 Australian Brain Cancer Mission- Survivorship

The objective of this Grant Opportunity is to support the development of better approaches to address the medical, functional and psychosocial impacts of brain cancer to improve quality of life and the survivorship experience.

Survivorship must be focused on children, adolescents and young adults, or adults with malignant brain cancer, their families or carers. Grants of up to \$5million will be available, and applications open on **11 February** and close on **3 March**. Further information, including guidelines, is available [here](#).

AI in Health

The MRFF – National Critical Research Infrastructure Initiative: 2019 **Applied Artificial Intelligence Research in Health** Grant Opportunity provides funding to health and medical researchers to transform the future of health care using Artificial Intelligence ideas, technologies and methodologies.

The aim of this grant opportunity is to enable AI technologies to impact the implementation work of others in the field, and not to be a source of funding for projects limited to either the provision of hardware alone, or implementation of existing programs.

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to:

- translate or implement innovative AI technologies into health applications that benefit multiple health disciplines/areas
- involve consumers in the research journey to ensure the research is applicable to the needs of the Australian community
- increase AI workforce capacity and capability, particularly in relation to health, through cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Applications for grants of \$1 million to \$5 million open on open on **11 February** and close on **3 March**. Further information, including guidelines, is available [here](#).

Stem Cells Therapies

The objective of the 2020 **Stem Cell Therapies Grant Opportunity** is to prime teams working on 'proof of concept' stem cell research targeted towards a health care outcome. Funding for such priming programs will target two priority areas aimed at driving innovation and accelerating implementation into clinical practice:

1. Stem cell therapies
2. New treatments using human tissues made from stem cells.

This \$6 million grant opportunity is being administered by NHMRC on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health. Applications close on **4 March 2020**; guidelines and application templates are available [here](#).

Traumatic Brain Injury

The \$5 million **2020 Traumatic Brain Injury grant opportunity** will support clinical research that improves knowledge and its translation into practice in order to enhance personalisation of care after traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Some examples of the research that can be funded through this grant opportunity include (but are not limited to):

- identifying clinical biomarkers that are prognostic of outcomes
- novel imaging technologies and methods that could be used for prognostic purposes
- understanding genetic factors that impact outcomes
- investigating the novel use of artificial intelligence on administrative or other data collections to assist clinical decision making.

The expected outcome of the research is innovative diagnostic and prognostic methods that facilitate longer term advances in TBI treatment and drive improvements in health and social outcomes for patients after TBI and people around them.

Applications close on **4 March**, and will be administered by the NHMRC. Guidelines and application templates are available [here](#).

Frontiers Health and Medical Research- Stage 1 of the Second Round

The MRFF Frontier Health and Medical Research Program is providing grants to a total of \$570 million over ten years. For the Stage One – Research Plan grant opportunity, up to \$1 million in funding will be made available to 10 multi-disciplinary teams including research and industry partners to work on **novel and transformative ideas** that will produce practical benefits to Australians and also globally.

The teams will have **12 months to develop a detailed research plan** to outline the activities, methods and partnerships required to transform the idea from concept to implementation in the health system. Applications don't open until **30 January 2020**, with a closing date of **26 March** but the Guidelines and further information are **now available** [here](#).

MRFF disbursements for 2020/21

The 2019/20 Budget has confirmed \$579 million will be available for disbursement from the MRFF in 2020/21. The first announcement of this funding has been made.

- On 30 January the Government announced that it was providing \$5million in MRFF funding in a project jointly funded with Roche to use **genomics** to provide personalised treatments for patients with **lung cancer**. The ASPiRATION study will commence enrolment from July 2020 and is being conducted by the [Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Centre](#), the [Australasian Lung Cancer Trials Group](#) and the [National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Centre](#).
- On 29 November 2019 the Government announced the Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure Program, which will seek to remove barriers to participating in clinical trials by improving facilities, reducing costs for patients and increasing research capacity. \$100 million is available over 5 years (\$20 million per annum from 2020-21).
- On 6 October 2019 the Government announced \$3 million in MRFF funding will be made available to research the benefits of **medicinal cannabis** for pain, symptom and side effect management for cancer patients. An open and contestable grant opportunity will fund the research, but application dates have yet to be announced. This funding will be available in the next financial year, 2020/21.

MRFF disbursements for 2019/20

The 2019/20 Budget has confirmed that \$390 million is available in 2019/20 (almost double the amount available in the last financial year) and has outlined a program of funding for many areas over multiple years. Detailed below are the announcements so far for 2019/20.

- On 9 December, the Government announced \$13.5 million would be available over three years for **Indigenous-led projects** to drive improvements in outcomes for four key health challenges: avoidable blindness and deafness, kidney disease, and adolescent mental health.
- On 20 September, four grants under the **Targeted Health System and Community Organisation Research** initiative were announced. Totalling \$6.6 million, the four programs seek to evaluate:
 - The effectiveness of Melanoma Surveillance Photography in high-risk individuals (Monash University)
 - When breast MRIs improve patient outcomes (University of Western Australia)
 - The impact of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome on the Australian economy (University of Tasmania)
 - Whether mobile x-ray units to residents of residential aged care facilities are cost effective. (University of Adelaide)

These are funded following the first two targeted research calls made under this initiative in early 2019.

- On 18 September, the Minister announced that \$32 million is being provided to 7 Advanced Health Research Translation Centres (AHRTC) and one Centre for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRH). The funding is for research to influence lifestyle factors linked to chronic disease 'that can be applied to clinical practice in the immediate future, by creating pathways

between researchers and clinical health services'. This is the latest round of funding to the AHRTCs and CIRHs under the **Rapid Applied Research Translation (RART) initiative**. The 10 year MRFF plan provides for funding of between \$20 million and \$23 million per annum as part of this program. Presumably some or all of these grants are for multiple years.

- On 9 September the Minister announced \$15 million would be made available for **clinical trials into reproductive cancers**: ovarian, cervical, fallopian and testicular. The grants, to open in October 2019, are from the Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need (**RCRDUN) Program**.
- On 5 September the Minister announced that over the next two years, \$32 million will be available for **MRFF Investigator Grants** for early to mid career researchers who can demonstrate experience turning research into positive outcomes for patients. The Government is seeking to support 'translational research projects that examine high priority issues such as brain cancer, mental and cardiovascular health, genomics and stem cell therapies, healthy ageing, and Indigenous health.' This funding is part of the **Next Generation Clinical Researchers** Initiative.
- On 26 August, 10 prevention projects, totalling \$11.7 million were announced. They are funded through the Medical Research Future Fund's **Keeping Australians Out of Hospital Program**. The projects cover a range of different activities and strategies, from early detection of deterioration in elderly aged care residents to prevent hospitalisation (University of Queensland) to a project to reduce heart failure readmissions for patients using a nurse-led disease management program (Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute).
- On 25 August, the **Sanfilippo Foundation** announced it had received \$2 million in MRFF funding which it is matching with a further \$500,000 for a two year project with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, Adelaide's Women's and Children's Hospital and the University of Adelaide. The project will use patient's own cells to grow 'mini brains' on which to test potential drug candidates. The MRFF funding is from the *Emerging Priorities and Consumer Driven Research* initiative.
- On 7 August, the Government announced that \$8 million in MRFF funding would be made available for research into **anti-microbial resistance and drug-resistant TB**. The projects will be undertaken by Australian universities or medical research institutes collaborating with researchers in Pacific island countries. A further \$5 million in foreign aid funding will support intensive TB detection and treatment under Australia's Health Security Initiative for the Indo-Pacific region, administered through the **Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security**.

MRFF disbursements for 2018/19

Detailed below are the amounts that have been announced in 2018/19. On 5 April 2019 the Department released a list of all funding 'announced and under contract' as at that date, available [here](#).

- On 3 June the Government announced \$5 million in funding to tackle eating disorders from the Million Minds Mission. \$3.67 million is awarded to the **Inside Out Institute** to establish the MAINSTREAM Centre for Health System Research & Translation in Eating Disorders: detection and intervention system-focused knowledge to drive better outcomes in mainstream care for eating disorders. \$1.34 million was awarded to Deakin University to research leveraging digital technology to reduce the prevalence and severity of eating disorders in Australia.
- On 11 May, the Government announced \$9.6 million of MRFF funding would be awarded to the **Children's Cancer Foundation** to fund the following programs:
 - \$4.8 million to fund the Hudson Monash Paediatric Precision Medicine Program, which involves the establishment of a living biobank of paediatric brain tumours and solid cancers.
 - \$637,500 to improve the effectiveness of treatment of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia

- \$1,177,055 for 2-year clinical research fellowships to train the next generation of oncologists in translational research skills.
 - \$176,927 to use human pluripotent stem cells to model the initiation and transformation of childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.
 - \$879,750 for a clinical trial to provide access to a new drug currently unavailable to Australian children, to improve survival rates.
 - \$283,328 for brain cancer medicine trials.
 - \$180,066 for clinical trials that may allow safe and effective stem cell transplant from a patient's parent for paediatric and adolescent patients with high-risk malignancies.
 - \$200,000 to develop a rapid and cost-effective clinical tool to determine the medulloblastoma molecular subtype.
 - \$1,205,705 for a study to understand relapse, improve residual disease detection and develop pre-clinical testing models to identify better therapies for high-risk neuroblastoma patients
- Around \$9.5 million in Stage 1 **Frontiers Program** funding has been awarded to ten initial research projects for:
 1. next generation brain imaging technology for diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy.
 2. a new interface between the brain and a machine, to help people regain eyesight, movement or other nerve functions.
 3. a national database of antibiotic resistance, to allow resistant strains to be traced, isolated and treated.
 4. an Australian method for controlling the spread of Zika virus, dengue fever and other mosquito-borne diseases.
 5. new technologies to improve women's sexual and reproductive health.
 6. new 4D diagnostic technology to allow accurate assessment of lung function in people of all ages.
 7. the latest genome editing technology to rapidly detect and identify infectious disease and antimicrobial resistance.
 8. therapeutic ultrasound to treat brain disorders, including dementia.
 9. test a new biomedical technology to deliver spinal cord stimulation as a treatment for cerebral palsy.
 10. new technologies to care for stroke victims before they reach hospital.

All applications were assessed by an International Scientific Peer Review Panel to ensure those recommended for funding would deliver new to world ideas and opportunities

- On 13 April the Government announced \$22.5 million in funding for the first five projects under the Million Minds Mission. There are two projects targeting child and youth mental health and three projects designed to improve access to mental health programs for Indigenous Australians.
- On 11 April the Government announced a 10 year National Men's Health Strategy. The Strategy incorporates \$3.8 million from the MRFF for research into the causes and prevention of **male infertility**.
- On 10 April the Health Minister announced \$10 million in MRFF funding to support the **Menzies Multiple Sclerosis Flagship Program**. The funding aims to improve the quality of life for the more than 25,000 Australians living with MS by conducting research into cures and prevention of the disease.
- On 9 April, as part of the announcement of the National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030, the Minister for Health announced \$20 million in MRFF funding for **ovarian cancer** research. The Minister also announced \$9 million for **endometriosis** research. This is in addition to MRFF funding for endometriosis research announced in July 2018. A further \$1.06 million will be provided from outside the MRFF to *'...enable a 'one-stop shop' for endometriosis information and resources. It will also be used as a treatment tool that will*

refine effective treatments for endometriosis based on patient feedback and be a vehicle for promoting and supporting collaborative research.'

- On 13 March, the Government committed \$150 million in MRFF funding over 10 years to a new Australian Stem Cell Therapies Mission. It will be co-chaired by **Stem Cells Australia** program leader Professor Melissa Little and inventor of the Nanopatch Professor Mark Kendall.
- On 10 March the Health Minister announced \$150 million over 10 years for nationally coordinated medical research to improve the recovery of patients with a traumatic brain injury.
- On 8 March the Health Minister announced \$55,000 in funding to Griffith University to trial a new malaria vaccine, **PlasProtect**©. The funding matches \$500,000 raised by **Rotary Health** towards the Malaria Vaccine Project, which has developed the new vaccine.
- On 27 February the Government announced a 10 year, \$160 million Indigenous Health Research Fund. The 3 Flagship Priorities are preventing rheumatic disease, avoidable blindness and avoidable deafness. Research projects will have a broad remit across five key themes – guaranteeing a healthy start to life, improving primary healthcare, overcoming the origins of inequality in health, reducing the burden of disease, and addressing emerging challenges.

The Program incorporates the \$35 million already announced for the End Rheumatic Heart Disease vaccine initiative. An advisory panel comprising prominent Indigenous research experts and community leaders, co-chaired by **Professor Alex Brown** (South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute) and **Dr Misty Jenkins** (Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research), will guide the Indigenous Health Research Fund investments.

- On 26 February, the Government announced a 10 year, \$220 million *Mission for Cardiovascular Health*. The Mission will be overseen by an appointed expert advisory panel chaired by **Professor Gemma Figtree**, a clinician researcher at University of Sydney and Royal North Shore Hospital, and will provide open and contestable grant opportunities. *'It will aim to reduce hospitalisations, develop clinical trials and new drug therapies, use the unique DNA of a patient to develop new therapies and also look into why people who don't lead an unhealthy lifestyle or have a genetic cause suffer heart attacks.'* This Mission includes the recently announced \$20 million in funding to help defeat congenital heart disease by better understanding genetic causes and treatment options through the HeartKids Project. The **draft Roadmap for the Mission** was released for consultation on 20 July 2019.
- On 24 February the Government announced \$35 million would be provided over three years to the End Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) vaccine initiative. Directed by Prof Jonathan Carapetis AM (Director of the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth) and overseen by a Scientific Advisory Board including leading Australian and International experts, the initiative will allow manufacture and testing of a number of vaccines currently in development, and fast-tracking and funding of clinical trials in Australia. The aim is to accelerate availability of a vaccine for use in Australia and internationally. The vaccine targets Group A Streptococcus and will build on the work of the **Australia and New Zealand joint CANVAS initiative**. Rheumatic Heart Disease is a chronic and debilitating condition, affecting heart function, which develops following repeated Strep A infections. Largely a third world disease, it is endemic in some Australian and Torres Strait Islander communities. Alarming, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 64 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to develop rheumatic heart disease, and nearly 20 times as likely to die from it.
- On 17 February the Government announced \$22.3 million of MRFF funding over four years to MTPConnect to operate the new Biomedical Translation Bridge initiative. MTPConnect will partner with BioCurate (University of Melbourne and Monash University) and UniQuest (University of Queensland). This program will support researchers to develop their ideas and transform them into new treatments and technologies to improve patient outcomes.

Successful research projects will receive between \$200,000 and \$1 million over a maximum of three years. **A call for applications is expected later this year**, with further calls every six months.

- On 15 February, the Minister for Health announced the latest round of funding for the **Rare Diseases and Rare Cancers Program**. \$38.6 million will support 23 new clinical trials to improve treatments and discover cures for debilitating and deadly rare cancers and rare diseases.
- On 14 February, the Government announced a \$20 million competitive research grant round focusing on **congenital heart disease**. The grants will be administered by the NHMRC and a call for application is expected to be made shortly for research aimed at better understanding the disease's genetic causes and prevention and treatment options. The announcement is part of a broader package of funding for a National Action Plan, including \$6 million from outside the MRFF to the [HeartKids](#) charity for teaching, training, and awareness.
- On 12 February, the Government announced the **Researcher Exchange and Development within Industry Initiative (REDI)**. The objective of the program is to provide researchers with a diverse range of experiences and exposure to entrepreneurship with the aim of strengthening Australia's success with translation and commercialisation to prevent, diagnose and treat disease. \$32 million is available over four years. The Government is initially seeking applications from organisations interested in administering the program.
- On 6 February the Government announced a total of \$20 million in funding for two different phenomics-based projects to support precision medicine. \$10 million in funding is being provided to the [Australian National Phenome Centre](#) at Murdoch University. A partnership involving University of Western Australia, Curtin University, Murdoch University, University of Notre Dame Australia and Edith Cowan University, the Centre is Australia's first dedicated metabolic phenotyping laboratory and a hub within an international network of compatible centres. A further \$10 million in funding over two years is being provided to the Australian National University (ANU) for the [Phenomics Translation Initiative](#), a two year program to develop new diagnostic and treatment options for people living with chronic and debilitating diseases including lupus, type 1 diabetes and age-related macular degeneration.
- On 4 February the Government announced a total of \$54.5 million in funding for research over three years into Type 1 Diabetes. \$25 million will be provided to JDRF in ongoing support of its **JDRF Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network**. JDRF's research program has received ongoing support from successive ALP and coalition governments, and the ALP has also pledged **further funding** for the Research Network if it wins the next election. There is a further \$4.5 million over three years to support JDRF's administration and leadership of the research network. \$25 million of the \$125 million **Targeted Translation Research Accelerator** initiative will also be directed to diabetes research. On 30 January, the Government announced \$30 million in funding over 5 years to the Garvan Institute as the lead institution in the **Australian Parkinson's Mission**. The funding is for the trial of promising drugs to reduce the progression of the disease and allow people to live in their homes longer. Mission is an international research collaboration between the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Shake it Up Australia Foundation, The Cure Parkinson's Trust, Michael J Fox Foundation and Parkinson's Australia.
- On 14 January, the Government announced it is making a \$25 million contribution to the new [Drug Discovery Centre](#) at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI). The Centre, which is co-funded by WEHI, the Victorian Government and philanthropy, will open in June 2019.
- A 10 year, \$180 million **Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission** was announced by the Minister for Health on 18 December. Its focus will be on:
 - diagnosis, treatment and prevention of dementia;
 - falls prevention; and
 - assistive technologies.

The first funding, of \$10 million, has been awarded to [The Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research at the University of Queensland's Queensland Brain Institute](#), a Research Australia member. No call for grant applications has been made at this point.

- On 4 December, the Minister for Health announced \$3 million in funding for a research program for stillbirth research, to be guided by a National Action and Implementation Plan. There is also \$3 million for stillbirth education and awareness programs. This funding is part of the Government's response to the report of the Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Education and Research.
- On 22 October the Prime Minister announced \$4 million in funding to the [St George and Sutherland Medical Research Facility](#) to better understand the human microbiota. \$2 million of this funding will be drawn from the MRFF. The funding boost will *'help researchers better understand how restoring the balance of microbiota through, for example, eating a healthy diet and increasing physical exercise, can prevent and cure disease. This funding will also support a new study into the role of the microbiome in pregnancy and its outcomes in the mothers and their babies.'* It follows \$4 million in funding from the Commonwealth in 2017 to establish the Microbiome Research Centre at St George Hospital, due to open in February 2019.
- \$11.5 million is available for the [The MRFF – Keeping Australians Out of Hospital](#) Grants to support research into evidence-based, implementable and scalable preventive health measures that aim to prevent the development, or promote better management of complex and chronic health conditions, improve quality of life for people with these conditions and keep them out of hospital.
- On 6 October the Minister for Health announced \$1 million in funding to the [National Stroke Foundation](#) for the *Return to Life, Return to Work* research package. The research will focus on rehabilitation for working age people, and include a clinical trial of Perispinal Etanercept to reduce inflammation in the brain.
- On 11 September, \$10 million in funding for six new **Clinical Trials** was announced, targeting: pancreatic cancer; traumatic brain injury; rare skin tumours; myeloma; myelofibrosis; and a pioneering treatment for high mortality cancers, such as glioblastoma. The funding has been awarded to researchers at LaTrobe University, Monash University, University of Melbourne, and the University of Sydney.
- On 6 September, the Minister for Health announced the creation of the **Prostate Cancer** Research Alliance, which will focus on stopping prostate cancer progressing to advanced, more deadly stages; and improving treatments and life expectancy for men with advanced prostate cancer. The MRFF's Accelerated Research Program will contribute \$2 million per year for three years from 2018/19, matched by \$6 million from the **Movember Foundation**. Funding will be provided through an open, national, competitive grant round, expected to open by the end of October.
- On 13 August, The Minister for Health announced \$7.4 million in funding from the MRFF for a range of **Fellowships**. These will support researchers working on a range of issues, including improved care for premature and sick babies, arthritis and osteoporosis, online treatments for youth depression and anxiety and improved health for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- On 1 August 2018, the Minister for Health announced \$3 million for **stem cell research**, including projects that aim to tackle congenital heart disease and genetic defects that cause blindness in children. The funding is from the MRFF Accelerated Research Program.
- On 26 July, the Minister for Health launched the [National Action Plan for Endometriosis](#). As part of this, he provided further information about how the \$2.5 million of funding from the MRFF, announced in March 2018, will be utilised. It will fund a targeted call for research; a national clinical trials network; and an Australian Collaborative Research Framework.

- On 25 July, Minister Hunt announced that \$3.6 million of the \$5 million allocated to **CanTeen** in 2017 would be used to run four clinical trials which will support 260 patients with brain cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and bone cancer.
- On 22 July 2018, the Health Minister announced that \$1 million would be provided to **Maddie Riewoldt's Vision**. The funding will 'support at least three new medical researchers over three years to undertake vital research and clinical trials in Australia into better treatments and ultimately cure for bone marrow failure.'
- On 17 July, the Minister announced \$6.1 million was being allocated to the **South Australian Academic Health Science and Translation Centre**, which is undertaking vital research projects in areas such as bowel cancer, cardiac rehabilitation and reducing the risk of preterm births.
- On 16 July 2018, the Health Minister announced that \$5 million from the Australian Brain Cancer Mission, which is funded by the MRFF and philanthropy will go to the Zero Childhood Brain Cancer Initiative, itself a part of the broader **Zero Childhood Cancer Initiative**. The initiative is a collaboration of Australian researchers and clinicians, led by the Children's Cancer Institute and The Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick.
- On 13 July 2018, the Minister for Health announced that \$22.3 million will be available over four years from 2018-19 through the **Biomedical Translation Bridge** grant opportunity. It will support one or more organisations to fund and nurture early stage health and medical research ventures to reach proof-of-concept stage with potential to attract further capital and support.
- On 3 July 2018, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced \$6 million in funding over three years for **Sydney Partnership for Health Education Research and Enterprise** (SPHERE) and the same amount to **Sydney Health Partners**. These organisations are Advanced Health Research Translation Centres and the funding is part of the Rapid Applied Research Translation Initiative under the MRFF.
- On 24 June 2018, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced \$33 million in funding to the third round of the **Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need Clinical Trials Program**. The applications are administered by the NHMRC and close on 15 August 2018.

MRFF disbursements for 2017/18

\$121 million is available for allocation from the MRFF in 2017/18. Announcements for the 2017/18 financial year are detailed below.

- On 18 June 2017, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced \$2 million in funding to the **Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Foundation** with a focus on four priority areas including the making of early diagnosis and treatment of cerebral palsy the standard of care in Australia, clinical trials of new interventions in high risk infants, a trial of TheraSuit® intensive therapy and new therapies to prevent cerebral palsy during pregnancy.
- On 14 June, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced the MRFF will provide \$2.4 million to the **University of Tasmania's Centre for Excellence in Rural and Regional Health** in Burnie.
- On 4 June, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced that as part of the Big Freeze 4 fundraising event at the MCG, the Coalition Government will match donations, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$2 million to invest in **new clinical trials for Australians suffering from MND**. This repeats the funding provided from the MRFF in 2017.
- On 16 May, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced \$6.1 million for **Monash Partners Academic Health Science Centre**, enabling it to build on research it has already undertaken in areas such as data linkage, women's and children's health, cancer, diabetes, infections, heart disease and many more areas of health. The funding from the MRFF builds on an earlier \$2.22 million grant provided to the Centre through the MRFF.

- On 14 May, the Minister for Health Greg Hunt, announced that \$6.1 million would be made available to [Melbourne Academic Centre for Health \(MACH\)](#), with the funding going towards further research in a number of different areas that are yet to be determined.
- On 13 April The Minister for Rural Health, Senator Bridget McKenzie, announced \$6.1 million has been awarded to [Diamantina Health Partners](#) over three years for a range of programs to support the translation of research into healthcare. Diamantina Partners is an NHMRC designated Advanced Health Research Translation Centre, and this funding is provided as part of the ongoing funding to AHRTCs and Centres for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRHs).
- On 21 March the Minister for Health Greg Hunt announced [NSW Regional Health Partners](#), one of two NHMRC designated Centres for innovation in Regional Health, will receive \$6.1 million over 3 years from the MRFF to fund translational research into strategies to improve the delivery of care. Examples given include investigating best practice models for telehealth and aged care, and changing community behaviour through healthy weight strategies.
- Marking National Close the Gap Day on 15 March, the Minister for Health announced MRFF funding of \$6 million over three years to the [Central Australian Academic Health Science Centre](#) (CAAHSC). The [CAAHSC](#) was recognised in July last year by the NHMRC as a Centre for Innovation in Regional Health, and has an emphasis on Indigenous-led and community controlled research. This funding is provided as part of the Rapid Applied Research Translation Program, designed to support the translational research efforts of the seven Advanced Health Research Translation Centres and the two Centres for Innovation in Regional Health. It follows the announcement last year of MRFF funding of \$10 million under this Program to the Academic Health Research and Translation Centres.
- On 6 March 2018, the Minister for Health announced a **National ‘million minds’ Health Mission**, focussing on mental health, to be funded from the MRFF. The plan for the Mission is to be developed ‘over the next six months’, including details of what the MRFF will fund.
- \$2.5 million will be available for a targeted call for research onto the **diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis**. The funding was announced by the Health Minister on 2 March 2018 as part of the Government’s development of a National Action Plan for Endometriosis. The funding forms part of the Accelerated Research Program within the MRFF, designed to stimulate targeted research in areas of identified unmet need.
- \$70 million over 5 years from 2017/18 for the *Next Generation Clinical Researchers Program*. \$10 million of this will be available from the 2017/18 disbursements for Fellowships, commencing in 2019, rising to \$20 million in subsequent years. This funding is in addition to the \$8 million in funding for Fellowships announced in 2016/17, and which commenced in 2018. On January 18 2018 the Minister [announced 21 Next Generation Clinical Research Fellowships, worth a total of \\$10 million](#).
- \$50 million from the MRFF, to be matched dollar for dollar by philanthropy will be available over multiple years from 2017/18 for the [Australian Brain Cancer Mission](#). Prioritised first investments include the establishment of an Australian arm of the GBM AGILE, an international adaptive trial platform for adults with glioblastoma, new funding for Australian and New Zealand Children’s Haematology Oncology Group (ANZCHOG) clinical trial centres, and support for the consolidation of the national ZERO Children’s Cancer initiative.
- A further \$30 million in funding will be allocated to the [Biotech Horizons Program](#) over the next four financial years. This builds on the initial \$5 million allocated in 2016/17 which is being administered by MTPConnect. On 17 April, MTPConnect and the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP [announced the first 11 recipients of \\$10 million](#). The funding round focused on supporting cutting-edge ideas in precision medicine and 3D anatomical printing towards proof-of-concept and commercialisation.
- On 24 January 2018 the Minister [announced that \\$26 million in funding](#) has been awarded to 19 projects as part of the **Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Needs Clinical Trials Program**(formerly the *Lifting Clinical Trials and Registries Program*). Initially announced in

2016/17 as \$13 million over four years, this announcement has doubled the initial allocation. The clinical trials are across the areas of rare cancer, rare disease and unmet need. A further \$10 million targeted grant round for clinical trials into Low Survival Cancers and Diseases (LSCD) was announced, and closed in April 2018.

MRFF disbursements for 2016/17

\$65.9 million is available for the allocation from 2016/17

- \$8 million is to be allocated across the four pre-existing NHMRC Advanced Health Research Translation Centres (something Research Australia has advocated for over a year). Of this amount, Monash Partners AHRTC is receiving \$2 million for research and initiatives to improve care in blood and lung cancer, cardiovascular disease diabetes dementia, and improve influenza vaccination rates. Sydney Health Partners AHRTC has been allocated \$2.2 million for three programs, to address lower back pain, improve recruitment for clinical trials, and address gaps in the health system. Detail of the other AHRTCs' research programs has yet to be announced.
- \$2 million to support new and existing Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres (AHRTCs) and the two soon-to-be-announced Centres for Innovation in Regional Health (CIRHs) to work together on national system-level initiatives. Of this amount, \$225,000 has been allocated to the recently announced Diamantina Partners AHRTC, and \$225,000 to the newly announced The SPHERE (Sydney Partnership for Health, Education, Research and Enterprise) AHRTC. A further \$225,000 has been allocated to NSW Regional Health Partners, a freshly minted CIRH.
- \$10 million in funding will be provided to The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (TAPCC) to generate effective low-cost solutions to address chronic disease and childhood obesity. On 1 February 2018, the Health Minister announced funding of more than \$500,000 for the first of the projects under the Boosting Prevention Program, a research program by Professor Fiona Blyth AM into better management of chronic pain in primary care. On 15 March 2018, the Minister announced that \$740,000 had been awarded to University of Queensland researchers to undertake a world-first project, in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, to find ways to improve Aboriginal food security and dietary intake in cities and remote areas.
- \$5 million for new targeted clinical trial activity for adolescents and young adults with cancer, to be administered by CanTeen.
- **\$13 million over four years to increase clinical trials and registries' capacity (the *Lifting Clinical Trials and Registries Capacity Program*). This includes funding for networks of investigators and service providers that work together, to identify and evaluate new approaches that will optimise healthcare effectiveness. A targeted call for funding applications is being administered by NHMRC, with funding to commence in January 2018.** Funding of \$1.2 million to the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and \$500,000 to University of Melbourne was announced on 18 January 2018 for two clinical trials for treatment for ataxia. On **24 January 2018** the Minister announced that the total allocation has been **increased from \$13 million to \$26 million** in response to the quality of the applications received. 19 projects have been funded, including the two ataxia projects announced a week earlier. These are across the areas of rare cancer, rare disease and unmet need.
- \$5 million over four years to the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) as the national alliance partner to build the capacity of clinical trials networks.
- **\$8 million to boost the scale of three existing NHMRC Fellowship schemes- Career Development Fellowships, (early to mid-career researchers in clinical, population health, biomedical and bioinformatics fields); Translating Research into Practice Fellowships (health professionals translating evidence into healthcare and public health improvements) and Practitioner Fellowships (implementing evidence-based**

practice among clinical, public health and health service professionals). Fellowship awards will be announced from early 2017-18.

- \$2 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a new international initiative to address critical research and development gaps for pandemic preparedness and global health security.
- **\$5.9 million for antimicrobial resistance to address knowledge gaps in relation to the development and spread of resistance; and the development of new products, including diagnostic technologies and therapies, policies and approaches to prevent, detect and respond to resistance. (Targeted call for funding applications being administered by NHMRC, with funding to commence in January 2018.)**
- **\$5 million to establish the Biotech Horizons program, to provide early stage pre-clinical support for biotechnologies.**
- \$2 million to Cure4MND for clinical trials for adults with MND. This amount was provided as matching funding to public donations to Cure4MND's 'Big Freeze 3' fundraising campaign.