



Project Grant scheme-specific funding rules

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The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Project Grant scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*
- *Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2018*
- *Project Grant scheme-specific peer review guidelines*
- *NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2018*
- *Project Grant scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants*
- *NHMRC Funding Agreement.*

It is recommended that you read the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018* before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1 About the scheme

1.1 Description

A Project Grant application must outline a research proposal that describes the investigation of a new research idea. The proposal must support a particular set of aims and the budget must be directed to those aims. All Project Grant applications must be between one and five years. Single investigators or teams of up to ten Chief Investigators (CIA – CIJ) are supported as well as New Investigators (NI) (early career researchers) (see section 5.2 *New Investigator (NI) status* for further details). Research teams are encouraged to include early career researchers as part of the Chief Investigator (CI) team.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of the Project Grant scheme is to support the creation of new knowledge by funding the best investigator-initiated research project plan of between one and five years, in any area relevant to human health.

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Project Grant scheme-specific funding rules:

- Clinical Trial and Cohort Study added to section 3.1 *Minimum data*
- New application limit in section 5.1.1 *Limits on Project Grants*
- New requirement for RAO certification of New Investigator status request form at section 5.2.4 *Institution certification*
- Updated guidance on Electromagnetic Energy Research in section 6.2.3 *Funding by other organisations*
- Inclusion of section 7.1 *External Assessments and Applicant Response.*

3 Critical dates

December 2017*	Application information and templates available
10 January 2018	Applications open in RGMS
24 January 2018 by 5pm AEDT	Deadline to request New Investigator status
14 February 2018 by 5pm AEDT	Minimum data due in RGMS
14 March 2018 by 5pm AEDT	Applications close in RGMS
Applications in Period 1: 8 June 2018 Applications in Period 2: 29 June 2018	Dates for release of Assessor Reports
Applications in Period 1: 18 June 2018 Applications in Period 2: 9 July 2018	Due dates for submitting Applicant Response (rebuttal)
7 September 2018	Completion of peer review
September 2018*	Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) applicants advised of outcome
October 2018*	Notification of outcomes

*Dates are indicative.

Completed applications must be submitted to NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to [section 11](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018* for further details.

3.1 Minimum data

Minimum data for the Project Grant scheme consists of the following:

- General: Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research (yes/no), and Synopsis
- A-RC: Research Classification: all sections
- B-GRPN: Grant Review Panel Nomination: all sections including Clinical Trial and Cohort Study.

Minimum data must be entered in RGMS by 5:00pm AEDT on 14 February 2018 to allow the NHMRC to commence sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields as outlined above with

correct information. Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see [section 10.4](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018* and [section 6](#) of the *NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2018*).

4 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the assessment criteria listed below:

- Scientific Quality (50%)
- Significance of the Expected Outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the Concept (25%)
- Team Quality and Capability relevant to the application - relative to opportunity, taking into account career disruptions where applicable (25%).

The assessment of the team is not weighted to the CIA but to the team as a whole.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity taking into consideration any career disruptions (see [section 6.2](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*).

Each application is regarded by NHMRC as a new application for funding and is assessed accordingly.

All peer review adheres to NHMRC’s Principles of Peer Review as described in the *Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2018* and [section 4](#) of the *Project Grant scheme-specific peer review guidelines*. Therefore, applicants can expect that any matter relevant to the three assessment criteria and budget may be considered in the review of their research application and requested budget. Issues not relevant to the assessment criteria will not be considered during the assessment process.

Applicants are expected to address the three assessment criteria in their application and should closely consider the relevant Category Descriptors. The Category Descriptors are used by Grant Review Panel (GRP) members to score each application against each criterion. This ensures a consistent framework by which applications are scored across and within GRPs. Additional guidance on how to address the assessment criteria is provided at [Attachment B](#) of the *Project Grant scheme-specific peer review guidelines*.

4.1 Additional criteria for Indigenous Health applications

Applications relating to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see [section 6.3](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*).

These applications will be assigned to GRP members with specific expertise in Indigenous health research where possible. In scoring applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, the Indigenous assessor will use their discretion, experience and expertise to reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the criteria and will closely consider the Category Descriptors and Assessment Criteria for Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (see [Attachment B – 2018 NHMRC Project Grant Category Descriptors and Assessment Criteria for Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#)).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Indigenous health which do not meet the Indigenous health criteria will be assessed as a standard Project Grant application.

5 Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether they are eligible to apply.

This scheme has eligibility criteria in addition to those identified in [section 7](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*. Applications that do not meet all of the eligibility requirements will be excluded from consideration (see [section 10.7](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*). RGMS has functionality to assist applicants determine eligibility; however this is indicative only and does not replace the responsibility of each individual CI to confirm their eligibility.

Applicants seeking to submit their Project Grant application with NI status must have their status as a NI confirmed by NHMRC prior to submitting their application (see [section 5.2.1 Requesting New Investigator status](#)). Note that requesting NI status involves a separate assessment process that is completed prior to the Project Grant minimum data deadline.

CIs must ensure they meet all eligibility criteria at the time of submission and for the duration of the peer review period. For example, CIs holding NHMRC grants should confirm with the CIAs of those grants that no variation requests have or will be submitted during peer review that may affect their eligibility to apply for new Project Grants.

5.1 Multiple research grant eligibility

Where any CI (CIA-CIJ) has submitted applications in excess of the maximum they are eligible for, all applications they are named on as a CI will be ruled ineligible and excluded from consideration (refer to [section 10.7](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*). It is the responsibility of each individual CI to ensure they meet all eligibility requirements prior to the submission of an application and that they maintain their eligibility for the duration of the peer review period. Variation requests will only be considered where consistent with the Variations Policy and where approval will not result in a breach of the eligibility limits.

5.1.1 Limits on Project Grants

The maximum number of applications any CI (CIA-CIJ) may **submit** in the 2018 Project Grant round is two. The maximum number of Project Grants a CI (CIA-CIJ) can **hold** is six. For the purpose of determining eligibility for this round, the number of Project Grants an applicant holds is the number scheduled to continue from 1 January 2019. For example, if an applicant will hold five active Project Grants in 2019, only one Project Grant application may be submitted in 2018.

Note that the application cap of two per CI applies only to applications seeking funding from NHMRC. Applications seeking funding only from Cancer Council and/or Cancer Australia and Funding Partners are not capped.

5.1.2 Limits on Project Grants for Program Grant Chief Investigators

NHMRC Program Grant CIs are not permitted to hold, or apply for, more than one Project Grant. For the purpose of determining eligibility for this round, the number of Project Grants an applicant holds is the number of grants scheduled to continue from 1 January 2019. For Project and Program Grant limit examples, see [Attachment C – 2018 Project/Program Grant Eligibility Rules](#).

Applicants should note that there can only be one Program Grant holder named as a CI on any Project Grant application. Program Grant CIs cannot be the sole CI named on any existing Project Grant or a Project Grant application: there must be at least one other CI who is not also a CI on an awarded Program Grant or a Program Grant receiving funding in any year in which the Project Grant is funded. This eligibility criterion applies regardless of a CI's part-time or full-time status on the Program Grant.

5.2 New Investigator (NI) status

The NI initiative aims to support early career researchers who are yet to receive significant research funding through a competitive grants process. NHMRC seeks to fund Project Grant applications with NI status at approximately the same rate as standard Project Grant applications.

For a Project Grant application to have NI status, each CI (CIA-CIJ) will need to be assessed and be confirmed as a NI by NHMRC. The process to request NI status is outlined below (see [section 5.2.1 Requesting New Investigator status](#)). Where one or more CIs have not submitted a request or have

not had their NI status confirmed, the application will progress as a standard Project Grant application. It is the CIA's responsibility to ensure that all CIs meet this requirement.

The following criteria are used by NHMRC to determine NI status:

1. The letter advising PhD thesis was passed was dated on or after 24 January 2008, unless career disruptions (see [section 6.2](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*) at least equal to the difference between the PhD award notification date and 24 January 2008 are claimed (as per [section 5.2.2 Career disruption for New Investigator status](#)).
2. The CI has not been named as a CI on an NHMRC research support grant.
3. The CI has not been named on any competitively awarded grant (see description below) where the total research support funding awarded equals AUD \$250,000 or more. Where funds are provided for both research and salary support in a grant and justification is provided, the amount awarded specifically for salary may be deducted from the total grant value.

A competitively awarded research support grant is any opportunity that has been externally advertised and involves assessment against predefined criteria. This includes, but is not limited to, state, national, and international funding schemes; any funding opportunity listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register; and Australian Research Council research support grants. It does not include funding which exclusively supports salary, or applications on which you were named as a collaborator or the equivalent of an Associate Investigator (AI). The total value of the grant is used to determine eligibility even if the CI only received a portion of the funding.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide sufficient information for NHMRC to determine their eligibility. Failure to do so may result in the applicant's NI status request being declined.

5.2.1 Requesting New Investigator status

Applicants who wish to have their application assessed with NI status must request NI status assessment by submitting the online NI status request form in RGMS. Requests must be submitted by 5pm AEDT 24 January 2018. Early notification of assessment outcome enables applicants to adjust the research team if their NI status is not confirmed.

Applicants seeking NI status must complete all mandatory sections of the NI status request form in the 'Applications' section of RGMS. Applicants must update their RGMS CV-RF and CV-ORF fields before commencing the NI form.

Each request for NI status is regarded as a new request and will be assessed accordingly; no consideration will be given to the outcome of a previous request for NI status. No additional explanatory information will be accepted after the NI status request form has been submitted. Confirmation of NI status will be sent to the RAO of the Institution that certified the form.

5.2.2 Career disruption for New Investigator status

An applicant whose PhD award notification date was before 24 January 2008 will be considered for NI status if they are able to demonstrate periods of significant career disruption between 24 January 2008 and 24 January 2018 (see [section 6.2](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*). The duration of career disruption must be equal to or greater than the duration between the PhD award notification date and 24 January 2008. Disruptions prior to the PhD award notification date will not be considered.

Applicants seeking to have their career disruption taken into consideration must provide the following information in their NI status request form:

- the total duration of the period being claimed
- dates for each period of disruption
- sufficient explanation to demonstrate the disruption being claimed is a circumstance eligible for consideration (see [section 6.2](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*).

5.2.3 Cancer Australia Young Investigators (CAYI)

Applicants who intend to apply for both NHMRC NI status and CAYI funding are required to meet both the NHMRC NI status and CAYI requirements. Any questions relating to CAYI eligibility should be addressed to Cancer Australia.

5.2.4 Institution certification

The NI status request form must be certified and submitted by the applicant's current institution before the submission deadline. The RAO must be authorised to certify and submit the request, and must be able to provide assurances that reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the request is accurate and complies with all requirements detailed in the relevant NHMRC guidance.

6 Funding

6.1 Level and duration of funding

A Project Grant can be requested for between one and five years. Applicants are required to fully and clearly justify the requested budget to demonstrate value for money.

The GRP will consider how the requested budget and requested duration of the grant supports the proposed outcomes of the application, and may adjust the duration and budget of the grant to ensure the project can be achieved, while ensuring value for money.

For a more detailed explanation regarding the appropriate use of NHMRC funds, Personnel Support Package (PSP) requests and how to prepare the budget in the application, see [section 4.6](#) of the *Project Grant scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants*.

For information on Project Grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the [NHMRC website](#).

Applicants applying for funding from another funding organisation, for example Cancer Australia, will need to refer to the relevant guidelines provided by these organisations as specific conditions on the level and duration of funding and the items supported may differ to those of NHMRC (see section 6.2.3 Funding by other organisations).

6.2 Use of funds

6.2.1 Funding to support overseas research activities

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so the applicants must clearly demonstrate that the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and that the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia. In some instances applicants may conduct the majority of their work overseas. However it is important that applicants ensure the research is well justified and conforms with the scheme eligibility requirements. For example, the CIA is required to be based in Australia for at least 80% of the requested grant duration.

Applicants may request funding for salary support for the specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. When requesting salary support for overseas activities, the personnel in relation to the request may not be named as a CI.

6.2.2 Funding for clinical trials

NHMRC will only be able to fund a limited number of clinical trials and may require applicants to find co-funding as a prerequisite for NHMRC support.

6.2.3 Funding by other organisations

The Project Grant scheme has established a number of different arrangements with government agencies, Administering Institutions and not-for-profit organisations to provide research support in specific areas. These arrangements enable the funding of highly ranked applications, in total or in part, that are beyond the limit of NHMRC funding.

Each year, NHMRC conducts the peer review of applications on behalf of these organisations.

Applicants can choose to apply for funding from one or more organisations that offer funding through the NHMRC Project Grant scheme, with all applications being submitted to the same peer review processes. If an applicant chooses to apply for funding from NHMRC and another organisation, and the application is subsequently ranked as competitive (fundable) following NHMRC peer review, NHMRC has the first option to fund the application. Details, including peer review outcomes, of all remaining relevant applications that are considered fundable by the GRP are then provided to the funding organisation. The decision to fund the additional application/s remains with that organisation. NHMRC does not participate in that stage of the process.

Privacy will be protected in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* as outlined in [section 9.5](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*.

Applicants seeking funding from other organisations must comply with their specified criteria or requirements. For information on the funding partner opportunities and their assessment criteria, refer to the [NHMRC website](#).

Cancer Australia and Funding Partners and Cancer Councils

Applicants can choose to apply exclusively to:

- Cancer Councils
- Cancer Australia and Funding Partners

Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Research

Applicants who select EME funding in a Project Grant application should be aware that NHMRC, in conjunction with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), will determine if an application meets the criteria for EME research and is eligible to be funded through the Australian Government's levy on radio communication license fees.

Applicants are advised to review the 2017 ARPANSA Technical Report '*Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy and Health: Research Needs*'. Applicants are required to provide a detailed justification that their application aligns with the research agenda into Radio Frequency (RF) EME and health outlined in the Technical Report. Specifically, applicants are required to show that their project investigates the effects of RF EME on human health. In this context a description of both the RF exposure (such as frequency range and source of the exposure) and the health effect that is being investigated is required.

Applications that are not in scope will not be eligible for EME funding. However, these applications will be considered for standard NHMRC Project Grant funding.

7 Assessment process

For information on the peer review process, see the *Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2018* and *Project Grant scheme-specific peer review guidelines*.

7.1 External Assessments and Applicant Response

NHMRC, through its Assigners Academy, will endeavour to seek two reviews from External Assessors for each Project Grant application. Prior to the GRP meeting, applicants will have an opportunity to respond to the reviews provided by Spokespersons and External Assessors. The Applicant Response is not an opportunity to modify the application.

Applicant Responses must be uploaded into RGMS by the NHMRC deadline indicated in the notification letter. The page limit for the Applicant Response is two pages. Applicants addressing the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be permitted an additional third page to respond to comments provided for this component of their research proposal. The Applicant Response must meet the formatting requirements in Table 1 of [section 10.3.3](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*. Applicant Responses that do not adhere to these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

7.1.1 Inappropriate comments in Assessor Reports

Applicants should state their objection/s in writing to NHMRC through the Administering Institution's RAO. Objections must be received within five calendar days of comments being issued and should state how the comments do not meet NHMRC standards set out in [section 6.1](#) of the *Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2018*. Unless NHMRC advises otherwise, applicants should continue with the preparation of a rebuttal (see [section 11.5](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*).

Objections should be directed to the Director of Research Grants via an email to the Research Help Centre at help@nhmrc.gov.au. NHMRC will provide a written response to all objections. Following receipt of the NHMRC response, applicants may choose to seek a further review by the Complaints Team (see [section 11.7](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*).

8 Grant administration

Please refer to the *NHMRC Funding Agreement*, [section 12.3](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018* and the NHMRC website under Administering Grants.

8.1 Reporting

The requirements for reporting are as described in [section 12.7](#) of the *NHMRC Funding Rules 2018*.

Where a grant commences funding on a date other than 1 January, the annual financial reports will still be due on 30 April for the portion of the previous calendar year in which the grant was active.

9 Attachments

Attachment A – 2018 NHMRC Project Grant Category Descriptors

Attachment B – 2018 NHMRC Project Grant Category Descriptors and Assessment Criteria for Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Attachment C – 2018 Project/Program Grant Eligibility Rules

Attachment A – 2018 NHMRC Project Grant Category Descriptors

The following category descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria: 1) Scientific Quality; 2) Significance of the Potential Outcomes and/or Innovation of the Concept; and 3) Team Quality & Capability, relative to opportunity. While the category descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score must be met. The descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. The process of consistently referring panel members to these descriptors is vital to ensuring equity, thoroughness and process consistency both within and across all peer review panels.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
7 Outstanding by International Standards	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed has a near flawless study design is highly feasible with all of the required expertise, research tools and techniques established would be highly competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will result in a highly significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of great importance to human health will result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues will translate rapidly into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy will almost certainly be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings will almost certainly result in highly influential publications. is highly innovative and introduces advances in concept(s) will use very advanced approaches which will optimise outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has expertise that specifically targets the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is outstanding by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team has senior members with outstanding national and international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve junior members who are very strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of very strong mentoring by other members of the team.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
6 Excellent	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is clearly defined, coherent and well developed • has a strong study design • is feasible with all required tools, techniques and expertise established • is likely to be competitive with strong, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will result in a significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health • is likely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues • is likely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy • will likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings • will likely result in influential publications. • is highly innovative in concept • will use advanced approaches to enhance outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has expertise that is highly relevant to the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth • has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is excellent by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice ○ research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI ○ research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team • has senior members with excellent national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application • may involve junior members who are strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of strong mentoring.
5 Very Good	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is generally clear in its scientific plan and is logical • raises only very few minor concerns with respect to the study design • is feasible in all, or almost all areas - required techniques and tools either established or nearly established • may not be highly competitive with similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will advance knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health • may result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues • very few concerns regarding feasibility may translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy • could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meetings • is likely to result in some very strong publications. • is innovative in concept • will use well established approaches to good effect. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raises only minor concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research • has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is well above average by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice ○ research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI ○ research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team • members have very good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application • may involve junior members who are valuable contributors to the team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of some mentoring.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
4 Good	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is generally solid in its scientific plan, but may not always be clear in its intent and may lack some focus raises several minor concerns regarding the study design raises doubts about the feasibility in some areas is not likely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may incrementally advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of some importance to human health is unlikely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues several minor concerns regarding feasibility is unlikely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy is unlikely to be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international meetings may result in some good but not excellent publications. s solid in concept will in the main use standard approaches. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raises some significant concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is average by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team members have good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve some junior members who would have the potential to add to the team with mentoring, but there is little or no evidence of a mentoring framework to support them.
3 Marginal	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is somewhat unclear in its scientific approach and goals contains some major design flaws raises major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some importance to human health may result in some publications may have some innovative and novel aspects, while others underpin or extend existing knowledge. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> members have made contributions to the field of research but there are significant concerns regarding the depth and breadth of relevant expertise has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice, that places them at an average level for their peers/cohort members have established national reputations but do not yet have strong international profiles.
2 Unsatisfactory	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is unclear in its scientific approach and goals contains several major study design flaws raises several major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some concern to human health provides a program of research which will not significantly advance current knowledge in the field has relatively little innovation or novelty. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research has published only a few works in relevant and other fields of research members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
1 Poor	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible is unlikely to be successfully completed. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not address an issue of more than marginal concern to human health will not advance current knowledge in the field only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or previously well used approaches. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is heavily underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program is not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields.

Attachment B – 2018 NHMRC Project Grant Category Descriptors and Assessment Criteria for Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The following category descriptors are used as a guide to score an application against each of the assessment criteria: 1) Scientific Quality; 2) Significance of the Potential Outcomes and/or Innovation of the Concept; and 3) Team Quality & Capability, relative to opportunity. While the Category Descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score must be met. The descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. The process of consistently referring panel members to these descriptors is vital to ensuring equity, thoroughness and process consistency both within and across all peer review panels.

To assist members of the Indigenous Grant Review Panel (IGRP) when assessing applications the criteria for health and medical research of Indigenous Australians has been integrated into the table below. This is to be used as a guide only.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application - 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
7 Outstanding by International Standards	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed has a near flawless study design is highly feasible with all of the required expertise, research tools and techniques established would be highly competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will result in a highly significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of great importance to human health will result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues will translate rapidly into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy will almost certainly be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings will almost certainly result in highly influential publications. is highly innovative and introduces advances in concept(s) will use very advanced approaches which will optimise outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has expertise that specifically targets the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth. has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is outstanding by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team has senior members with outstanding national and international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve junior members who are very strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of very strong mentoring by other members of the team.
7 Indigenous Criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has outstanding levels of community engagement, ensuring that the proposal is highly feasible outstandingly demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for the community 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the study will definitely lead to major and effective health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project The outcomes of the study will have a very high impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes from the proposal will have a strongly significant health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has an outstanding track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The proposal will build outstanding capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application - 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
6 Excellent	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is clearly defined, coherent and well developed has a strong study design is feasible with all required tools, techniques and expertise established is likely to be competitive with strong, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will result in a significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health is likely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues is likely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy will likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings will likely result in influential publications. is highly innovative in concept will use advanced approaches to enhance outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has expertise that is highly relevant to the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is excellent by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team has senior members with excellent national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve junior members who are strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of strong mentoring.
6 Indigenous Criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has excellent levels of community engagement, ensuring that the proposal is feasible demonstrates excellently how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for the community. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the study will lead to considerable and effective health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project The outcomes of the study will have a high impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes from the proposal will have a significant health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has an excellent track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The proposal will build excellent capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application - 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
5 Very Good	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is generally clear in its scientific plan and is logical raises only very few minor concerns with respect to the study design is feasible in all, or almost all areas - required techniques and tools either established or nearly established may not be highly competitive with similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will advance knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health may result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues very few concerns regarding feasibility may translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meeting is likely to result in some very strong publications. is innovative in concept will use well established approaches to good effect. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raises only minor concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is well above by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team members have very good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve junior members who are valuable contributors to the team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of some mentoring.
5 Indigenous Criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has very good levels of community engagement, ensuring that the proposal is likely to be feasible clearly demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for the community. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the study will lead to effective health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project The outcomes of the study will have an impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes from the proposal will have some health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has a very good track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The proposal will build very good capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
4 Good	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is generally solid in its scientific plan, but may not always be clear in its intent and may lack some focus raises several minor concerns regarding the study design raises doubts about the feasibility in some areas is not likely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may incrementally advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of some importance to human health is unlikely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issue several minor concerns regarding feasibility is unlikely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy is unlikely to be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international meetings may result in some good but not excellent publications. is solid in concept will in the main use standard approaches. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raises some significant concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is average by international standards commensurate with their field of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team members have good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application may involve some junior members who would have the potential to add to the team with mentoring, but there is little or no evidence of a mentoring framework to support them.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application - 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
4 Indigenous Criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has good levels of community engagement raises some concerns that the proposal is feasible demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for the community. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the study may lead to effective health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project The outcomes of the study may have an impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes from the proposal may have some health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has a good track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The proposal may build good capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
3 Marginal	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is somewhat unclear in its scientific approach and goals contains some major design flaws raises major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some importance to human health may result in some publications may have some innovative and novel aspects, while others underpin or extend existing knowledge. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> members have made contributions to the field of research but there are significant concerns regarding the depth and breadth of relevant expertise has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice, that places them at an average level for their peers/cohort members have established national reputations but do not yet have strong international profiles.
3 Indigenous criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has limited community engagement has several concerns that the proposal is feasible and achievable. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the study may lead to limited or short- term health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The outcomes of the study may have a moderate impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes from the proposal are likely to have a minimal health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has a marginal track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples The proposal may build minimal capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
2 Unsatisfactory	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is unclear in its scientific approach and goals contains several major study design flaws. raises several major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some concern to human health provides a program of research which will not significantly advance current knowledge in the field has relatively little innovation or novelty. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research has published only a few works in relevant and other fields of research members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant resarch fields.

Category	Scientific Quality - 50% Feasibility can include contribution of Associate Investigators	Significance and/or Innovation - 25% Significance of the expected outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the concept	Team Quality & Capability relevant to this application - 25% Relative to opportunity, does not include Associate Investigators
2 Indigenous criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has little or no community engagement • is unlikely to be feasible and achievable. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes of the study are unlikely to lead to any health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • The outcomes of the study are unlikely to have any impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes from the proposal are likely to have little or no health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has an unsatisfactory track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • The proposal is unlikely to build capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
1 Poor	<p>The proposal has a research plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible.is unlikely to be successfully completed. 	<p>The planned research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not address an issue of more than marginal concern to human health • will not advance current knowledge in the field • only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or previously well used approaches. 	<p>Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is heavily underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program • is not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields • members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields.
1 Indigenous criteria	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has no community engagement • will not be feasible. 	<p>Sustainability and transferability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes of the study will not lead to any health gains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • The outcomes of the study will not have any impact on health services delivery or other community priorities. <p>Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes from the proposal will have no health benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 	<p>Building capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has a poor track record in working with communities and building capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • The proposal will not build any capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Attachment C – 2018 Project/Program Grant Eligibility Rules

The following table summarises the NHMRC Project/Program Grant eligibility rules underpinning the eligibility criterion:

Program Grant status	Eligibility to hold Project Grant/s	Eligibility to apply for Project Grant/s
Accepted Program Grant offer of funding, but yet to commence the Program.	Can hold up to six Project Grants prior to the commencement of Program Grant funding. Cannot hold more than one Project Grant after the commencement of Program Grant funding.	Can apply for one Project Grant if they do not hold a Project Grant, or if they only hold Project Grant/s that are not scheduled to continue in the following year.
Program CI in Year 1, 2, 3 or 4 of the Program.	Can hold one Project Grant.	Can apply for one Project Grant if they do not hold a Project Grant, or if they only hold a Project Grant that is not scheduled to continue in the following year.
Program CI in Year 5 of the Program.	Can hold one Project Grant.	Can apply for up to two Project Grants.