



Leading Innovations through New Collaborations

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Metro South  
Health



Children's Health Queensland  
Hospital and Health Service

## 2023 Funding Guidelines

LINC Grant – \$50,000 for two years (seven grants available)

**More information & Funding Guideline:** <https://www.tri.edu.au/LINC>

**Grant Application:** <https://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/>

**Enquiries:** TRI Research & Clinical Translation Manager

**T:** 07 3443 7765 | 0438 124 528

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## 1. LINC SCHEME INTRODUCTION & HIGHLIGHTS

The LINC Scheme is a joint initiative of the Translational Research Institute (TRI), Metro South Health (MSH) and Children’s Health Queensland (CHQ) to support high quality, new, collaborative research projects with clinical translational potential.

The Scheme awards TRI funding matched by Metro South Health Study, Education and Research Trust Account (SERTA), Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service’s (CHQ) Study, Education and Research Trust Account (SERTA) and CHQ Oncology. Up to seven (7) grants of up to \$50,000 are on offer for 2023: Five (5) grants are available to TRI-MSH collaborations, one (1) grant to TRI-CHQ collaborations and one (1) grant to TRI-CHQ oncology specific collaborations.

Through this program, our core aims are to:

- i. Foster research projects with a novel, potentially translatable clinical outcome
- ii. Create long-term, collaborative partnerships between early to mid-career researchers (EMCRs) based at TRI and early to mid-career clinicians from MSH and CHQ, and to generate pilot data along with a joint research track-record.

An opportunity to present potential collaborative research projects/ clinical dilemmas, as well as network and form research partnerships will be provided through the LINC Showcase event. All researchers interested in the LINC Scheme are encouraged to enter an EOI to present their (1) research ideas requiring clinical input and (2) clinical questions needing research collaborations at this event.

### The LINC Scheme in summary

Funding amount and purpose
Up to \$50,000 for two years
Pilot funding for developing an innovative, collaborative research project focused on meeting a clinical need as well as obtaining preliminary proof-of-concept data. Must be led jointly by an early to mid-career researcher based at the TRI and an early to mid-career clinician employed by MSH or CHQ.

### Important dates for the 2023 LINC Scheme

Date (2022)	Actions
14 July 2023	LINC Scheme opens
6 October 2023	LINC Scheme applications close at 5:00pm AEST
Mid-October- Mid November 2023	Peer-review of submitted applications
8 December 2023	Announcement of funding outcomes
31 January 2024	Signed Conditions of Award & Certification forms due
16 February 2024	Completed Grant Payment Request form due
23 February 2024	Signed Grant Funding Agreement due
28 February 2026	Final Report due <i>[required within three (3) months of the end of the grant period]</i>
28 February 2026	Due date for expenditure of grant funding
30 April 2026	Final financial report submitted

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The LINC scheme aims to foster new, collaborative research projects between early to mid-career researchers based at TRI and early to mid-career clinicians employed by MSH or CHQ. The scheme is designed to provide funding over two years to establish a new collaboration, develop clinically relevant projects and obtain preliminary research data. The Scheme's key objectives are:

### 2.1 Research Collaboration & Capacity Building

- 2.1.1 Foster new, genuine, long-term, independent, and self-directed research collaborations between MSH and CHQ clinicians and TRI-based researchers from its partner organisations: The University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Mater Research, and Queensland Health.
- 2.1.2 Build high-quality research capacity between MSH and CHQ early to mid-career clinicians and TRI-based early to mid-career scientists.
- 2.1.3 Nurture research capability in early to mid-career clinicians from MSH and CHQ and early to mid-career researchers based at TRI.

### 2.2 Driving Translational Research

- 2.2.1 Foster new, quality research projects addressing clinical, disease, treatment, or consumer-led issues. The projects may challenge or build upon existing understandings, systems, paradigms, or assumptions and/or open up entirely new lines of investigation.
- 2.2.3 All projects will have the potential to generate new knowledge to help prevent, improve diagnosis, and treat or improve the delivery of health care for health conditions in the community. They will have the potential to be translated into health care policy or clinical practice.

## 3. FUNDING BODIES

The LINC Scheme is supported with by four (4) funding bodies:

- Translational Research Institute Pty Ltd as trustee of the Translational Research Institute Trust ("TRI")
- Metro South Health Study, Education, and Research Trust Account ("MSH SERTA")
- Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service's Study, Education and Research Trust Account ("CHQ SERTA")
- Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service, Oncology (CHQ Oncology)

The award of research funds is governed by the regulations associated with each funding body, who decide the type and number of grants they support and the level of funding to be provided. Each grant comprises matched funding from either TRI and MSH SERTA or TRI and CHQ SERTA, or TRI and CHQ oncology.

## 4. LINC SCHEME OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

TRI, MSH and CHQ will work together to manage the LINC Showcase, grant application and assessment process, offers of grants, and reporting/evaluation processes. The LINC Scheme grant application and assessment processes will be in accordance with these Funding Guidelines as well as the Metro South Health Research Management and Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service research governance, which can be accessed at:

- <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/research/about-us/policies-and-procedures>
- <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/research/for-researchers/governance/>

## 5. 2023 LINC GRANT SCHEME OVERVIEW

All grant applications for the LINC grant scheme must demonstrate the components outlined in 6.1 to 6.3.

### 5.1 Eligibility: Principal Investigators (PI)

A LINC grant application requires two equal Principal Investigators. Both PIs must be at an early to mid-career level.

The **PI-Clinician** will hold a clinical appointment (of any clinical discipline e.g.: doctor, nurse, allied health professional, etc.) with MSH or CHQ and will have an interest in research. The applicant will be an early or mid-career MSH or CHQ clinician (drawn from any department), or a CHQ clinician from within the Oncology Services Group.<sup>1</sup> The applicant is 17 years or less post an undergraduate degree conferring the ability to work in a clinical setting (e.g., MBBS, BN, BOT etc.) (relative to opportunity).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **CHQ Clinicians** must be working in the Oncology Services Group for the duration of the grant.

<sup>2</sup> **Relative to opportunity** as stated by the NHMRC is whereby "researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct". The NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy includes that peer reviewers should assess an applicant's research productivity and contribution, considering both career disruption and other considerations (personal and professional).

[NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy](#) examples:

- Career Disruption – time away from work due to pregnancy, illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities.
- Other considerations – any other personal or professional circumstances affecting research productivity.

**Please see** Appendix 2 for the complete NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy.

**Additionally for clinicians**, relative to opportunity examples may include consideration around regional and remote clinical placements. Other considerations for career disruption will be assessed based on relative to opportunity principles.

**Please note:** any disputes regarding an applicant's relative opportunity eligibility will be reviewed by an independent probity advisor.

PI-Clinician applicants who have recently completed or are embarking on a research higher degree (e.g., PhD, MPhil, MMed, MSc etc.) are encouraged to apply, if they fall within the 17 years post clinical undergraduate degree completion.

The PI-Clinician (as determined by the grant review committee) will not be considered as an early or mid-career clinician if any of the following is true:

- holds an academic position of Level D or Level E
- is greater than 17 years post their clinical undergraduate degree.

**Please note:** Senior clinicians, more than 17 years post their clinical undergraduate degree, are *not* eligible for this grant under any circumstances (e.g., even if they have relatively few years of research experience or are currently undertaking a research PhD or Masters). If a clinician holds an EMCR research position within TRI, they are encouraged to apply for the LINC grant as a PI-Researcher.

The **PI-Researcher** must be employed by a TRI partner institution (The University of Queensland, Mater Research Ltd, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland Health/Metro South Health) and be based at TRI's main campus (Kent St, Woolloongabba) at least 20% of their time. The PI-Researcher must be an early to mid-career researcher within their first 10 years (relative to opportunity)<sup>2</sup> of academic or other research-related employment, following completion of postgraduate research degree.

## 5.2 Mentors and Co-Investigators

PI-Clinician and PI-Researcher must each include a Co-Investigator who is able to provide a mentoring role for the duration of the project:

- The mentor for PI-Clinician must be an experienced clinician.
- The mentor for PI-Researcher must be an experienced researcher with a track-record in designing and implementing translational research.

Both mentors must be:

- willing and have the capacity to provide expert guidance for the duration of the project
- employed by MSH, CHQ or TRI respectively or external to MSH or CHQ if the field of research determines the expertise lies outside both organisations.

**Please note:** additional Co-Investigators who are not mentors and Associate Investigators can be named in the grant application.

## 5.3 Research Project

The LINC grant scheme is designed to foster new collaborations between clinicians and researchers and the development of a new research project. For this reason, the LINC grant application requires applicants to include only an outline of a potential collaborative research project. The project outline will be assessed against the criteria outlined in *Section 8* of these Funding Guidelines.

## 6. LINC GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

### 6.1 LINC Application Timeframe

<b>Opens:</b>	9:00am AEST, Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
<b>Closes:</b>	5:00pm AEST, Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
<b>Application review:</b>	Mid-October – Mid-November 2023
<b>Grants announced:</b>	5:00pm AEST, Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023

### 6.2 Application Form

The LINC scheme grant application must be prepared using SmartyGrants at:

[https://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/2023\\_TRI\\_LINC\\_grant](https://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/2023_TRI_LINC_grant)

Applicants must be a registered SmartyGrants user (the PI can nominate someone to submit the application on SmartyGrants).

#### 6.2.1 Certification Page

The certification page, section 13 of these Funding Guidelines, must be uploaded as part of the SmartyGrants application:

- The Head of Department (HoD) at MSH or CHQ and the TRI Partner Group Leader/Program Leader are required to sign the certification page. Allow sufficient time to gain these signatures, or escalation of the signature if the HoD/Leader is involved in the research.
- The Mentors are required to sign the certification page.

#### 6.2.2 Submission of Application

Applications must be submitted online via the MSH SmartyGrants site

(<https://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/>):

- no later than 5:00pm AEST Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- under no circumstances will late submissions be accepted (we recommend submissions are made well in advance of the deadline to avoid technical issues. **Please note**, SmartyGrants will cease to accept applications at **5pm exactly** on the due date.)
- hand delivered applications will not be accepted
- email applications will not be accepted.
- If difficulties with signatures occurs, this should be declared at time of submission and a timeframe provided for the provision of signatures.



## 6.3 General Instructions

- 6.3.1 Applicants seeking to participate in the LINC grant scheme must comply with these Funding Guidelines, instructions on the Application Forms, and with MSH or CHQ Research policies and procedures located at:
- <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/rss> and <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/research/about-us/policies-and-procedures>
  - <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/research/for-researchers/governance/>
- 6.3.2 The applicant listed in the SmartyGrants application must be the PI-Clinician, however, PI-Clinician may wish to delegate the completion of the application to PI-Researcher or other members of the research team.
- 6.3.3 A PI may submit multiple applications, but a maximum of one (1) grant will be awarded to any individual PI-Clinician or PI-Researcher.
- 6.3.4 TRI, MSH and CHQ actively discourage the practice of experienced researchers making multiple applications in the names of dependent researchers.
- 6.3.5 There is no limit on the number of Co-Investigators or Associate Investigators applicants can name.
- 6.3.6 When preparing the research proposal, Applicants must adhere to the formatting requirements specified in the application form. This includes font size/type, line spacing and page margins. Research proposals that do not comply with formatting requirements may be withdrawn from assessment.
- 6.3.7 All details in the application must be current and accurate at the time of submission.
- 6.3.8 All applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility prior to review. TRI, MSH and CHQ may remove at their discretion applications, which are incomplete, ineligible, not consistent with the guidelines, or non-competitive.
- 6.3.9 Once submitted, the application will be considered final, and no changes will be permitted.
- 6.3.10 Metro South Health, CHQ and TRI will not duplicate funding. You will not be eligible for the LINC Scheme if your project has been funded by any other funding body or is subsequently awarded funding prior to the announcement of the LINC Scheme recipients.

## 7. EVALUATION PANEL

TRI, MSH and CHQ will assemble a peer-review panel to assess LINC scheme applications, for recommending fundable grant applications. The Review Panel will be comprised of representatives appointed by MSH, TRI and CHQ as well as independent members, each panel member having a significant level of research experience within a variety of medical research fields, who may not be subject matter experts for each proposed project.

All members will be assigned to applications in which they have declared that they are without conflict of interest. Conflict of Interest is managed in consultation with an independent Probity Advisor and according to the Metro South *Research Management - Research Integrity Procedure* and *Research Management – MSH Research Support Scheme Procedure*. The Panel will have a designated Panel Lead, who will act as Spokesperson on behalf of the panel at the Grants Recommendation Meeting.

### 7.1 Initial Assessment for Eligibility

A nominated MSH Research, CHQ Research and TRI representative will undertake an initial administrative assessment of eligibility.

### 7.2 Confidentiality

All details of a funding application and associated materials will remain confidential upon receipt by TRI, MSH and CHQ. The review panel members agree to keep all details of applications confidential. Outcomes of applications may only be discussed with named investigators. Proposed funding outcomes will remain confidential until approved. Membership of the review panel will not be disclosed to applicants.

## 8. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTING

### 8.1 Scoring

Each of the Evaluation Criteria will be scored on a scale of 1 to 7, where:

1 = No evidence

2 = Unsatisfactory

3 = Fair

4 = Good

5 = Very Good

6 = Excellent

7 = Outstanding by national standards.

**A minimum score of 3 for each evaluation criteria will be required for a project to be recommended for funding.**

## 8.2 Evaluation Criteria

The LINC grant applications will be assessed against six (6) Evaluation Criteria:

1 35%	2 25%	3 15%	5 15%	6 10%
<b>Collaborative potential</b>	<b>Clinical/Public health significance</b>	<b>Project feasibility</b>	<b>Translation potential</b>	<b>Justification of budget</b>
(Score 1 to 7)	(Score 1 to 7)	(Score 1 to 7)	(Score 1 to 7)	(Score 1 to 7)
It is a new collaboration	Does the project have clinical or public health relevance?	Clearly articulated outline for a scientifically sound project?	Does this project have the potential to change clinical practice, healthcare policy or service delivery?	To what extent is the budget justified, appropriate and able to be managed?
Each PI can appropriately contribute to their field of research relevant to the proposed research	Will it address the burden of disease or clinical issue of importance or consumer identified need?	Acknowledgement of potential risks and barriers to the project being developed	Is there a concept for a 'product'* which will address an unmet or poorly met healthcare issue?	
Nominated mentors have ability and capacity to support EMCRs	Does it have the potential to progress clinical or public health outcomes through new ideas/diagnosis/procedures/technologies/programs/health policy?	Thought put into potential design and methodology to achieve preliminary proof-of-principle data	Is the 'product' novel or are there competitors? Is there a point of market difference?	
	Will it progress clinical knowledge (originality)?	Is it likely the project design can be completed in Year 1?	Is there any understanding of the market for the 'product'?	
		Is it likely that the ethics approval & governance authorisation plus the pilot study can be completed within the second year?	Has there been consumer consultation/ clear articulation of the end consumer and how they will benefit?	

\* Product can refer to a diagnostic test, device, therapeutic, new clinical procedure, new treatment regimen/drug combination, policy

## 9. RANKING AND RECOMMENDATION

Applications are scored according to the Evaluation Criteria and ranked in order of merit. Scores will reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the criteria. All applications will be determined to be fundable or otherwise. At any time, an application may be considered not for funding if alignment with the TRI, MSH and CHQ objectives has not been demonstrated. The merit of applications will be discussed by the Review Panel at a Grants Recommendation Meeting in November 2023. In the event that multiple applications obtain equal scores, the Review Panel will determine a ranking and order of merit, based on assessment by members present.

### 9.1 Awarding of Grants

Recommendations for funding will be considered by the authorised delegates of MSH, TRI and CHQ, who will make the final decision on the award of grants. The decision of the authorised delegates is final.

Award of grants will be via a letter of offer, accompanied by grant conditions (an example of which is set out in Appendix One, but are subject to change).

Prospective grant recipients will be required to accept the offer and conditions in writing by the date identified in the grant award letter. Failure to provide written acceptance of the grant by the due date may result in forfeiture of the grant offer.

In the event that a grant cannot be awarded to, or accepted by the initial recommended applicant, the grant may be awarded to the next ranked application eligible for a particular grant on the order of merit, at the sole discretion of the authorised delegates of MSH, TRI and CHQ. None of MSH, TRI or CHQ are obliged to award the maximum number of grants available.

### 9.2 Feedback & Issues/Disputes

Feedback on the LINC scheme processes, or outcomes should be directed to the TRI Research and Clinical Translation Manager ([funding@tri.edu.au](mailto:funding@tri.edu.au)) in the first instance. Issues and concerns will be managed in consultation with an independent Probity Advisor.

### 9.3 Milestone reporting

Two milestone reports are required:

**Milestone 1:** A research plan must be submitted for a scientifically sound, collaborative research project, which has ethics approval and governance occurs by the end of the first year of funding as designated in the grant Terms and Conditions.

**Milestone 2:** A final report is required within three (3) months of the end of the grant period. A final report template will be provided by TRI.

A delegated TRI representative will review both Milestone reports. Failure to submit either report and adequately meet the reporting requirements may result in the rescinding of the grant.

## 10. DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDING

The LINC Scheme funding will be awarded in its entirety at the start of the grant period following receipt of a fully signed copy of the terms and conditions (an example of which is set out in Appendix 1, but are subject to change).

*Please note the following stipulations around the awarding of funding for the LINC scheme:*

- All LINC grant Funding will be administered by either MSH or CHQ (with MSH, and CHQ invoicing TRI for its contribution on the approval of each Milestone). Non-MSH or CHQ PIs will need to invoice MSH or CHQ for their component of the funding for work undertaken at TRI.
- For auditing purposes and to determine compliance with the grant, the Grant Recipient and the Recipient's Institute agree to provide TRI, MSH and CHQ with information as requested, including financial statements detailing the final costs (income and expenditure) for each financial year the Project has been active and also at the completion of the Project.
- If the Grant Recipient and the Recipient's Institute are for any reason unable to undertake the Project, or meet a Milestone, the Recipient's Institute must notify TRI immediately and cease to undertake any Project activities until a new Project plan is agreed in writing and approved by the authorised delegates from TRI, MSH and CHQ. If the Project is terminated, the Grant Recipient and the Recipient's Institute must immediately reimburse MSH or CHQ (and subsequently TRI) the balance of Funding that is unspent or uncommitted at the date of notification.
- If the Grant Recipient relocates from TRI (for PI-researcher) or from MSH or CHQ (for PI-clinician) during the course of the Project, the recipients are required to provide written notice to TRI that there is a change to their employment. The project funds can not be transferred. If the Project funding has been fully expended at the time of relocation, the final report (Milestone 2) must be submitted as according to the grant funding agreement.
- The Grant Recipient and the Recipient's institutions will be required to agree that the Funding must be completely expended on the Project within 24 months from the start date and any unexpended Funding must be paid back to MSH or CHQ (and subsequently TRI) at the end of the 24 months unless otherwise agreed by TRI in writing.
- Any failure to use the Funding for the Project as outlined in the Application will lead to immediate termination of the Funding and the Grant Recipient and the Recipient's Institute agree to reimburse MSH or CHQ and TRI all unspent or uncommitted Funding within 60 days of the date of termination.

## 11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

With regards to intellectual property rights and commercialisation arising from the Project:

- a. management of IP will be as negotiated and agreed between the parties and will be in accordance with relevant institutional policies and procedures

- b. the Grant Recipient and the Recipient's Institute may publish and otherwise disclose the results of the Project in accordance with all relevant institutions' procedures having regard to confidentiality and protection of intellectual property, provided:
  - i. TRI and MSH or CHQ funding is acknowledged; and
  - ii. authorship and contributions are addressed and acknowledged in all publications based on academic and scientific merit as determined in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the institutions contributing to the Project IP.

## 12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TRI and Metro South Health or Children's Health Queensland must be acknowledged on all publications, presentations, social media posts and media releases pertaining to research funded through the LINC Scheme.

**For example:** *This research was funded through a LINC grant awarded by TRI and Metro South Health/Children's Health Queensland.*

TRI and MSH or CHQ communication/media teams are to be advised of any publications, under embargo, before they are made public to allow TRI and MSH/CHQ the opportunity to work with the PI's institution with regard to any publicity opportunities.

### 13. CERTIFICATION PAGE

#### CERTIFICATION BY THE INVESTIGATIVE TEAM

We accept and agree to adhere to the Conditions of Award for a 2023 LINC Scheme Grant funded by the Translational Research Institute and MSH SERTA, CHQ SERTA or CHQ Oncology for the research study entitled "XXXX".

#### Signatures:

##### Metro South Health or Children's Health QLD

Principal Investigator - Clinician

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Translational Research Institute

Principal Investigator - Researcher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Mentor of Principal Investigator - Clinician

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Mentor of Principal Investigator - Researcher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI3: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI4: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI5: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI6: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CI: Co-Investigator

### CERTIFICATION BY THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/DIVISION

**(IF THE PI IS HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, THIS SECTION MUST BE SIGNED BY THE LINE MANAGER, OR SUITABLE AUTHORITY WITHOUT CONFLICT OF INTEREST)**

For Principal Investigator - Clinician:

I certify that I have read the research proposal and I am prepared to have the research study *entitled "XXXX"* carried out in my Department/Division by Dr *"XXX"*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Title: \_\_\_\_\_

For Principal Investigator - Researcher:

I certify that I have read the research proposal and I am prepared to have the research study *entitled "XXXX"* carried out in my Department/Division by Dr *"XXX"*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Title: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 1: Example 2023 LINC Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions

Note: these are subject to change

As a recipient of a 2023 Leading Innovations through New Collaborations (“LINC”) Grant from the Translational Research Institute Pty Ltd as trustee for the Translational Research Institute Trust (“TRI”) and Metro South Health and Hospital Service (“MSHHS”), the Recipients’ Institutes (“the Parties”) agree that the Funding is provided on the following terms and conditions (“this agreement”):

1. The Recipients’ Institutes acknowledge and agree that funding up to the Maximum Total Amount of Funding (“Funding”) has been committed and approved through the 2023 LINC Grant program to undertake the research outlined in the Application for the Project over a period of 24 months commencing on the Commencement Date.
  - (a) upon execution of this agreement, MSHHS will remit payment of 50% of the Funding to the MSHHS Grant Recipient’s (Principal Investigator- Clinician) internal order number and TRI will, upon receipt of an invoice from MSHHS, remit payment of 50% of the Funding within 30 days to MSHHS; and
  - (b) subject to receipt of payment from TRI as set out in clause 3(a), Principal Investigator-Researcher’s Institute will issue quarterly invoices to MSHHS for expenses incurred or committed to be incurred by Principal Investigator-Researcher’s Institute in accordance with the budget in the Application (said invoices in total not to exceed the Maximum Total Amount of Funding);
  - (c) MSHHS will pay the invoices issued by Principal Investigator-Researcher’s Institute in accordance with clause 3(b) using the Funding within 30 days of MSHHS receiving the invoice.
2. The Recipients’ Institutes agree that the Funding is to be used solely for the Project and nothing in this agreement will entitle the Recipients’ Institutes to any additional funding other than the Funding.
3. The parties agree that:
  - (a) Milestone 1: within no more than 12 months from execution of this agreement (unless otherwise agreed in writing by TRI), the Grant Recipients must provide to TRI a research plan for a scientifically sound, collaborative research project which has ethics approval and governance authorisation, and ensure a collaborative research agreement (or similar) governing access to data, confidentiality, privacy, intellectual property ownership and other relevant matters, is agreed between the Recipients’ Institutes (“CRA”); and
  - (b) Milestone 2: by no later than 28 February 2026 (unless an extension of up to 3 months is granted by TRI), the Grant Recipient must submit to TRI a final project report in the
4. As a condition of receiving the Funding, the Recipients’ Institutions agree to comply with the following milestones:

- form requested by TRI, and such report must be approved by TRI and MSHHS.
5. The Recipients' Institutes agree that the Funding must be completely expended on the Project by 28 February 2026 and will provide a financial statement demonstrating this to TRI and MSHHS by 30 April 2026. Any unexpended Funding must be paid back to MSHHS at the end of this period unless otherwise agreed by TRI and MSHHS in writing.
  6. If any of the Grant Recipients and the Recipients' Institutes are for any reason unable to undertake the Project, or meet a Milestone, the Recipients' Institute must notify TRI (funding@tri.edu.au) and MSHHS (MSH-Research@health.qld.gov.au) immediately and cease to undertake any Project activities until a new Project plan is agreed in writing. If the Project is terminated, the Recipients' Institutes must immediately repay MSHHS the balance of Funding that is unspent or uncommitted at the date of notification under this clause 6.
  7. The Recipients' Institutes acknowledge that any failure to use the Funding for the Project as outlined in the Application will lead to immediate termination of the Funding and the Recipients' Institutes agree to reimburse MSHHS all unspent or uncommitted Funding within 60 days of the date of termination under this clause 7.
  8. For auditing purposes and to determine compliance with these terms and conditions, the Recipients' Institutes agree to provide TRI and MSHHS with information as requested including financial statements detailing the final costs (income and expenditure) at the completion of the Project.
  9. Where the Recipients' Institutes are required to repay or reimburse any portion of the Funding to MSHHS, MSHHS agrees to reimburse TRI its contribution to the Funding (or part thereof on a pro-rata basis) within 30 days of receiving these refunded or reimbursed funds and an invoice from TRI.
  10. With regards to intellectual property rights and commercialisation arising from the Project ("Project IP"), the Parties agree and acknowledge that:
    - (a) Management of Project IP will be as negotiated and agreed in the CRA and will be in accordance with relevant institutional policies;
    - (b) subject to the terms of the CRA, the Recipients' Institutes may publish and otherwise disclose the results of the Project in accordance with all relevant institutions' procedures having regard to confidentiality and protection of intellectual property, provided:
      - i. TRI, MSHHS and the Funding is acknowledged in the manner required by clause 11; and

- ii. Authorship and contributions are addressed and acknowledged in all publications based on academic and scientific merit as determined in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the institutions contributing to the Project IP.
- 11. In addition to clause 10, the Recipients' Institutes further agree to:
  - (a) acknowledge TRI - MSHHS and the Funding in all publications, presentations, social media posts and media releases pertaining to research funded through the LINC Grant program.
- 12. If any of the Grant Recipients or the Recipients' Institutes commit a material adverse breach of this agreement and the material breach remains unremedied after 28 days of receiving the notice of the breach, TRI and MSHHS reserve the right to terminate this agreement and withhold further Funding.
- 13. This agreement may not be assigned or varied without the prior written consent of all parties.
- 14. In no event will TRI or MSHHS be liable for any loss or damage under or in respect of this agreement whether in contract, tort (including negligence), statute or any other cause of action, except where:
  - (a) TRI fails to pay its contribution in accordance with this agreement in which case TRI's maximum liability is \$25,000;
  - (b) subject to receipt of TRI's contribution, MSHHS fails to pay the Funding in accordance with this agreement, in which case MSHHS's maximum liability is \$50,000, or failing receipt of TRI's contribution, MSHHS fails to pay the Funding in accordance with this agreement, in which case MSHHS's maximum liability is \$25,000.  
  
MSHHS's liability cap under this clause applies to MSHHS solely in its role as a co-funder, and not to its role as a Recipient's Institute or any other role in the Project.
- 15. This agreement may consist of a number of copies, each signed by one or more parties to the agreement and will be considered as making up the one document.

## APPENDIX 2: NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy

[NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy](#)

12 January 2021

### Purpose

NHMRC's goal is to support the highest quality research that will lead to improvements in health over the short or long term. Peer review by independent experts is used to identify well-designed feasible projects that address a significant question and are undertaken by researchers with demonstrated capacity to perform high quality research.

In most NHMRC grant schemes, peer reviewers are asked to assess the track record of the applicants as well as the proposed research. However, NHMRC recognises that not all research careers are the same and therefore peer reviewers are asked to assess track records "relative to opportunity", taking into account circumstances that have affected the applicant's research productivity.

The purpose of this document is to outline NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity Policy with respect to:

- peer review of applicant track records
- eligibility to apply for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants.

### Policy approach

NHMRC considers Relative to Opportunity to mean that peer reviewers should assess an applicant's track record of research productivity and professional contribution in the context of their career stage and circumstances, by taking into consideration whether the applicant's productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to them.

The policy has two components:

- Career Disruption – a prolonged interruption to the ability to work due to pregnancy, illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities. Career Disruptions are taken into account in track record assessment and in determining an applicant's eligibility to hold an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant (in terms of years since they received their PhD).
- Other Relative to Opportunity considerations – any other personal or professional circumstances affecting research productivity. These circumstances are taken into account in track record assessment.

In addition to NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review, particularly fairness and transparency, the following principles support this objective:

- **Research opportunity:** Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct.
- **Fair access:** Researchers should have access to the funding available through NHMRC's grant program consistent with their experience and career stage.
- **Career diversity:** Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside academia should not be disadvantaged. NHMRC recognises that time spent in other sectors, such as industry, may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

NHMRC expects that peer reviewers will give clear and explicit attention to these principles to identify the highest quality research and researchers. NHMRC recognises that life circumstances can be varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review.

### **Consideration of career circumstances during peer review of grant applications**

Under the Relative to Opportunity policy, researchers' career circumstances are considered during track record assessment. This aims to take into account salient research opportunity considerations over the course of a research career and is not intended to address minor changes to life circumstances.

Circumstances considered during peer review include, but are not limited to:

#### Research

- research role(s) and responsibilities, career stage, and amount of time spent as an active researcher

#### Resources and facilities

- available resources and facilities, including:
  - the extent to which any additional research personnel and/or collaborators contribute to the applicant's research program
  - situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities

#### Professional responsibilities

- clinical, administrative and/or teaching workload
- time employed in other sectors
- building relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods

#### Personal circumstances

- disability (including mental health conditions and psychosocial disability) or illness
- caring responsibilities that do not interrupt the applicant's career for an extended period (that would meet the definition of a Career Disruption) but still affect research productivity
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including 'sorry business'
- any other personal circumstances

#### Other circumstances

- relocation of an applicant and their research laboratory or clinical practice setting
- periods of unemployment
- calamities, such as pandemics, bushfires or cyclones.

Relative to Opportunity considerations do not include:

- minor (or short-term) changes that occur during the normal course of conducting research, e.g. broken equipment or delayed ethics approval
- minor (or short-term) medical conditions
- recreational leave or general administrative activities related to research, such as preparation of grant applications and publications or committee-related activities.

### **Consideration of Career Disruption during peer review and in determining eligibility for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants**

A Career Disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

The period of Career Disruption may be used:

- to determine an applicant's eligibility for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant
- to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application
- for consideration of track record relative to opportunity by peer reviewers.

A period of Career Disruption is defined as:

- a continuous absence from work for 90 calendar days or more, and/or

- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined %FTE) due to circumstances classified as Career Disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more.<sup>1</sup>

In determining eligibility of Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant applicants, the 10-year limit on the number of years post-PhD may be extended commensurate with the period of the Career Disruption.

NOTE: For the purposes of peer review, circumstances not meeting the definition of Career Disruption may be considered under the career circumstances provisions above.

<sup>1</sup> For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 450 calendar days to achieve a Career Disruption of 90 calendar days.