National Foundation for Medical Research and Innovation

NFMRI

2023 Grants | Available Funding | Partnerships

Over $1 million of medical research innovations funded by NFMRI and partners

The National Foundation for Medical Research and Innovation (NFMRI) announced its new 2023 grant recipients at its biennial conference, Research with Purpose, held on 22-24 November 2022 at The Anchorage Hotel & Spa in Port Stephens, NSW. Successful researchers from across Australia received funding to support the advancement of their innovations ranging from diagnostics to vaccines – across a number of diseases and conditions affecting the health of humans.

- **NFMRI announces the fifth recipient of *the Dr John Dixon Hughes Medal*: Dr Joshua Ooi**
- **NFMRI announces $1,063,904 for new grants commencing in late 2022 & 2023**
- **New and ongoing research support for 2023 is over $1.9 million.**

New projects to commence in late 2022 or early 2023 include:

- **Dr Joshua Ooi,** Monash University, autoimmune disease

research, $50,000 prize grant, *"Targeted regulatory T cells (Tregs) to treat SLE (lupus)"*

- **A/Prof Linda Wakim**, Doherty Institute, The University of Melbourne, influenza research, $145,000, *"A novel universal influenza virus vaccine that provides long term protection against the flu"*
- **Dr Livia Carvalho**, Lions Eye Institute, $145,000, eye disease research, *"Investigating novel bile acid nanocapsules carrying neuroprotective agents for the treatment of retinitis pigmentosa"*
- **Prof Denise Doolan**, James Cook University, malaria research, $290,000, *"Development of a multi-antigen T-cell malaria vaccine"*
- **Dr Prashant Bharadwaj**, Edith Cowan University, Alzheimer's disease research, $250,000, *"Analysis of neurofilament biomarker for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Multiple sclerosis and childhood dementia"**
- **A/Prof Peter van Wijngaarden**, Centre for Eye Research Australia, Alzheimer's disease, $40,000, *"A retinal imaging biomarker of Alzheimer's disease"**
- **Dr Jonathan Danon**, The University of Sydney, Alzheimer's disease, *"Innovative molecules for imaging neuroinflammation in Alzheimer's disease"**

**Grant funded via partnership between NFMRI & The Mason Foundation (managed by Equity Trustees)*

NFMRI CEO, Dr Noel Chambers, noted that the Foundation was excited to be able to provide over $1 million in new funding to advance some of Australia's most promising innovations.

Dr Joshua Ooi from Monash University was awarded the 2023 Dr John Dixon Hughes OAM Medal, which is awarded every two years to a researcher under the age of 45, nominated by peers for an outstanding contribution towards the development and advancement of a biomedical innovation.

In a landmark 1st author Nature paper, Dr. Ooi showed that regulatory T cells (Tregs) specific for self-proteins can be used to specifically treat the cause of autoimmune diseases, like lupus. Dr. Ooi then started his own independent laboratory and devised a platform that can genetically engineer GMP-ready Tregs specific for any self-protein. These cell products are called "Targeted Tregs".

Dr. Ooi has applied his unique platform to develop Targeted Tregs specific for lupus. Lupus patients suffer from multi-organ dysfunction due to an

lupus. Lupus patients suffer from multi-organ dysfunction due to an autoimmune response that attacks its own tissues. Using lupus patient blood samples to devise a novel humanised mouse model of lupus, Dr. Ooi has shown that the lupus-specific Targeted Treg product effectively stops the pathogenic autoimmune response and effectively cures disease.

In addition to the lupus-specific Targeted Treg product (which led to a large research collaboration and commercialisation deal with a multinational pharma company) , Dr. Ooi has developed and filed patents for Targeted Tregs specific for other severe autoimmune diseases including Sjogren's syndrome and autoimmune vasculitis.

NFMRI's Board and Research Advisory Committee congratulated Dr. Ooi for his outstanding achievements that could ultimately lead to an effective treatment for lupus patients.

Dr. Chambers thanked NFMRI's funding partners, including The Mason Foundation, The NSW Community Foundation, The Vernon Sinclair Fund, and The NSW Community Foundation – Nicholas and Phyllis Pinter Trust (all managed by Equity Trustees) and the State Trustees Australia Foundation.

Dr Chambers emphasised that "support from our partners enables us to scale our ability to advance research and innovations towards potential future treatments and options for those in need that would otherwise be left unfunded. Our recent Strategy Impact Report outlined a success rate of 62% for NFMRI-funded projects securing next-step partners, leveraging a total of over $45m in external support."

Read more about our research projects by visiting our website here.

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NFMRI's 2023 Funding Opportunities

The National Foundation for Medical Research and Innovation (NFMRI), together with The Mason Foundation (managed by Equity Trustees), are pleased to announce the following 2023 funding opportunities below.

NFMRI seeks to strategically support biomedical research into potential new drugs, medicines, tools, diagnostics, vaccines and devices. Our targeted support enables research to cross what is often referred to as the 'valley of death' and advance towards attracting the next-step partner on the translation pathway.

Those interested in applying for funding should read more about our strategy and portfolios prior to making a submission. Our success stories and current research also provide a good indication as to the types of projects we normally support and most common questions are addressed in our FAQs section.

Should applicants have any additional questions, NFMRI will be holding online grant round Q&A sessions which will be announced in the new year.

NFMRI 2023 Funding Opportunities

1. Alzheimer's Disease Grant Round - now open

As part of our partnership with The Mason Foundation (managed by Equity Trustees), NFMRI is seeking EOIs for Alzheimer's disease research.

We strongly encourage women to apply and for the researcher leading the project day-to-day to be listed as the chief investigator, including mid-career researchers.

Focus: Alzheimer's disease applications that fall within portfolios 1, 2 & 3

(preference for 2 & 3), open nationally. More information about this grant round, including the expression of interest form, can be found here.

Next closing date: 6pm on Thursday, 23 March 2023

2. NFMRI General Grant Round - opens on 29 January 2023

Expressions of interest for our general grant round will soon open. Applications for innovations across all diseases and conditions are sought from Australian publicly funded research organisations.

Focus: Open nationally across all diseases and conditions affecting humans. Applications that fall within portfolios 2 & 3 only. More information about this grant round can be found here.

Closing date: 6pm AEST on Monday, 21 March 2022

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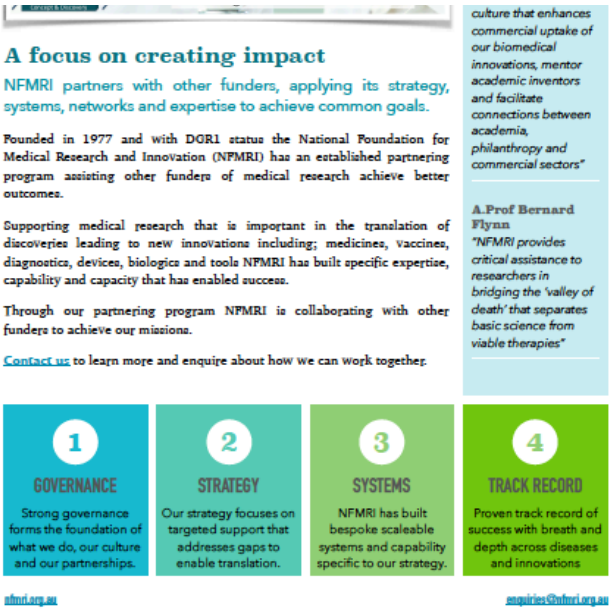
Partnering with NFMRI

NFMRI is always happy to consider partnership opportunities with other foundations, trusts, organisations or individuals looking to support innovative medical research in Australia and achieve greater outcomes from their funding. We are able to work within the disease and geographic parameters of our partners to collectively support new programs focussing on translation. This can better enable academic research outcomes, discoveries and innovations to move beyond academia and attract next stage partners including government, industry and venture capital. These partners have the expertise, capability and capacity to take research to the next stage, navigate the complex regulatory and approval systems and enable access to those in the community who are in need sooner.



NFMRI focuses strictly on supporting early stage biomedical innovations (drugs, vaccines, devices, diagnostics, biologicals and tools) advancements to cross the 'valley of death'. Our processes, systems capability and capacity have been purpose built to support a unique strategy and deliver impact by assisting publicly funded research organisations to attract next stage partners along the innovation pathway.

This strategy and support has already prevented a number of research projects from withering-on-the-vine. These projects have attracted next stage partners, secured investment and entered clinical trials across a number of diseases and innovations.

Based upon a framework of good governance, scalable systems and reproducible evidence of success, NFMRI established a targeted partnering program to assist other well-governed funders of research access to our capability and capacity. Every dollar put towards our partnerships is distributed to innovative projects that meet the objectives of both NFMRI and the partner.

If your organisation would like to discuss a potential partnership further, please don't hesitate to contact Dr Noel Chambers by emailing enquiries@nfmri.org.au

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Recent blog posts

- Impact review finds 62% of supported projects attracted next-step partners leveraging over $45m
- Measuring for success
- More than $1.6m in research funding announced
- From evidence to practice: exploring translational pathways for clinical medical science and public health research
- Increasing capacity and expanding capabilities using technology

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