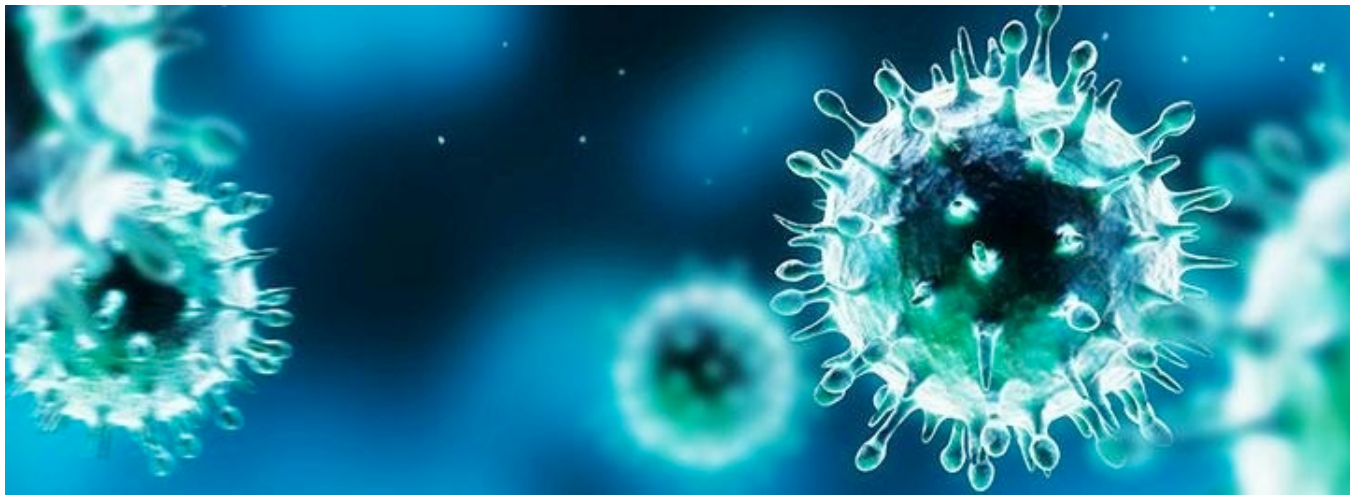
Making Grants to Health & Medical Research

Research Australia





Considering making one or more grants to support health & medical research

Determine what to fund, who to fund, and how to go about it

Grants to health & medical research

Many philanthropic trusts and foundations make grants to health and medical research. Making a grant provides the grant maker with greater opportunity to specify how the funds will be used than is normally available when making a donation. This is particularly important where a trust or foundation's governing documents impose restrictions on where and how the funds are to be disbursed or accounted for. While making a grant is more complicated than simply making a donation, it does not necessarily require specialist medical or scientific knowledge.

Most Australian health and medical research is conducted in our public universities and medical research institutes (and some public hospitals), and these entities are generally eligible to receive grants from trusts and foundations with DGR status. (Check with the organisation before making a grant if this is relevant to your trust or foundation.)

Determining which specific health and medical research projects should receive your support can be challenging. You might want to support research that improves our understanding of the brain, seeks a cure for a particular disease or condition, or supports the work of a particular person or organisation. All these are possible.

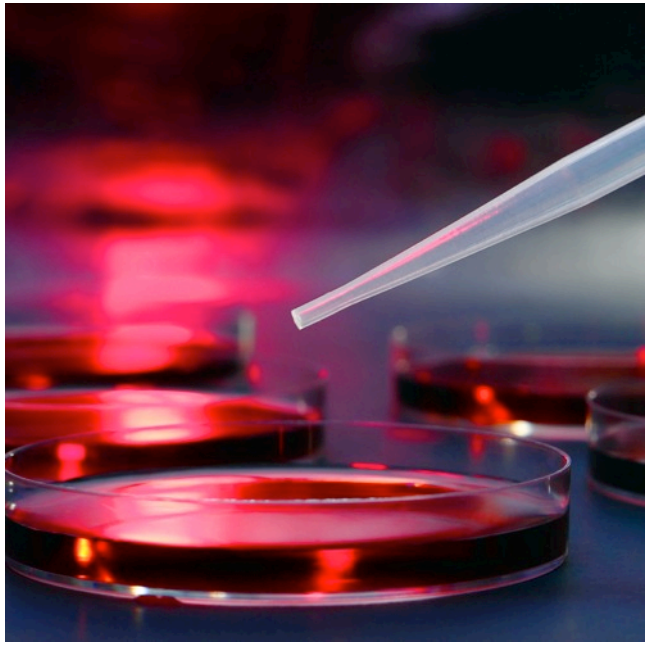
Types of grants

The following are some suggestions for different types of grants that can be make to support health and medical research:

- Funding research by a specific organisation
- Supporting students
- Funding projects
- Supporting career development
- Funding research into a specific disease or condition
- Funding equipment, infrastructure & capital
- Supporting innovation







Funding research by a specific organisation

You may have had previous experience with a particular organisation, for example a hospital, and want to contribute to that hospital or a research institute connected to that hospital. Or you might choose to support a university where you studied, or an organisation undertaking research in your local community.

Supporting students

Health and medical researchers typically undertake an undergraduate degree followed by either a Masters Degree or a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). This involves anywhere from 7 to 10 or more years of study, during which time the individual has to support themselves without being able to work more than part time at most.

Funding projects

Some people prefer to donate to clearly-defined projects. Projects can address a wide range of research questions across various health conditions and disciplines. Examples are:

- a laboratory-based research project to investigate the action of a particular protein;
- a hospital based clinical trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular therapy; or
- research to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular community health program in promoting healthy behaviours.

Projects typically have clearly defined objectives, milestones and timeframes and are well suited to funding through grants.



Supporting career development

Forging a career in health and medical research requires dedication and commitment, and the financial rewards can be small. Researchers undertake many years of study and constantly have to develop their techniques, knowledge and networks.

Following completion of their studies, early to mid-career researchers need to be able to fund their research. Without a track record of previous research and publications, it can be difficult to attract government funding.

Even if they have secured a paid research position, researchers often need financial support to attend or present at conferences and scientific meetings in Australia and overseas, and to fund the costs of materials for experiments.

Support can be provided in the form of Fellowships (an income for a fixed period) or as a contribution to specific costs and expenses.

Universities and medical research institutes provide a range of opportunities to support the work of their early to mid career researchers.

Opportunity to develop research expertise

Dr Traini is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney, based at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research. Her research investigates how to formulate drugs so that they can be administered by inhalation.

Receiving support from the Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundations early in her career offered her the perfect opportunity to build her own niche area of research, boost her independent studies, become competitive for government grants and increase her international reputation.

Learn more about the Ramaciotti Foundations at www.perpetual.com.au/ramaciotti



Funding research into a specific disease or condition

You may wish to support research into a specific disease or condition. This may be research into the search for a cure, improved diagnosis or better ways to support individuals with the condition (and their families). Many organisations have a research focus on a particular condition or disease.

Funding equipment, infrastructure & capital works

In order to generate successful outcomes, health and medical research is reliant on appropriate workspaces and equipment. A single significant item of equipment will rarely be used by one researcher alone, with different researchers sharing equipment and technology.

Research laboratories often require total or partial refits to meet updated workplace safety regulations and to provide safe working environments for researchers. In recent years, we have seen a growing need for construction of new, dedicated research facilities. Funding equipment, infrastructure and capital works is a way to make a tangible lasting contribution to health and medical research.

Supporting innovation

Innovative and ‘niche’ research projects often have difficulty in attracting support from established government programs or commercial investors. Governments tend to want to fund ‘safe’ research and corporations usually want some certainty that they will get a return on their investment. Really revolutionary ideas are at first often seen as too high risk or unconventional to attract funding. As a consequence, some of the greatest scientific breakthroughs have occurred as a result of research conducted with support from donations and bequests. Many universities and research institutes have projects of this sort for which they are seeking philanthropic funding.

Australian innovation



The Australian bionic ear

The Australian Bionic Ear is the result of pioneering research commenced by Professor Graeme Clark in the late 1960s at the University of Melbourne's Department of Otolaryngology.

At the time, scientists said that a successful bionic ear or cochlear implant was not possible in the foreseeable future. This made it difficult to get funding, and Professor Clark and his staff had to seek donations from the general public to establish the work.

In 1978, the prototype multiple-electrode Bionic Ear was implanted in the first adult at The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital by Graeme Clark and his colleagues. The team discovered how to analyse the complex speech signal and present it as electrical stimulation to the hearing nerve so that speech could be understood. In addition, they were successful in engineering a speech processor small enough for the patient to wear.

As a result of this ground-breaking research, the Australian Government awarded a public interest grant that helped the Australian firm Cochlear Limited to develop the Bionic Ear industrially. In 1982, the first device for clinical trial world-wide was implanted at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. The international trial established that it was safe and effective and it was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1985, the first multiple-electrode Bionic Ear to be approved by any world regulatory body.

In 1985, the team implanted the first child with a multiple-electrode Bionic Ear. This Bionic Ear was developed industrially by Cochlear Limited in co-operation with The University of Melbourne and The Bionic Ear Institute. This was the start of a world-wide trial for the Bionic Ear and its use in young children.

It was approved as safe and effective for use in children born deaf or developing hearing difficulties early in life by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1990. It has also been approved by the Chinese and other world regulatory bodies. It is considered by many to be the first major advance in helping profoundly deaf children to communicate in the last 200 years since signing was established at the Paris Deaf School.

The Australian Bionic Ear has now been implanted in hundreds of thousands of people in over 100 countries. Learn more at Cochlear's History of Innovation, www.cochlear.com





Getting started

There is a range of factors that need to be considered when making a grant to health and medical research. Unsurprisingly, many of these are the same considerations that apply to philanthropic grants for all causes. Apart from deciding the type of research you want to support it is important to be clear about the total amount you will make available as a grant. How long do you want to commit for? Do you want to make a one-off grant or do you want to set up a program of grants paid in instalments over a number of years?

The following is a step by step guide to things to consider when making a grant to health and medical research.

Determine eligibility and other legal requirements

Review your trust deed, will or constitutional documents to clarify any restrictions such as geographic location, size of grant, duration of grant, or co-funding arrangements. You may wish to seek legal advice when determining your eligibility and legal requirements.

Using an ‘opt out’ approach can make it easier to shortlist your range of choices by eliminating options that don’t fit with the administrative, legal or institutional framework in which you make your decisions. Start by eliminating projects in areas that are outside the scope of your trust or foundation.

Define your area of interest and identify priorities

Determine the areas and issues that are of interest to you. For example, you may wish to focus on a specific disease or population group. Narrow down your areas of interest to come up with a priority list. You will need to make a judgment, which is likely to be subjective, about the relative worth of various factors such as rareness, impact, burden of disease, stage of life, disease type affected population (women, children, indigenous), availability of other funding sources, and type of research (e.g. basic or applied). You also need to consider whether you want to fund people, projects or equipment.

The Motivations Worksheet can assist with this task.

For philanthropists and grant makers without an exclusive passion or legal obligation to give elsewhere, health and medical research can provide a logical destination for giving that will have a clear community benefit

How much?

There are no hard and fast rules about how much you should give. Every gift or grant will be gratefully received and can make a real difference. For example, a gift of $500 may allow a project to proceed that otherwise might not get off the ground.

Some grant makers prefer to keep their grants fairly small so they can support a number of research causes. Others choose to give on a larger scale, perhaps by participating in jointly funded programs with medical research institutes or universities, mainstream funding agencies, or other trusts or foundations.

Guide to Giving These figures are a base guide only	
Professional chair (in perpetuity)	$2 million
Professional chair (salary support)	$200,000 per year
Honours scholarship	From $5,000
PhD scholarship	$20,000 per year over 3 years
Conference attendance/travel	From $5,000
Laboratory establishment	$500,000 per year
Research equipment	$5,000 - $5 million
Capital works	$5 million plus
Research project	$75,000 - $500,000 (or more)
Research program*	$1 million plus
Website development	From $20,000
Resource materails**	From $2,000 - $500,000

* Research programs may combine several research projects over a number of years
** Resource materials may include publication in peer-review online journals, presentations



Which approach?

There are essentially two different approaches that you can take to making grants to health and medical research.

The first is more suited to a single grant and/or to developing a relationship with a single organisation that is to be the recipient of your ongoing philanthropy· your 'research partner'. It involves some significant effort in the initial phases but can be relatively simple to maintain. It is a good way to provide support for the overall research of an organisation or researcher, although it can also be more targeted to a specific project or area.

The second approach is to develop a formal grant program. This can be done through an open application process or by inviting applications from selected research organisations working in your area of interest. This requires more time and effort but can be a useful process for a trust, foundation or company with a significant resource base and/or a number of grant programs. It enables targeted funding of specific research that aligns with your priorities and objectives at more than one research organisation.

Each of these approaches has its advantages. Further information is provided about each in the following sections.

APPROACH 1

Find a research partner

The starting premise to this approach is that there are many ways in which your money could be used effectively in support of health and medical research in the areas that you have identified as important to you. Rather than focusing on the individual research, the objective is to identify one or more universities or research institutions ('organisations') that meet your criteria, that you will be happy to support, and with which you can develop a relationship.

In addition to the 'hard' criteria such as the quality and extent of their work, relevant criteria are likely to include:

- the organisation's reputation and standing in the scientific community and the community generally;
- organisational culture and values;
- the responsiveness of the organisation to your initial approach to them;
- the organisation's ability to explain to you not only what they are going to do with a grant from you but why the research your grant will support is important; and
- whether the organisation can provide meaningful feedback and reporting on the acquittal of your grant.

In short, it is about your ability to develop a trusting, productive relationship with the organisation as much as it is about funding a specific research project that meets your own objectives. Do you like the organisation and the people there that you deal with, and are you confident they will use your funds effectively? Research Australia suggests a two stage approach to identifying a research partner.

Stage One

Develop your eligibility and other criteria for making a grant. Determine what motivates you. Think carefully about the amount of grant you want to make, the type of research you want to support (a particular disease, early career support, basic research or drug development.

Writing a list of your 'hard' and 'soft' criteria can assist you at this stage to be clear about what you are looking for.

Identifying potential grant recipients

Research Australia has a database of its member organisations that undertake health and medical research. This database can be searched by the types of research the organisations undertake and the diseases or conditions they are seeking to address. This database can be searched by following this link researchaustralia.org/search-directory

The search results provide a description of the organisation and a link to the organisation's own website where you can obtain more information, including how you can make a grant. Alternatively you can conduct you own internet search.

Use information about the organisations from their websites to develop a shortlist based on the alignment of their areas of research, size, location etc. with your criteria. Don't forget to get confirmation of their Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, and that this is the type of organisation you can donate to without jeopardising the DGR status of your own foundation or trust. Information about DGR status is usually available on the organisation's own website and can be verified at abr.business.gov.au

Stage Two

Identify the appropriate individual within each organisation (Trusts Manager or similar) and make initial phone or email contact to discuss the prospect of you making a grant. Ask them about what they see as their key areas of need. Talk to them about the potential quantum, likely timing, and your criteria; invite them to tell you how they would use the funds. The initial contact should lead to a written proposal from the organisation.

Follow up receipt of the proposal with a meeting with relevant staff from the organisation. Use the meeting to further discuss the proposal provided by the organisation and to evaluate the organisation and its staff. It may take time to develop a proposal that is mutually satisfactory.

What other information do you need from them?

Do they understand what you are trying to achieve with the grant and what is important to you?

Do you think you can work with them?

Are you confident they can make good use of your money?

You can use your list of criteria to give the organisation a score for each one. Make a decision based on all your criteria, recognising that these criteria may have changed based on your conversations with research organisations about the work they are doing or would like to do, and what their priorities are.

In addition to your criteria some of the questions you might want to consider are:

- What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?
- Is the research being undertaken elsewhere?
- How does this research fit with research currently being undertaken nationally and internationally?
- Is the research an area in which there is little research activity currently occurring?
- Is the research difficult to obtain funding for? If so, why?
- Is the research being conducted as part of a team or collaboration?
- Where else is funding coming from?
- What will be the measures of success?
- How will the community benefit from this research?
- How will the results of the project be disseminated and/or lessons learnt?
- What plans do you have to share the results of your work with others? How will other organisations benefit from the research findings?
- How will the project be sustained after the grant funds have been expended?
- Does the project adhere to relevant regulatory and legislative arrangements?
- Has the research project satisfied ethics approvals processes? If not, identify the process that will be followed.

When you have made a decision you can proceed to make a grant. This can be as simple as making the payment accompanied by an exchange of letters. An agreement or letter of understanding may include:

- How and when your organisation will make the funds available (eg. single amount or in instalments);
- How the funds will be applied;
- Reporting requirements and/or milestones that must be met before instalments will be paid; and
- Acknowledgements. This section will specify how you would like to be acknowledged or whether you prefer not to receive any form of acknowledgement. Most grant recipients are willing to acknowledge support in publications, presentations, annual reports, websites and other material.

Alternatively you may want to use a more formal agreement.

APPROACH 2
Establish a grant program

Establishing a grant program involves determining your own research goals and objectives beforehand and then finding individuals and/or organisations that are able to undertake the type of research that meets your criteria.

The clearer you are about the terms and conditions of your grant the more likely you are to receive only applications that are relevant and which address the criteria you have established. This makes your task of assessing applications as straightforward, efficient, and objective as possible.

It requires a more methodical and objective process than the first approach, and enables you to be more specific about what you will fund, but it also requires more resources and expertise.

Preparation

You will need to identify the amount of grant you want to make, the type of research you want to support (for example a particular disease, early career support, basic research or drug development). Determine what motivates you. The worksheet can assist with this.

What are researchers identifying as the need? You might want to contact some research organisations and ask them about where they think the greatest need is. Research Australia has a database of its members that undertake health and medical research at www.researchaustralia.org/search-directory or you can conduct you own internet search. This process can help you refine your ideas.

Schedule

Before proceeding further it is advisable to set up a schedule for the grant process. Items to include are:

a. making the call for applications;

b. the closing date for applications;

c. the selection process;

d. the date for notification to successful and unsuccessful applicants; and

e. the date grants will be made.

Remember to allow time for seeking further information from applicants, for getting the necessary internal approvals and for any investment instructions that need to be provided to ensure that sufficient liquid funds will be available to make the grant disbursements.

Actions

The following actions are covered in more details in the following sections:

1. Determine the process for assessing applications.
2. Develop an application form and grant guidelines.
3. Draw up a standard agreement or less formal letter of agreement. Include details of how you want your gift to be acknowledged. You will also need a notice to unsuccessful applicants.
4. Develop a reporting template. What kind of reports will you require from grant recipients to ensure that the activities you are funding achieve their objectives and outcomes? Developing a reporting format will ensure that reports from grant recipients contain the information you need, are consistent in format and easy to evaluate.
5. Ensure that your reporting requirements appropriately reflect the level of funding awarded, and that reporting arrangements are user-friendly for not-for-profit and non-government grant seekers.

Note: Grant seekers may want information about the reporting requirements before they make an application. This will help them assess whether the reporting requirements are acceptable and ultimately whether they will make an application.

The application process

Having determined your eligibility requirements and priority area(s) of interest, you can now proceed to determining how you will receive applications and proposals.

Some grant makers adopt a two-stage process that involves an initial call for expressions of interest, with formal applications to follow by invitation. This process works best where you are prepared to fund research in a relatively broad area and are likely to receive a large number of applications. The initial call for expressions of interest seeks comparatively high level information against a few criteria and is used to create a shortlist of individuals or organisations who will be asked to provide more detailed information.

Others use a single stage application process that reflects their identified priorities and specific areas of interest. Applicants are required to provide all information with the initial application.

Another consideration is whether you will make a general or targeted call for applications.

If you are making a general call for applications you will need to advertise publicly in appropriate national, local and specialist media, and/or through your own networks. It may be worth issuing a media release at the same time to maximise coverage and interest. Research Australia can assist by circulating a 'Grant Alert' to its membership and followers.

A targeted call for applications is made to individuals or organisations that you have identified as potential recipients. The list of potential recipients can be established by working through your existing networks and personal connections to identify suitable researchers or research activities, or you can undertake some research to identify relevant researchers. Research Australia's database of research organisations can assist with this task. http://www.researchaustralia.org/search-directory

In either case, you will want to communicate deadlines and closing dates prominently.

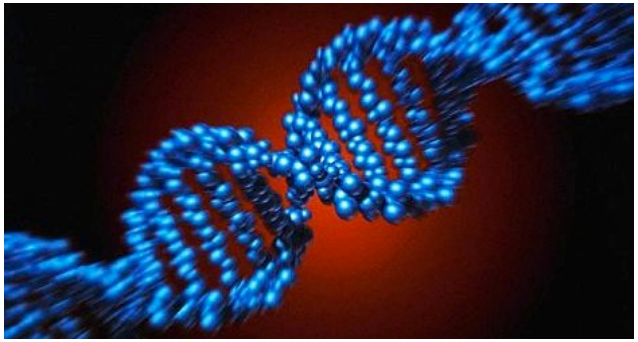
A checklist for the grant making process is available for download here.

The application form

Think carefully about the kind of information you require from grant seekers in order to make informed decisions. Start with your trust's or foundation's governing rules. Do they impose any specific requirement on grants?

Separate the questions you will ask to satisfy legal, taxation and organisational requirements from those you will ask about the research program and its impact. Identify the responses to questions that will automatically disqualify an application; for example the organisation does not have the appropriate DGR status.

What information is important to you? Do you want a detailed explanation of the science and the track records of the chief researchers involved? Is collaboration with other researchers and organisations important? A list of potential questions and information to be included in an application form is provided here.







Guidelines

You will need to develop guidelines to accompany the application form which set out the type of health and medical research that you will fund and the eligibility and selection criteria. The Guidelines should also outline the key dates, such as when applicants will be notified and when you expect the grants to be made, and specify the reporting and grant acquittal requirements for successful applicants.

Provide clear directions about the types of responses you want to your questions. Researchers naturally have a tendency to use technical terms and specific terminology. This is fine if the individuals assessing the applications are experts in the field, but not otherwise. You can provide guidance to the applicant about the types for responses they should provide. For example:

'In providing information about your research, please assume that applications will be assessed by individuals with general medical knowledge and an understanding of condition X, but not expert knowledge of specific research areas or disease mechanisms.'

Electronic forms

The health and medical research sector is accustomed to making online applications and using electronic systems.

Consider using technology to make your application process more efficient and accessible to grant seekers. Depending on the resources available to you and the level of sophistication of your organisation, this can be as simple as providing application forms electronically in Word format for fields to be completed, or electronic forms that can be completed and submitted on line. You may wish to create a website or webpage specifically for grant seekers. The website or webpage can contain downloadable application guidelines, frequently asked questions, contact details, and an online or downloadable application form. Providing this information via your website can reduce the administrative burden of posting out materials and dealing with telephone enquiries.

Useful tips for electronic forms

- Develop streamlined application and reporting forms for small grants. If you expect some applicants to make repeat applications, store their data so they only have to provide updates rather than resubmitting full details each time.
- Test your online application system carefully before going live. Ensure that applicants can download files and that you can upload their application and attachments. Applicants should be able to cut and paste and print their applications, as well as save them and return to them later.



Assessing applications

Once applications have closed, you will need to review them to ensure they meet your requirements for eligibility, quality, risk and relevance to your priority area of interest.

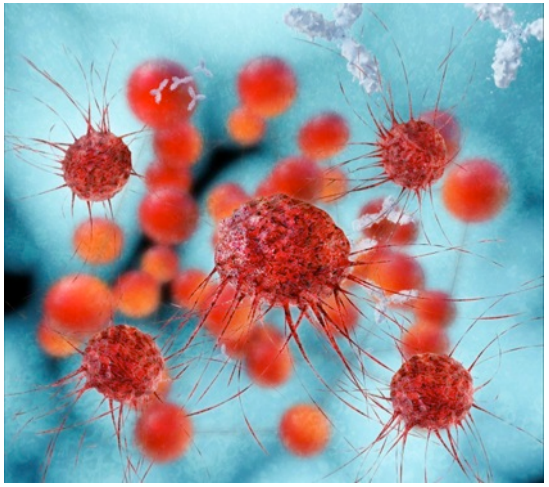
Who will be responsible for assessing applications? What criteria will they use for assessing applications, and how will these be rated and compared? Will you rely solely on the applications or do you want to interview candidates? (This can be particularly useful where you want to fund individual researchers, with a fellowship for example.) These questions need to be resolved before you make a call for applications and design your application form to ensure that you capture the information you will need to make a decision.

Depending on the skills and knowledge available within your own organisation you may choose (or need) to establish a scientific advisory group. This may be driven by the size of the grants you are considering, the type of projects that you wish to fund, and the information you have sought from applicants.

Finalise your decision

A shortlist of applications can now be prepared for discussion and final selection by your trustees or board. This decision can be confidently taken with an understanding of how the research fits with your organisation's objectives and wishes, with confidence that the research will reflect good science, and knowing that it has the potential to make a positive impact on people's lives.





Notification to successful applicants

A standard template can be used to notify successful applicants. This forms the basis of the understanding between grant maker and grant recipient and should cover all the relevant conditions.

An agreement or letter of understanding may include:

- How and when your grant seeking organisation will make the funds available (eg. single amount or in instalments);
- How the funds will be applied;
- Reporting requirements and/or milestones that must be met before instalments will be paid; and
- Acknowledgements. This section will specify how you would like to be acknowledged or whether you prefer not to receive any form of acknowledgement. Most grant recipients are willing to acknowledge support in publications, presentations, annual reports, websites and other material.

You may wish to consider including reverse promotional activities whereby recipients forward contributions and updates for inclusion in your organisation's newsletters and reports. These inclusions promote public recognition and awareness of the research. However, you cannot make this a condition of the agreement without running the risk of incurring GST. See the Australian Taxation Office, www.ato.gov.au, for up to date information on grants and GST implications.

A sample Grant Agreement is provided here.

Notifying other applicants

Once you have notified the successful applicant(s), you will also need to advise the unsuccessful applicants that you will not be supporting their research at this time.

Be aware that some unsuccessful applicants may seek feedback to help them structure their proposals in future funding rounds. Be prepared to provide reasons for why the application was unsuccessful, and advise them whether you would be prepared to consider an application from them at a future date.

USEFUL TIP: Don't notify unsuccessful applicants until the successful applicant has formally accepted the grant.



Reporting and acquittal

Where your gift is substantial or carries specifications regarding reporting and evaluation, you will need to determine how you will receive and review reports from the grant recipient. This is particularly relevant where the grant is to be paid in more than one instalment subject to specific performance criteria being met.

You may wish to receive reports in a standard format that are reviewed and accepted by an officer of the trust/foundation. Reports deemed 'unsatisfactory' may need to be reviewed by the trustees. A process for responding to unsatisfactory reports needs to be made clear to grant seekers.

A sample Acquittal Report is provided here. Ideally, your acquittal report should be made available as part of the grant application process, and the agreement will specify satisfactory reporting as a condition of funding.

Be prepared to discuss reporting requirements with grant recipients and to change the requirements where mutual agreement can be reached. For example, some flexibility about reporting periods and the format of financial reporting to accommodate accounting software used by the grant recipient may enable you to meet your objectives without imposing an additional unnecessary burden on them.

In specifying performance requirements it is important to appreciate that research outcomes cannot be guaranteed in advance. An experiment can be conducted successfully without yielding the expected outcome, and your funding should be provided on the understanding that the research finding may not result in the outcomes you and the researcher expect. Sometimes it is useful to know what doesn't work as well as what will work. Even unexpected outcomes may advance the body of knowledge about a disease and bring a cure a step closer.

Review

It is important to review the process you have followed. Did it meet your expectations? Was it more or less work than you anticipated? What would you do differently with hindsight? Talk to grant seekers who have applied successfully and unsuccessfully, and to those you expected to apply but did not. Use this feedback to improve your processes and communication.

Raising awareness of the research you support

Public awareness of philanthropic gifts to health and medical research can help generate support from other philanthropic, industry and government sources.

Researchers rely strongly on publication in peer-reviewed journals to communicate their findings to the scientific community. As a grant maker, you may be able to help raise awareness of their research work more widely and perhaps inspire other philanthropists to become involved.

You can do this by:

- Letting your connections know about the research work you are supporting
- Contacting the media with good news stories from the research
- Proudly acknowledging your support of the project
- Including information about the research on your website and in other publications such as employee newsletters and annual reports
- Hosting events that enable the key researchers to present their work to your stakeholders.

USEFUL TIP: Before you go ahead with any communications or events, contact the institute or organisation receiving your support. Liaise closely with them to approve media releases, web content, annual reports and other communications. This will ensure that your communication activities accurately reflect the research you are supporting.



Photo: Actor Samuel Johnson has raised more than $1.8 million for breast cancer research as at July 2014 by riding more than 15,000 km around Australia on a unicycle www.loveyoursister.org



For information please refer to these other resources:

- What is Health and Medical Research?
- Why Support Health and Medical Research?

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RESEARCH AUSTRALIA
AN ALLIANCE FOR DISCOVERIES IN HEALTH