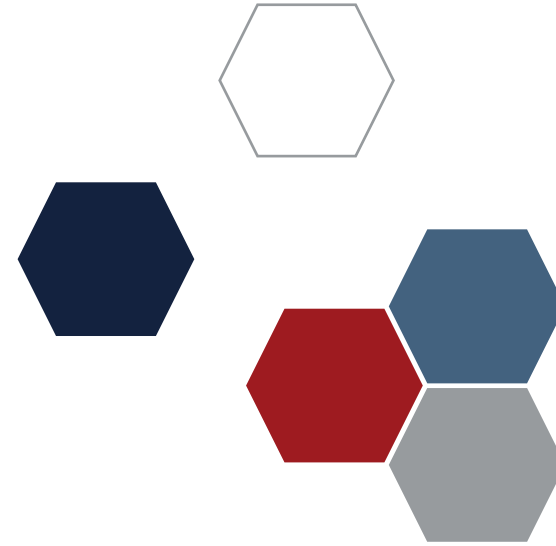




Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care



Medical Research Future Fund

Bolton Clarke Research Institute – National Symposium
The Medical Research Future Fund and Research Translation
22 March 2024

Ms Natasha Ploenges, CEO, Health and Medical Research Office
Dr Ragini Singh, Director, Policy and Support

Overview

1. About the MRFF
2. MRFF – funding research translation
3. MRFF – changes over time
4. Keeping connected

About the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

The MRFF is established under legislation (MRFF Act 2015)
with the objective:

“to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians”

\$6.3 billion over 10 years

\$650 million per annum

21 initiatives

\$\$\$

\$20 billion in capital base came from health system savings; expectation that research would provide returns to the public by improving care and outcomes (currently at \$22 billion)

Guidance documents and the MRFF

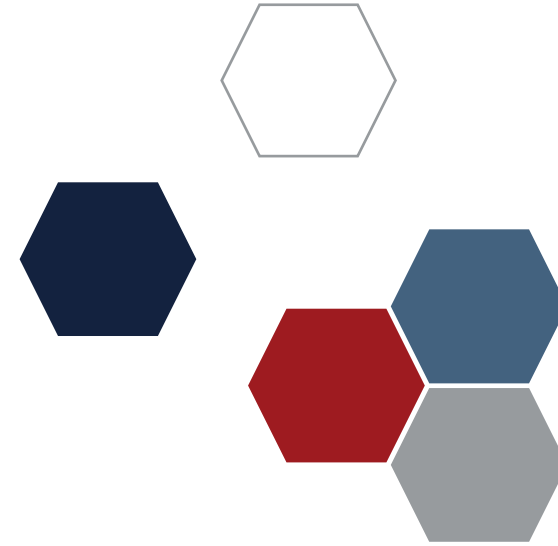


Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015



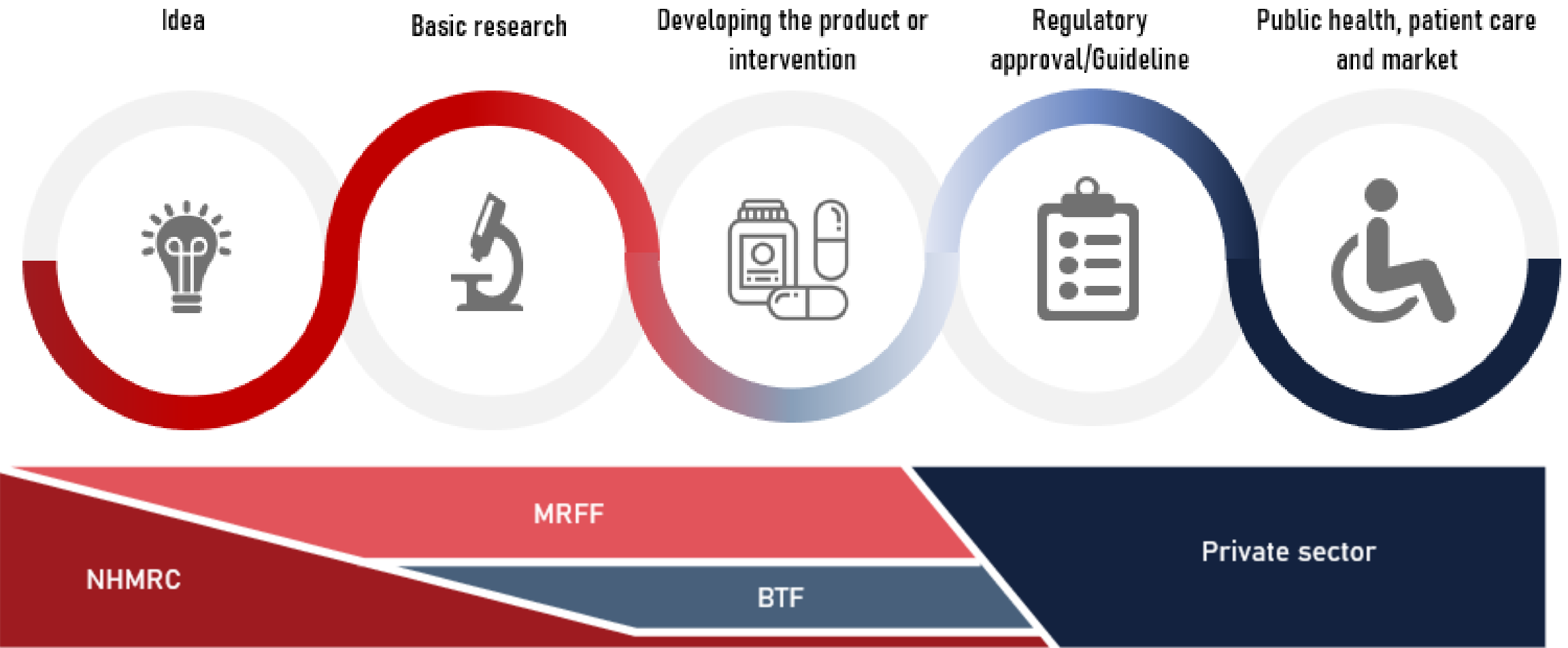
Key features of the MRFF





MRFF – Funding Research Translation

Where do the MRFF and NHMRC focus?



MRFF 2nd 10-year investment plan – 4 Themes, 21 Initiatives



\$6.3 billion investment over 10 years

Relationship between Priorities and Initiatives

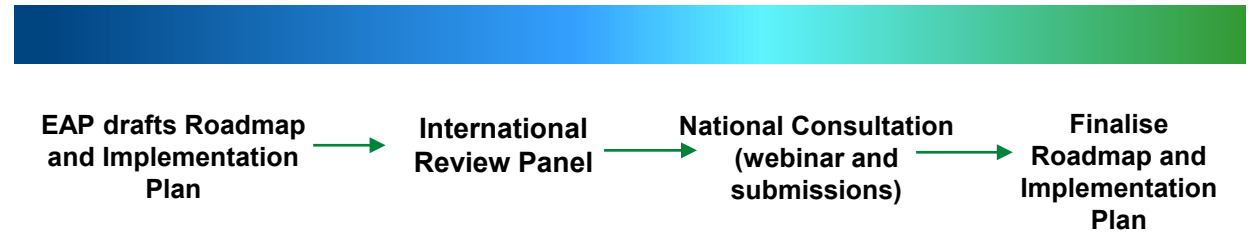
2022-2024 priorities	21 MRFF initiatives
Consumer-Driven Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research Preventive and Public Health Research
Research Infrastructure and Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Critical Research Infrastructure Research Data Infrastructure Clinician Researchers Researcher Exchange and Development within Industry
Translation and Commercialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Commercialisation Frontier Health and Medical Research Genomics Health Futures Mission Stem Cell Therapies Mission Cardiovascular Health Mission Rapid Applied Research Translation Early to Mid-Career Researchers Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission
Comparative Effectiveness Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical Trials Activity Preventive and Public Health Research
Preventive and Public Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventive and Public Health Research Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission Cardiovascular Health Mission
Primary Care Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Care Research
Health and Medical Researcher Capacity and Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinician Researchers Early to Mid-Career Researchers Researcher Exchange and Development within Industry
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Health Research Fund
Priority Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission Clinical Trials Activity Australian Brain Cancer Mission Traumatic Brain Injury Mission Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission
Antimicrobial Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Health
Global Health and Health Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Health
Health Impacts from Environmental Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research
Data, Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Critical Research Infrastructure Research Data Infrastructure

- Many MRFF Initiatives align with the ‘Translation and Commercialisation’ priority

- But more broadly, **all** MRFF grant opportunities encourage partnering – how might a company/industry be able to partner with other organisations/researchers to, e.g. improve the potential research impact and translation into practice?

MRFF – Missions

 <h2>Research Missions</h2> <h3>\$1.5 billion</h3>	
<p>Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care, \$122.5 m</p>	<p>Indigenous Health, \$87.5 m</p>



- **Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care** supports research that will enable older Australians to:
 - maintain their health and quality of life as they age
 - live independently for longer
 - access quality care when they need it
- 2024 Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Grant Opportunity is currently open for application till 7 August 2024
- \$19m available for research grants of up to \$3m, aligned with two priority areas (health and medical researcher capacity and capability and priority populations).
- **Indigenous Health Research Fund** supports Indigenous-led research to tackle health issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It aims to:
 - improve health outcomes and
 - close the gap on health mortality and morbidity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 2024 Indigenous Health Research Grant Opportunity is currently open for application till 24 July 2024
- \$13.4m available for research grants of up to \$5m, aligned with two priority areas (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Preventative and Public Health Research).

MRFF – Initiatives



Clinician Researchers Initiative

- Empowering groups of clinicians to identify issues in their area of expertise and come up with solutions
- 2020 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health opened and closed in 2021(\$32m), funded 14 grants
Supported clinicians to validate and implement new approaches for improving the quality and consistency of patient care
- 2022 Clinician Researchers: Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health closed in 2022 (\$20.3 m), funded 15 grants
Supported these professionals to address the needs of their patient populations and build research capacity
- 2023 Clinician Researchers: Applied Research in Health closed in 2023 (\$45.5m), funded 33 grants
Supported specialists to improve the quality of health care, practice and systems by undertaking applied research in health care or by effective implementation of evidence-based practice in health care.

MRFF – Initiatives



Translation
\$2.1 billion

Preventive and Public Health
Research, \$596.5 m

National Critical Research
Infrastructure, \$650 m

Medical Research Commercialisation,
\$450 m

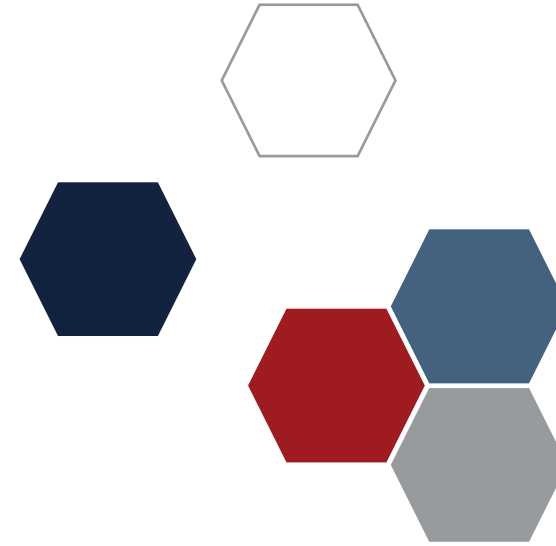
**Rapid Applied Research Translation,
\$228 m**

Primary Health Care Research,
\$100 m

Research Data Infrastructure,
\$100 m

Rapid Applied Research Translation (RART) Initiative

- Supporting transformative translational research, so patients can benefit from better quality of care.
- RART was evaluated in 2020, findings helped with development of the 2020 RART grant opportunity
- **2020 RART** closed in 2021 and funded 9 projects (\$62 m), including \$24.6m towards grants in the rural stream
- **2022 RART** closed in 2023 and funded 9 grants (\$36.2m) - two streams focussed on implementation of substantial improvements to health care and/or health system effectiveness, and one on evaluation of 2022 and 2020 RART projects



MRFF – Changes over time

MRFF- changes over time

- Strengthened focus on consumer involvement and priority populations
- Revised **assessment criteria** (40% project impact, 40% project methodology, 30% capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project, overall value and risk (unweighted))
- **Competitive** (rather than targeted) funding, with grant applications open for longer (**4-6 months**) where possible
- **Grant Opportunity Forecast Calendar** - [MRFF grant opportunities calendar | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- **Increasing stakeholder engagement and communication activities**
 - MRFF CEO webinars, MRFF RAO webinars, topic-specific webinars, fortnightly newsletter
 - Implemented 'State Leads' at Director level - Primary contact for stakeholders in that state/territory
 - Engaging with Research Administration Officers on post-award management or active grants
- **Continue to publish evaluation reports**
 - Review of the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission 2021-22
 - Evaluation of the MRFF Clinical Trials Activity 2021-2023
 - Review of the MRFF Australian Brain Cancer Mission 2021-2023

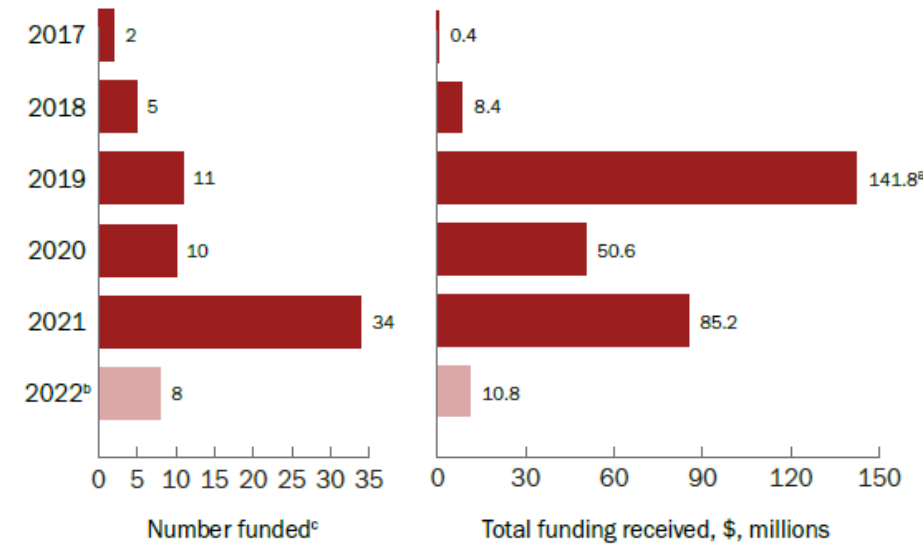
MRFF data available

MRFF Financial Assistance Report (May 2023)

- MRFF financial assistance consistency with 2020–2022 priorities
- **Funded rates**
- MRFF policies, performance and assurance activities
- MRFF highlights and research snapshots...and more

MRFF Report on Funding for Rural, Regional and Remote Health Research (August 2023)

- **MRFF investment into RRR focused projects has increased since inception**
- A rural focus has been embedded in a number of grant opportunities (through streams and eligibility criteria)
- Increased funds have been awarded to projects that are undertaken in rural areas, and to projects that address health topics of significance to rural areas of Australia



^a The total for 2019 includes the 2019 Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure grant opportunity (\$124.4 million awarded).
^b The dataset for 2022 is not yet complete and does not include data for grant opportunities that opened in 2022 and for which outcomes are not yet available or have not been announced.
^c The number of projects funded includes grants with payments that commenced before or on 30 December 2022.

MRFF Coronavirus Research Response Report (May 2023)

\$130 million total funding
 80 projects funded
 69 through competitive processes

- awarded through 24 grant opportunities
- across all 4 broad research areas and 20 fields of research
- with similar funded rates between males and females

Leading to:

- the first Australian-made COVID-19 mRNA vaccine
- the world's first 'living guidelines'
- new ways to vaccinate against, diagnose and treat COVID-19
- new ways to perform clinical trials

MRFF Report on Gender Data for Grant Opportunities (August 2023)

- **Overall MRFF funded rates for women and men are similar**, for both leading Chief Investigators (20.3% for women and 21.5% for men) and all Chief Investigators (25.7% for women and 25.7% for men)

Keep connected



Subscribe to MRFF News

www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-news



Nominate for an MRFF Grant Assessment Committee (GAC)

www.nhmrc.gov.au/2021-22-medical-research-future-fund-mrff-grant-opportunities



Register for MRFF grants opportunities

www.grants.gov.au/



Check out the grant opportunity forecast

www.health.gov.au/our-work/medical-research-future-fund/mrff-grant-opportunities-calendar



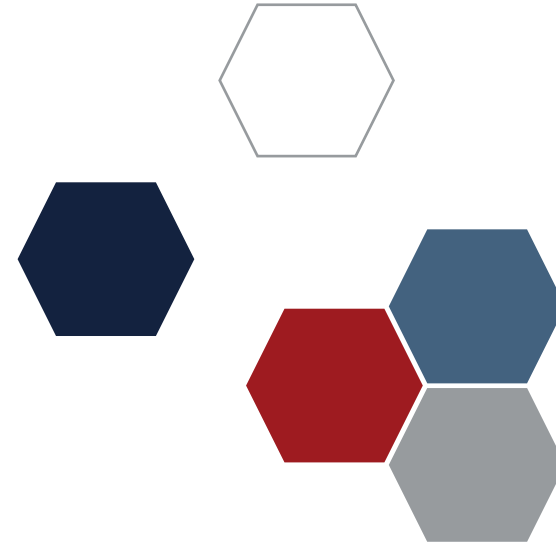
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Send any questions to

MRFF@health.gov.au



Questions?