



NEW INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT (NIRIS) AWARD 2009

GUIDELINES TO APPLICANTS

1.0 Background

Over the past eight years (2001-2008) the State Government has provided a total of \$735,000 for several one-off "New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support (NIRIS) Awards" for outstanding new independent medical and health researchers in WA. The purpose of the awards is to assist these researchers to develop their independent career, help to meet the infrastructure costs associated with their research programs, provide some tangible recognition of their achievements, and to generally support them in their research activities in WA.

The Department of Health now invites applications for the ninth round of NIRIS Awards of up to \$10,000 each (excluding GST) for a period of twelve months commencing in calendar year 2009.

2.0 Eligibility

- 2.1 The emphasis of the scheme is to provide infrastructure support for outstanding new independent medical and health researchers in Western Australia.
- 2.2 Expenditure of infrastructure grants must occur within Western Australia.
- 2.3 Eligibility for a "New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award" is based on applicants having:
 - a) been awarded a Doctorate or other appropriate tertiary qualifications within the preceding **eight** years or equivalent (career breaks will be assessed on a case by basis), preferably in a health and medical research related field;
 - b) been an active independent researcher over a maximum period of **eight** years full time or equivalent (career breaks will be assessed on a case by case basis);
 - c) sufficient tenure at a University, Research Institute, Teaching Hospital or other hospital in WA, as approved by the assessment panel, to allow completion of their research project(s);
 - d) a demonstrated reputation as an outstanding new independent researcher, through various achievements, including principal or first authorship of high quality publications, principal or chief investigator on research grants, invited conference presentations, prizes and awards, patents etc;
 - e) principal or chief investigator status on a current national or international competitive peer reviewed grant in the field of medical and health research;

- f) not received any previous grants under the Medical and Health Research Infrastructure Fund or NIRIS Scheme;
- g) Australian citizenship or holding Australian permanent residency.

NOTE:

- a) Applicants not possessing an Australian PhD must provide evidence confirming their qualification is equivalent (i.e. letter from university/academic institution/DEEWR);
- b) Researchers holding full professorial positions are deemed ineligible for this Award.

3.0 Selection process

- 3.1 The selection of successful applicants will be based on competitive merit and assessment against the eligibility criteria (Section 2.0).
- 3.2 Applications will be assessed by a panel including at least two assessors representing the State's medical and health research community.
- 3.3 The recommendations of the panel will be referred to the Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Health for approval.
- 3.4 The Chief Medical Officer's decision will be final with no process of appeal. Correspondence in respect to the selection process – written or verbal – will not be entered into with applicants after the application date has closed.

4.0 Level of funding for eligible applicants

NIRIS Awards of up to \$10,000 each will be awarded to outstanding new independent medical and health researchers in Western Australia in 2009. Awards provided to the host institution for administration will include an additional provision for GST.

5.0 Definition of infrastructure

Medical research infrastructure is usually defined as an institution's resources essential for supporting quality projects or programs in a particular field, including indirect costs associated with particular projects or programs, but excluding direct costs, which should be covered by research grants.

- 5.1 Infrastructure costs include the following items:
 - Animal holding and breeding facilities
 - Research equipment
 - Vehicles
 - Salaries of research support and administrative support staff (including salary on-costs¹) to provide general support for activity in a given area, rather than to work for a specific research project

¹ *Salary on-costs include payroll tax, superannuation, leave loading, workers' compensation and insurance, and shift allowance/penalty payments.*

- Common services - telephone, fax, copying, postage, stationery, printing, computer network, accounts system
- Computers
- Provisional patents
- Lighting and power
- Cleaning and maintenance
- Workshops
- Rates and charges
- Minor capital works

5.2 The following items are **not** regarded as infrastructure costs:

- Salaries and salary on-costs² of teaching and research staff (including the cost of 'buying time' to free such staff to do some more research)
- Salaries and salary on-costs of staff supporting research at the institutional level (including Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Research Grant Officer, Director of an Institute)
- Postgraduate research student stipend
- Travel costs directly related to individual projects (including fares, accommodation, travel allowances)
- Project management costs

5.3 The GST payable on goods or services purchased by a researcher using a NIRIS Award will not be funded by the Department of Health. Individual researchers in organisations registered for the GST will be required to fund that component themselves and claim it back as an input tax credit.

6.0 Responsible Officer

6.1 The host institution shall notify the Department of Health on the application form of the name and title of the officer of the institution whom it appoints "Responsible Officer" for the purposes of administering the infrastructure grant.

6.2 All correspondence and reports relating to the infrastructure grant shall be made through the "Responsible Officer" and all documents signed by the "Responsible Officer" shall be binding on the host institution.

6.3 The "Responsible Officer" shall supply all necessary information reasonably requested by the Department of Health in relation to the purposes for which the infrastructure grant is used.

7.0 Institution to provide certain resources

7.1 In accepting the administration of a NIRIS Award, the host institution undertakes to provide the facilities and services necessary for the efficient conduct of the research and further agrees to meet the normal overhead expenses and institutional maintenance charges.

²Salary on-costs include payroll tax, superannuation, leave loading, workers' compensation and insurance, and shift allowance/penalty payments.

7.2 The relevant Head of Department of a host institution must certify that facilities and services will be available to the applicant and that the institution endorses the application and is willing to administer the NIRIS Award.

8.0 Certification of expenditure

8.1 The NIRIS Award expenditure is subject to the Financial Management Act 2006.

8.2 “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award” funds shall be spent as specified by the recipient in accordance with the grant offer, and shall not be used to meet direct costs which should be covered by other research grants or the host institution.

8.3 The Responsible Officer shall, no later than 6 months after the close of the calendar year in which the award was provided, issue a report on the outcome of the “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award” and shall set out:

- a) The outcomes arising from the awarding of the “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award”, including research performed and publications; and
- b) An audited statement of the acquittal of the expenditure or commitment in accordance with the conditions of the Award.

8.4 The recipient must endeavour to spend all of the grant funds within 6 months of the close of the calendar year in which it was provided, and then provide an acquittal statement annually until the funds are expended. The applicant must advise the Department of Health of their intention to carry over any funds before the report is due.

9.0 Awards to Individual Researchers in Organisations Registered for the GST

The NIRIS Award complies with the requirements of the tax system.

9.1 “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Awards” paid to individual researchers in organisations registered for the GST will be increased by 10% (**GST inclusive** amount) to accommodate the GST payable on each infrastructure grant.

9.2 The **GST inclusive** amount will be paid to the researcher’s host institution, which will be responsible for ensuring that the full **GST exclusive** amount is credited to the researcher’s project account.

9.3 Where a host institution has more than one “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award” recipient, the **GST inclusive** amount will be a one-line addition to the total amount paid to the host institution, rather than an addition to the infrastructure grant paid to each researcher.

- 9.4 Upon receiving a recipient created tax invoice from the Department of Health, the host institution will remit 1/11th of the total **GST inclusive** amount to the Australian Tax Office, thus enabling the Department of Health to claim input credits back from the ATO.
- 9.5 The GST payable on goods or services purchased by a researcher using a “New Independent Researcher Infrastructure Support Award” will not be funded by the Department of Health. Individual researchers in organisations registered for the GST will be required to fund that component themselves, and claim it back as an input tax credit.

10.0 Application details

Applications for a NIRIS Award must be completed by addressing the eligibility criteria set out in the enclosed application form.

Applicants should forward **four** completed application forms (one original and three copies) and **four** copies of their complete Curriculum Vitae to:

Research Development Unit
Department of Health
PO Box 8172 Perth Business Centre
PERTH WA 6849

Courier Address: First floor, 1 Centro Ave, Subiaco

For queries, please email shrac@health.wa.gov.au

The closing date for applications is 4.00pm on Thursday 26th March 2009.

Late applications will not be accepted.