Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund

Precision Medicine Round Guidelines

VICTORIA
State Government

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1 Program Overview

1.1 About the Program

The Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund (the VMRAF) was first launched by the Victorian Government in 2017. The VMRAF is designed to capitalise on Victoria's competitive advantages in research, increase the efficiency of the Victorian health system and improve health outcomes for Victorians.

The VMRAF provides funding to support and accelerate health and medical research through the provision of one-off Grants to Successful Applicants. A total of 136 Projects have received funding through the 8 previous rounds of the VMRAF, providing over $26 million to the Victorian health and medical research sector.

The Program and its objectives align with the four pillars of the *Health and Medical Research Strategy: 2022-2032* – Talent, Collaborate, Big Ideas and Generating Outcomes, along with the Victorian Government's *Economic Growth Statement*, where health technologies and medical research is named as a priority sector.

VMRAF Precision Medicine

This round of the VMRAF (VMRAF Precision Medicine) will focus on supporting research Projects that apply precision medicine approaches. Precision medicine (defined at section 17) has been identified as a field where targeted support may help strengthen the development of future research and translation opportunities.

Precision medicine, sometimes known as 'personalised medicine', describes an approach to tailor treatments or interventions to an individual's (or group of individuals') biology, environment or lifestyle. The goal of precision medicine is to use this information to inform and target treatments to patients at the optimal time and ensure a person's unique characteristics and circumstances are used to inform their care.

The Program is expected to deliver around $2 million (GST exclusive) in one-off Grants to Successful Applicants. Two tiers of funding will be offered for innovative precision medicine Projects.

Tier 1 funding will be provided to support discovery and early-stage research that applies a precision medicine approach and Tier 2 funding will be provided to 'fast track' the translation of research that applies a precision medicine approach into health and economic outcomes. The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the department) will administer this Program.

1.2 Program objectives

Broadly, the VMRAF aims to facilitate collaboration between health services, medical research institutes, universities and industry that maximises innovation and impact, supports talent retention and capability uplift, accelerates research translation and increases the likelihood that the outputs of health and medical research conducted in the field of precision medicine generate health and economic outcomes for all Victorians.

This round of the VMRAF will offer two tiers of funding to research Projects that apply an approach that fits under the definition of precision medicine (defined at section 17):

1.2.1 Tier 1 – Discovery and early-stage research

- Support innovative discovery and early-stage health and medical research in the field of precision medicine.
- Facilitate collaboration between health services, medical research institutes, universities and industry to maximise innovation and increase the likelihood of future research translation.

1.2.2 Tier 2 – Research translation

- Accelerate the translation of health and medical research in the field of precision medicine into health and / or economic outcomes.
- Facilitate collaboration between health services, medical research institutes, universities and industry to stimulate translation and ensure research is investment ready.

1.3 Program outcomes

The expected outcomes of VMRAF Precision Medicine are:

1.3.1 Tier 1 – Discovery and early-stage research

- Innovative discovery and early-stage precision medicine research has been positioned for future translation and impact.
- Research collaborations have improved the targeting of discovery and early-stage research to likely end-users.

1.3.2 Tier 2 – Research translation

- The benefits of health and medical research in the field of precision medicine have been delivered to the public faster.
- Collaborations across the Victorian health and medical research sector have supported the translation of research into clinical care and / or more commercially attractive products or services.

1.4 Promoting gender equality

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic), the department has a duty to promote gender equality. The VMRAF seeks to promote gender equality by encouraging the participation and inclusion of women in Applicant Project teams.

The VMRAF allocates a proportion of the Assessment Criteria weighting in favour of Applicants with Project teams who include at least 50 percent members that identify as women or Applicants with Project teams that are led by a Chief Investigator (CI) who identifies as a woman.

1.5 *marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri*: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical, and Wellbeing Research Accord (*marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri*/the Accord)

marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri endeavours to improve the ethical standards of health, medical and wellbeing research that impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria. The implementation of the Accord is being led by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO).

The Victorian Government has endorsed the Accord and strives to uphold its values and guiding principles to ensure improved ethical standards and cultural safety in research, and adherence to self-determination principles.

Applications from organisations and Collaborative Partners that have endorsed *marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri* are strongly encouraged to apply. Further, Applicants are encouraged to outline how they and their organisation uphold the objectives and principles of the Accord.

For further information on *marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri* please visit the Accord webpage: www.vaccho.org.au/accord/

2 Available Funding

The budget for VMRAF Precision Medicine is expected to be around $2 million (GST exclusive). Grants can be applied for as follows:

Tier	Description	Available Grant funding	Co-contribution Funding
Tier 1: Discovery and early-stage research	Early-stage innovative research proposals for Projects that demonstrate potential for translation at a later stage	Up to $125,000 (GST exclusive)	1:1 (at least $1 Applicant contribution for every $1 of Grant funding)
Tier 2: Research translation	Accelerate translation of research into products, services or clinical practices	Up to $500,000 (GST exclusive)	1:1 (at least $1 Applicant contribution for every $1 of Grant funding)

2.1 Co-contribution Funding

2.1.1 Requirements

- Grant funding under the VMRAF will be provided on the basis that Applicants provide 1:1 matched cash Co-contribution Funding.
- Co-contribution Funding can be provided by the lead organisation, the Collaborative Partner, or another source such as a health service, medical research institute, university or other legal entity.
- Applicants must provide the department with evidence to the department's satisfaction of Co-contribution Funding in their Application, which must meet the requirements of these guidelines.
- Applicants must provide the department with evidence, to the department's satisfaction, that any required Co-contribution Funding has been used for the purposes of the Applicant's Project.
- In-kind contributions cannot form part of an Applicant's required Co-contribution Funding.
- Funding received from another Victorian, state, territory or Commonwealth Government Grant Program for the same Project cannot be used to satisfy the co-contribution requirement. Applicants may use funding from their own operating budgets, reserves or discretionary funds as Co-contribution Funding, including where those funds are supported by government funding that was not provided specifically for the purposes of the VMRAF Project.

2.1.2 Examples

Tier 1:

- If the total Project cost is $300,000 (excluding GST), the maximum Grant contribution will be $125,000 (excluding GST). The remaining $175,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.
- If the total Project cost is $82,000 (excluding GST), the Grant will cover up to $41,000 (excluding GST). The remaining $41,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.

Tier 2:

- If the total Project cost is $1.2 million (excluding GST), the maximum Grant contribution will be $500,000 (excluding GST). The remaining $700,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.
- If the total Project cost is $780,000 (excluding GST), the Grant will cover up to $390,000 (excluding GST). The remaining $390,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.

3 Applicant Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for funding under the VMRAF, an Applicant must:

- be an organisation in the health service, education, or research sectors or have a commercial relationship with an organisation in one of these sectors (as determined by the department) and
- hold a current Australian Business Number (ABN) and
- maintain the following insurance policies:
    - Public Liability Insurance of at least $10 million; and
    - Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least $5 million.

Applicants must attest that they:

- meet the eligibility requirements set out in these guidelines.
- can meet the Co-contribution Funding requirements applicable to their Application and provide evidence of this in their Application.
- will participate in any monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities required by the department.
- will deliver the entire Project in collaboration with at least one Collaborative Partner.
- will ensure that the Project, including the majority of Project personnel (measured by Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)), is primarily led from and undertaken in Victoria.
- will ensure that their research activities, including FTE employed for the purposes of the Project, will predominately be led from and conducted in Victoria.

3.2 Eligible entity types

Applicants must be one of the following legal entity types[1]:

- a Victorian company incorporated pursuant to the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission
- an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) or equivalent legislation of another Australian jurisdiction
- a Victorian education body established by or under legislation
- a public health service established under the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic) or

[1] Applicant entities must be registered with appropriate regulator/s, which may include but are not limited to: Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators.

- another incorporated entity approved by the department.

Successful Applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the department. The department can only enter into a funding agreement with a legal entity.

3.3 Ineligible entity types

Unless otherwise specified by the department, the following entities are not eligible to apply for the VMRAF:

- a Commonwealth, state or local government agency or body[2]
- a state department, agency, entity, or other body established under the Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic) or equivalent legislation of another Australian jurisdiction
- an unincorporated association
- a partnership or an individual partner on behalf of a partnership
- a trust
- an individual, or
- a sole trader.

3.4 Number of Applications

Applicants may apply once unless the following applies:

- Applicants that are medical research institutes or industry and health services organisations may apply for funding for up to four Projects, that are independent of each other.
- Universities may apply for up to four research Projects per faculty. Each Project must be independent of the other Projects.
- The Applicants to which these rules apply will need to provide assurance to the department that their institutes, organisations or faculties have sufficient resources and can undertake multiple concurrent Projects (if approved).

Previous Applicants:

- Applicants who have previously applied to an earlier round of the VMRAF and were unsuccessful are eligible to reapply.
- Previous VMRAF recipients are eligible to apply for further funding where the new Application relates to a different phase of the Project. Funding will not be provided for a phase of work that has already received VMRAF support.

[2] This exclusion applies also to a body corporate under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

4 Collaborations

4.1 Collaborative Partner requirement

To apply for the VMRAF, an Applicant is required to collaborate with at least one other organisation (Collaborative Partner). Ideally the Collaborative Partner is an end user that can support the translation and/or commercialisation of the research.

Applications must identify the Collaborative Partner and must attach relevant proof of collaboration as an attachment to their Application in accordance with the requirements set out in the 'Documentation and Information Requirements' at section 6 of these guidelines.

The Application and supporting evidence should demonstrate how the Applicant and Collaborative Partner organisations will work together under the Collaborative Partner arrangements to maximise research impact, innovation, and overall quality of research, and how this will lead to effective translation and/or commercialisation of research.

4.2 Collaborative Partner eligibility

Applicants and their Collaborative Partners must be entirely separate entities. They must not be owned by the same parent company, share governance, or have common directors.

In the Application, Applicants are required to declare there are no existing governance relationships between themselves and the nominated Collaborative Partner, including that they:

- are not subsidiaries or related bodies corporate within the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* and
- do not share common directors, officers, or senior managers.

5 What will be funded

5.1 Project eligibility

Projects should meet a current need or gap and apply an approach specific to the field of precision medicine (as defined at section 17). Some examples of research-specific precision medicine Projects could be, but are not limited to:

- Research that uses genetic material to treat and/or prevent disease.
- Research on a cell type, or multiple cell types, that can be introduced into an individual to treat and/or prevent disease.

- Research that uses specialised molecular complexes such as radioactive isotope conjugates or antibody-drug conjugates to locate specific cells safely inside the body for the diagnosis and/or treatment of disease.
- Research that uses molecular data and/or patient or disease profiling to customise treatments, diagnosis or drug dosages that treat, diagnose and/or prevent disease.

Broadly, Projects could be, but are not limited to:

- innovative precision medicine approaches to treatment and/or prevention of disease
- development of new pharmaceuticals, diagnostics or devices in the field of precision medicine or
- studies into current precision medicine approaches or practices to guide future research targeted at solving weaknesses in current practice.

Eligibility of Projects that meet the objectives of the Program will be determined at the sole discretion of the department.

Applicants must nominate either Tier 1 or Tier 2 when applying. A Project submitted under one tier is ineligible for submission under the other tier.

5.2 Eligible activities & expenses

Eligible expenditure items are:

- regulatory and intellectual property fees and charges associated with registering domestic or international patents or other intellectual property enforcement expenses
- equipment, consumables, computing and services required for the research activity as outlined in the Project description provided that such equipment, consumable or service is not listed as an ineligible expense in section 5.3 and
- staffing costs that relate solely to either:
    - new employees or
    - the expansion of hours for current part-time employees, provided these employees are working on the funded Projects or
    - the extension of contracts for staff whose contracts would otherwise end within the period of the agreement.

The department makes the final decision on what is an eligible activity or expenditure in alignment with Program objectives.

5.3 Ineligible activities & expenses

Grant funding received from the VMRAF must not support the following expenditure items:

- usual operational expenditure, including existing staff costs, communications, travel entertainment, vehicles, accommodation, and office computing equipment
- routine replacement or minor upgrade of equipment
- printing, stationery, postage, and bank charges
- basic and routine professional services including legal and accounting fees
- any amount paid on account of goods and services tax
- costs related to preparing the Grant Application, preparing any Project reports and preparing any Project variation requests
- building routine websites, sales and promotional activities, marketing or communications campaigns
- retrospective funding of Projects that have already:
    - been completed prior to receiving an offer of Grant funding under this VMRAF round; or
    - commenced prior to receiving an offer of Grant funding under this VMRAF round, except in circumstances where the Application of the Grant funding can be demonstrated to effect a change of scope or acceleration of a Project commenced prior to any funding approval and
- any other expenditure as determined by the department in its sole and absolute discretion.

5.4 Project budget

Applicants are required to submit a Project budget summary detailing how the VMRAF Grant funds and the Applicant's required Co-Contribution Funding will be spent.

Grant funds provided to the Applicant under the VMRAF need to meet the eligible Project expense criteria outlined in these guidelines (refer to section 5.2). The Applicant must demonstrate that all Co-Contribution Funding will be applied to the Applicant's Project. Where the eligibility of an expense included in the Project budget is uncertain, the department may seek further information from an Applicant.

5.5 Project duration

Projects funded by a Grant under the VMRAF must be commenced by the Applicant following execution by the Applicant and the department of an agreement and completed within two years of the commencement date recorded in that Grant Agreement.

Projects initiated or completed beyond the timeframe of this VMRAF round may still be eligible if the proposed activities supported by funding are completed within two years in accordance with the conditions of the Applicant's agreement.

6 How to apply

Applicants must take the following steps to apply:

1. Carefully read these guidelines and ensure they meet all eligibility requirements.
2. Compile all necessary supporting documents and complete all required attestations as detailed in the 'Documentation and Information Requirements' section of these guidelines.
3. Prepare an Application and apply via the online Application form, available on the Program webpage: https://djsir.vic.gov.au/medical-research/sector-support/Victorian-Medical-Research-Acceleration-Fund.
4. Await email confirmation of Application submission. Please check spam/junk mail if confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox.

Only final Applications that are lodged with the department will be considered and assessed. Applications that are still in 'draft' and have not been submitted upon the Program close date will not be assessed.

Applicants will be required to declare in the Application form that all information in their Application is true and correct.

6.1 Key Program dates

Opening and closing dates will be listed on the Program website: https://djsir.vic.gov.au/medical-research/sector-support/Victorian-Medical-Research-Acceleration-Fund. Please monitor this website regularly for any changes.

Applications will remain open for approximately 6 weeks. No late Applications will be accepted.

6.2 Documentation and Evidence Requirements

Requirement	Reason for requirement
Evidence of Co-Contribution Funding Applicants must provide evidence which demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the department, that the Applicant has sufficient funds available for the required Co-Contribution Funding amount for the Project. This may include evidence of: • written confirmation from the Board or business owner that the business can undertake the Project and meet the required Co-contribution Funding amount • an approved loan facility (including loan amount) • sufficient cash in a bank (current bank statement) and • management accounts demonstrating satisfactory cash flow or liquid assets.	Eligibility criteria
Evidence of Collaborative Partner Applicants must provide evidence of an agreed Collaborative Partner or arrangement for the Project, including a copy of any agreement, letter or memorandum of understanding entered into between the Applicant and Collaborative Partner or letter of support from the Collaborative Partner, in relation to the proposed Project or activities.	Assessment and eligibility criteria

Additional documents If requested by the department, the Applicant must provide: For Grant Applications of $50,001 or more, financial accounts are required including at a minimum: • Audited financial reports for the last three financial years. This should be the 'final accounts' with a directors' report and declaration, and should include profit & loss statement, balance sheet, cash flows, and notes to the accounts. If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts from an Accountant will be accepted. • If the latest financial report is more than six months old, up-to-date management or interim accounts for the current year including profit & loss statement and balance sheet, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report. • The company's financial Projections for the next three financial years, including profit & loss and cash flow.	Due diligence

7 Assessment

7.1 Assessment process

This is a competitive Program, and successful Applications will be required to rate highly against the assessment criteria compared to other eligible Applications.

1. Applications will be verified against the eligibility criteria.
2. Eligible Applications will be assessed by an assessment panel (that includes external assessors*) and will be scored against the assessment criteria (at section 7.2) to create a ranking of Projects.
3. Applications will undergo due diligence checks, including financial risk assessments where required.
4. Final review will be undertaken by departmental executive/s to determine the number of recommendations, subject to available funding.
5. Funding recommendations will be made to the relevant Minister for final decision.

* any external assessors will be required to sign confidentiality agreements and Conflict of Interest declarations.

7.2 Assessment criteria

Eligible Applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below with reference to the relevant stream and tier of the Program applied for by the Applicant. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the Application will be taken into consideration during the assessment and scoring process.

#	Assessment Criteria	What will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment	Weighting

1	The quality of the research Project proposal and the extent to which it aligns with the Program objectives as set out in section 1.2	Tier 1:
		• demonstrates how this Grant will support innovative discovery/early-stage research in the field of precision medicine. The Application should address how the Project delivers value through innovative knowledge creation, knowledge transfer and/or knowledge Application.
		• the health and/or clinical need for this research has been clearly articulated
		• the Project applies an approach specific to the field of precision medicine, and
		• how well the partnership collaboration will support the Project to:
		  ○ maximise innovation
		  ○ support knowledge sharing
		  ○ improve the quality of research and
		  ○ increase the likelihood of successful translation of the research.
		Tier 2:
		• articulates how the Grant will 'fast-track' the translation of research into health and economic outcomes
		• the health and/or clinical need for this research has been clearly articulated
		• the Project applies an approach specific to the field of precision medicine, and
		• clearly articulates how the partnership will collaborate to:
		  ○ strengthen the research activity and outputs
			30%

		○ progress the research to the investment-ready/clinical readiness stage and ○ stimulate translational activities.	
2	The extent to which the proposal will meet the outcomes of the Program as set out in section 1.3	Tier 1 – Discovery and early-stage research • Innovative discovery and early-stage precision medicine research has been positioned for future translation and impact. • Research collaborations have improved the targeting of discovery and early-stage research to likely end-users. Tier 2 – Research translation • The benefits of health and medical research in the field of precision medicine have been delivered to the public faster. • Collaborations across the Victorian health and medical research sector have supported the translation of research into clinical care and / or more commercially attractive products or services.	30%
3	Demonstrated Project feasibility, delivery and the need for government support	For both Tier 1 and Tier 2: • clear resourcing, including identified skills and capabilities and strong track records for key personnel, to be able to deliver the Project within set timeframes. • a well-developed and suitable budget for the Project and defined Project scope that is feasible within the Project timeframe • Project timeline and clearly defined Project outputs that are reasonably achievable within available resources and budget • considers whether the Project would proceed without government support due to considerations such as timing, resourcing and/or level of risk impacting Project initiation. • Co-contribution Funding has been identified and committed to the Project • evidence of an agreed and suitable environment in which to undertake the proposed research and • identified Project risks and mitigation strategies.	35%

4	Promotion of gender equity	For both Tier 1 and Tier 2:	
		• demonstrates that at the time of Project commencement the Project team will consist of at least 50 per cent members who identify as women.	2.5%
		• demonstrates that the Project is led by a Chief Investigator who identifies as a woman.	2.5%

7.3 Due Diligence checks

Applicants may be subject to due diligence checks to enable the department to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the Application.

Such checks may include:

- the potential for reputational risk to the State
- the risk profile, financial viability and management capacity of the Applicant's business over the duration of the proposed activity
- whether the proposal has already been fully funded by the Applicant through other means
- the delivery performance of other Grants contracted with the Victorian Government and whether the Applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations
- any adverse findings by a regulator regarding an Applicant
- if an Applicant is placed under external or voluntary administration or is subject to receivership
- there is a petition to wind up or deregister the Applicant
- if an Applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered in respect of its registration regulatory body (including cancellation or lapse in registration)

The department may, at any time, remove an Applicant from the Application and assessment process, if in the department's opinion, association with the Applicant may bring the department, a minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

The department may request from non-government Applicants that organisation's last three financial statements as part of the departmental due diligence.

8 Notification of Outcomes

All Applicants will be advised via email of the outcome of their Application approximately 10 weeks after the closing date.

9 Conditions of Funding

9.1 Funding Offer

Applicants will be issued a letter of offer (Letter of Offer) if they are successful and are required to accept the funding offer in writing within 14 days from the date of the offer.

An offer of funding is not binding on the department unless and until both the department and the Applicant execute the Grant Agreement.

9.2 Grant Agreements

Successful Applicants will be invited to enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement with the State of Victoria (State) as represented by the department. An example of the Grant Agreement can be found on the Program webpage: https://djsir.vic.gov.au/medical-research/sector-support/Victorian-Medical-Research-Acceleration-Fund.

The Applicant will be required to sign the Grant Agreement within 30 days of offer. The funding offer may lapse or be withdrawn if the Grant Agreement is not signed by the Applicant within the timeframe given. The department is the final signatory to the Grant Agreement.

The Project, and any expenditure of funds associated with the Project, must not commence until the Grant Agreement has been executed. Agreement execution means the Grant Agreement has been signed by both the department and the Applicant.

Once the agreement has been executed, the Grant Recipient (Successful Applicant) will be required to commence the Project by the Commencement Date and within the agreed timeframe. If a Successful Applicant does not commence the Project by the commencement date recorded in the Grant Agreement, the department has at its absolute discretion the option of terminating the agreement.

The Grant Agreement details all funding obligations and conditions such as:

- payments
- funding use
- Grant activity deliverables and due dates
- monitoring and milestones
- reporting and accounting
- audit
- publicity and acknowledgment
- termination.

9.3 Project reporting milestones

The Successful Applicant will be required to provide reporting to the department as set out in the table below.

Report	Reporting Frequency	Due
Project plan Evidence of Co-contribution Funding	Once	At the beginning of the Project prior to receipt of funds
Project status report	Six-monthly	Every six months from receipt of funds until Project completion
Financial reporting on how the Grant has been spent on the Project to date	Annually	Every twelve months from receipt of funds until Project completion
Final report	Once only	At Project completion

Templates will be provided by the department to recipients for completing Project reports.

These reports will be used to assess whether the Project is proceeding satisfactorily and to ascertain whether funds are being acquitted in accordance with the original Application goals.

Funding may be suspended if progress is considered unsatisfactory, and suspended or repayment required, if funds have not been utilised in accordance with the Service Agreement or the Grant Agreement (as the case may be).

9.4 Eftsure bank account verification

Prior to Grant payments being issued, the department will use Eftsure software for verification of bank details. Eftsure is an Australian digital software company that delivers real time payment verification assurance to payment issuers. It is used to help reduce payment fraud and errors by ensuring electronic funds transfers go to the right payees. For more information on Eftsure and how they securely verify bank details, please visit the Eftsure website.

Successful Applicants will be provided further information on how this process works and what is required of them.

9.5 Refund events

The department has the right to a refund of the whole or part of the Grant amount paid in certain circumstances which are set out in the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. This includes failure to meet milestone deliverables or complete the Project in the manner agreed to in the Grant Agreement or where there is conduct which may bring the department, minister or State into disrepute.

9.6 Publicity/acknowledgement of support

Grant recipients must co-operate with the department in relation to all publicity and promotion of the Grant.

The department may require Grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support on all promotional materials and appropriate signage, which must be consistent with the guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications (available at www.dpc.vic.gov.au) or as otherwise specified by the department.

Where required, the department will supply the Grant Recipient with a logo suite and associated brand guidelines, as well as guidelines for the purposes of acknowledgment of government support.

The department may publicise the benefits accruing to a Grant Recipient associated with the Grant and the State's support for the Project. The department may include the name of the Grant recipient, and the amount of funding Granted in any publicity material and in the department's annual report.

9.7 Program evaluation

As a condition of funding, Successful Applicants will be required to deliver regular Project reports in accordance with conditions set out in the Grant Agreement.

Grant recipients will also be required to participate in any Program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by the department. This may include completing surveys throughout the Program to measure progress to achieving outcomes, and for up to three years after Program completion. Non-compliance could impact future Applications to the department's Programs.

Program evaluation is critical to the department in understanding Program impact, supporting continuous improvement in Program design and delivery, and delivering effective Grant Program outcomes for Victoria.

10 Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided for this Program will be collected and used by the department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, Program administration, Program review and evaluation.

The department completes a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of our auditing and monitoring processes and for confirming eligibility across this Program.

In assessing an Application for the Program as well as in any audit or evaluation of a successful Grant, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If

personal information about a third party is included in the Application, the Applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about the Applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

Enquiries about access or correction to your personal information, can be emailed to ohmr@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the department's Privacy Unit.

11 Department Probity and Decision-making

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the Grant Application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the published Program Guidelines.

Decisions in recommending and awarding Grant funding under this Program are at the Minister's and department discretion. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and Application terms may be changed from time to time, within the discretion of the department and the changes will apply to your Application.

The department may request the Applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an Application to the Program's policy objectives.

Victorian Government staff are required to act in accord with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (Section 61) issued under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic). This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided.

11.1 Applicant conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise where a Grant Applicant:

- Has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who is able to, or may be perceived to, influence the Application assessment process, such as a Victorian Government staff member, or
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the Applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Applicants must advise the department of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest relating to a Project for which it has applied for funding.

11.2 Feedback to unsuccessful Applicants

Due to the expected high volume of Applications for this Program, feedback on individual Application outcomes will not be able to be provided.

11.3 Complaints

If an Applicant wants to lodge a complaint or provide feedback to the department about the process for a Grant Application, requests can be made via this online form, by sending a written request to ohmr@ecodev.vic.gov.au or by calling 1800 878 969.

Requests can be made in relation to the Application process and adherence to these guidelines. Re-assessment of an Application or overturning of a funding decision for a merit-based Grant, will not be considered through the complaints process.

Once your complaint has been received by the department, it will be acknowledged within 2 working days and provided to the review team to be resolved.

Your complaint will be resolved within 28 business days unless further investigation is required. If further investigation is required, you may be contacted by phone or email asking for additional information.

12 Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI)

The department may use secure, generative artificial intelligence (gen-AI) tools for some elements of the assessment process. These tools are only intended to provide administrative support. The secure gen-AI tools retain data for a limited time, with data stored in Australia.

Where a Grant Applicant hires a professional Grant writer or uses a generative AI tool to prepare or assist in the preparation of their Grant Application, it remains the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure all information in the Application is accurate and correct.

If an Application is ultimately successful, it is the Applicant that enters into a binding agreement with the department and has contractual obligations to deliver the funded activity as described.

13 Payment of GST on Grant funding

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), where applicable, we will add GST to your Grant payment.

> Example: If the approved funding is $100,000 GST exclusive, the department will process payments totalling $110,000 ($100,000 GST exclusive funding + $10,000 GST).

Grants to Successful Applicants who are not registered for GST are exempt from GST[3].

> Example: If the approved funding is $100,000 GST exclusive, the department will only process payments totalling $100,000 GST exclusive.

14 Record keeping for recipients

14.1 Accounting and Audit

Grant Recipients must keep proper accounts as required by law and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.

Recipients may be subject to audit and will be required to retain records following completion of the Project and provide access and produce evidence (such as business activity statements, bank statements, financial reports, sales reports and invoices, payroll reports to demonstrate impact and turnover) and assist the department, its representatives, and the Auditor General of Victoria with the conduct of the audit, as required.

15 Further Information

For further information please visit the Program website: https://djsir.vic.gov.au/medical-research/sector-support/Victorian-Medical-Research-Acceleration-Fund

16 Caretaker Period

As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 28 November 2026, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 3 November 2026 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned.

In line with the caretaker conventions, the incoming government will determine whether to continue this Grant process and award Grants after the caretaker period.

Applicants should be aware that:

- all information about this Grant process represents the position of the current government only, and is subject to change; and
- an incoming government may decide to not continue with this Grant process.

[3] It is the responsibility of the applying organisation to determine whether they are required to register for GST based on their business circumstances and ATO ruling Registering for GST | Australian Taxation Office.

17 Glossary

- **Applicant** means an individual or organisation that has submitted the Application for funding for a Grant
- **Application** means the Application submitted by the Applicant to the department for funding
- **Chief Investigator** means the overall lead researcher for the whole Project who will have responsibility of managing the Grant funding and will make decisions with regards to the Project.
- **Innovation** means the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), a process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations
- **Precision medicine** means an innovative approach that uses an individual's (or group of individual's) genomic, environmental and lifestyle information to personalise and tailor their treatment. The goal of precision medicine is to provide a more precise, targeted approach for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- **Program** means Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund Program
- **Project** means the activities specified in the Application by the Applicant for which the Grant is provided
- **Grant** means funding provided by the department to organisations or individuals for a specified purpose to meet government policy objectives
- **Grant Agreement** means a legally binding document that details the terms and conditions of the Grant and sets out the relationship between the parties
- **Grant Recipient** means the legal entity that has entered into a Grant Agreement with the department.
- **State or department** means the State of Victoria through its Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.