

# Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

## Micro-Funding Scheme 2021

### Funding Rules



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## 1 Introduction

The Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC) is a research collaboration between the five hospital and health services (HHSs) in northern Queensland (Cairns and Hinterland, Mackay, North West, Torres and Cape and Townsville), the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) and James Cook University (JCU), including the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM). As of June 2019, TAAHC has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

The purpose of TAAHC is to improve the health of the northern Queensland population and grow prosperity in the tropical region through a partnership that enhances collective capability in health service delivery, health and medical research, and workforce development. Through an emphasis on translational research, TAAHC aims to embed research into health service delivery to improve quality and efficiency of care, enhance recruitment and retention of professionals in the region and encourage greater investment in the north.

These Funding Rules describe the provision and distribution of funding for the Micro-Funding scheme offered by TAAHC. The Funding Rules will be supported by a TAAHC Research Services Contract between TAAHC and the successful Lead Organisation.

## 2 Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre Micro-Funding Scheme

The Micro-Funding scheme delivers on the aim of the TAAHC 2019-2022 Research Strategy to:

- Enhance the capacity and capability of Members with an emerging research profile to undertake research of relevance to the northern Queensland population and engage in research partnership and collaboration with other TAAHC members; and
- Consolidate and enhance the research capacity of Members with an established research profile to develop new, high-level programs of research and promote partnership and collaboration between TAAHC Members

The Micro-Funding Scheme is intended to support concise, impact-orientated translational projects focused on health service delivery and/or health service quality improvement in northern Queensland.

The scheme recognises that improvements in health service delivery and patient care can often be realised through modest, targeted investments that allow clinicians and researchers to directly respond to identified health service challenges. Micro-funding can be used to fund quality research projects which fill immediate knowledge gaps in service delivery and/or gather preliminary or pilot data for a larger research funding application.

The objectives of the program are to:

1. Support health and medical research projects that are aligned with TAAHC Research Themes and have potential to lead to better health outcomes and/or service delivery improvements for northern Queensland communities.
2. Develop TAAHC clinicians and researchers and build their capacity to undertake high-quality translational research
3. Build collaborative linkages between TAAHC Members to support the translation of research discoveries into health service delivery.

## 2.1 Amount and duration of funding

The following funding is available under the Micro-Funding Scheme:

Funding	Maximum duration	Eligibility	Objective
A Up to \$20,000	12 months	Chief Investigator A must hold an appointment with a TAAHC Founding Member OR a general practice provider in the TAAHC region	To support quality research projects which fill immediate knowledge gaps in service delivery or quality, and/or gather preliminary or pilot data for a larger research funding application

Applicants may propose a research project in any clinical discipline that focuses on health service delivery and/or health service quality improvement, in alignment with the TAAHC Research Themes:

- Service delivery to regional, rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations;
- Non-communicable diseases with high regional prevalence;
- Innovative health workforce models;
- Infectious diseases and biosecurity.

## 2.2 Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- The Lead Investigator must hold an appointment with a TAAHC Founding Member OR a general practice provider in the TAAHC region
- Investigators may hold up to two active projects funded by TAAHC across its funding schemes (Research Assistance, Micro-Funding, Seed Funding, Clinician Researcher Fellowship).

## 2.3 Funding Use

Funding may be used for the following:

- Costs directly related to the proposed project, including research assistance, equipment, consumables and travel.
- Salary costs for dedicated research/technical staff to support the project.

Items not eligible for funding include:

- Salary costs for Investigative Team Members.
- Conference or event travel.
- Infrastructure Costs for basic facilities such as:

- Accommodation (e.g. laboratory and office);
- Access to a basic library collection;
- Standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services;
- Provision of computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialised applications) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software; and
- Use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.

## 2.4 Funding Administration and Conditions

- Successful Applicants must confirm a Lead Organisation. This will most likely be the employing institute of the Lead Investigator. The Lead Organisation will be responsible for ensuring that all Project obligations are met.
- The successful Project research activities must be conducted in the TAAHC region.
- Micro-Funding is awarded to support a specific Project and is not transferable.
- Applicants may apply or hold other grants outside of this scheme, as allowable by the relevant granting body. However, the other grants must not duplicate funding for the Micro-Funding Project.
- Micro-Funding Projects in Category A must be completed within 6 months; Micro-Funding Projects in Category B must be completed within 12 months. No additional funds will be provided by TAAHC.
- An estimated commencement date should be provided in the application form, with the actual commencement date to be confirmed if the application is successful.
- Costs incurred before the Micro-Funding commences will not be reimbursed.
- A Project must commence within 3 months of the Research Contract being signed. If these timeframes are not met, TAAHC has the right to withdraw the Micro-Funding offer.

## 2.5 Reporting

- The Lead Organisation will be required to report to TAAHC on the progress of the Micro-Funding Project and the use of funds.
- The Lead Organisation must complete and submit to TAAHC a Scientific Progress Report. This report must be submitted no later than 6 weeks from the completion of the first 50% of the Project (the halfway mark of the Project) e.g. the scientific progress report for a 12 month Project commencing 1 January 2021 will be due 10 August 2021.
- A Final Scientific Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 6 weeks of completion of the Project.
- A Final Financial Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 3 months of completion of the Project.
- TAAHC will provide 80% of the Micro-Funding funds upon execution of the relevant Research Contract and the remaining 20% of the funds upon submission and acceptance of a Final Scientific Report.
- If the Lead Organisation fails to submit the Final Scientific Report or Scientific Progress Report, or if in TAAHC's opinion, acting reasonably, satisfactory progress on completing the Project has not been made, TAAHC may withhold final payment or seek repayment of funds paid to date.
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- These requirements will be outlined in the relevant Research Contract between TAAHC and the Lead Organisation.

### 3 Application Process

It is the Lead Organisation's and applicant's responsibility to read and familiarise themselves with these Funding Rules and all other documents referred to within these Funding Rules.

Applications must be submitted through the [SmartyGrants Portal](#) by **5pm Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**. Setting up a SmartyGrants account is free and previous SmartyGrants users can use the same account.

Late applications will not be accepted.

### 4 Assessment process

The applications will be assessed by TAAHC representatives for completeness and eligibility. TAAHC reserves the right to remove applications that are incomplete, ineligible, not in keeping with the Funding Rules or clearly non-competitive, and to provide preliminary advice to the review panel. Exclusion of applications may take place at any time during the selection process.

Applications will be assessed under a competitive merit-based process against selection criteria by a review panel, which will provide recommendations on Micro-Funding recipients to the TAAHC Board of Directors. The TAAHC Board of Directors has absolute discretion in making the final decision on awarding recipients.

TAAHC will advise each applicant in writing of the outcome of their application. No information will be released verbally.

Application outcomes are final. TAAHC will not enter into any oral or written correspondence about selection decisions.

#### 4.1 Review Panel

The review panel will include the following:

- Researchers and senior clinicians from the TAAHC Founding Members;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives;
- Other researchers and senior clinicians with relevant expertise, as identified by TAAHC.

## 4.2 Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will guide the assessment:

Selection Criteria	Weighting
Alignment with TAAHC Research Themes	30%
Potential for the project to impact policy and practice for better, more equitable health outcomes and improved service delivery for northern Queensland	30%
Innovation, quality and feasibility of research project	40%

### *National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*

Applications that specifically relate to the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples or include distinct Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data will be required to address, and will be assessed against the following NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria. To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Selection Criteria	Weighting
Community engagement - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.	25%
Benefit - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important public health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.	25%
Sustainability and transferability - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.	25%
Building capability - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.	25%

### 4.3 Confidentiality and Privacy

TAAHC will use the supplied application information for the purposes of assessing Micro-Funding applications. All information provided during the application process is received and accepted by TAAHC in confidence.

Information comprising the names of successful Applicants and their Lead Organisation, funding awarded and area of research may be made publicly available by TAAHC, including being made available on the TAAHC website. Details of unsuccessful applicants will remain confidential.

## 5 Contractual Arrangements

The Lead Organisation and TAAHC do not enter into a binding legal relationship unless and until a subsequent Research Contract is executed between TAAHC and the Lead Organisation.

The Micro Funding is offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the Research Contract, which is an agreement between the Lead Organisation and TAAHC.

In signing the Research Contract, all parties agree to the conditions contained in the Research Contract and Schedules, including that research complies with relevant laws, guidelines and statements.

### 5.1 Dissemination and Publicity

Successful Applicants must acknowledge the TAAHC funding in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Successful Applicants should provide broad Micro-Funding information as required by TAAHC to support any public announcements or promotional activity and attend media/promotion events if requested.

Applicants must not make any public announcement of advertisement in any medium in relation to the application process or outcome without the prior written approval of TAAHC.

At the conclusion of the Project, recipients will be asked to provide information on the impact and outcomes of their Project, in a format specified by TAAHC, for use by TAAHC in promotional and marketing activities.

## 6 Further information

Further information or specific queries regarding the Micro-Funding Scheme should be directed to:

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Phone: (07) 4781 5036

Email: [taahc@jcu.edu.au](mailto:taahc@jcu.edu.au)