

Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN) Small Project Grants

GUIDELINES

Due Date: 14/04/2017

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1. OVERVIEW — Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN)

The vision of the Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN) is to foster a productive, collaborative and sustainable program of clinical and community intervention research aimed at enhancing the quality of palliative care.

The PCRN is keen to continue capacity building in cancer and palliative care research in cancer patients by supporting the next generation of palliative care researchers and facilitating high quality research projects. This PCRN initiative is funded by the Victorian Cancer Agency (VCA). This new opportunity is to support cancer related projects in palliative care.

Further information about the PCRN can be obtained from: <http://www.pcrnv.com.au/>

2. SMALL PROJECT GRANTS DESCRIPTION

The PCRN Small Project Grants Initiative aims to increase the pool of experienced researchers that are able to conduct high quality research into palliative care in cancer patients.

Applicants should have a defined research project and evidence of organisational support for the project.

These grants aim to enhance and develop cancer and palliative care research capacity within Victoria by providing:

- seed funding for projects or funding for small/pilot projects whose results can be utilised as the basis for future large funding applications to external granting bodies;
- funding for researchers who have previously not been active in research or who are at an early stage in their research career;
- funding for research that will result in the submission of a manuscript or manuscripts for publication;
- funding to support cross collaborative research and research involving collaborations with partners.

2.1. Who can apply?

Any organisation or individual that is, or will be, involved in the conduct of cancer and palliative care research in Victoria is eligible to apply for PCRN funding.

2.2. Level of funding

The maximum amount that can be requested for any research project is \$25,000. Funding may be used for a range of purposes including but not restricted to: purchase of software and equipment, research assistance (e.g. salaries) and consumables.

2.3. Duration

The project period is up to one year.

2.4. Project Focus Areas

The proposed research project should align with the mission and vision of the PCRN and the project should be directly relevant to palliative care in cancer patients.

2.5. Definition of Palliative Care*

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

Palliative care:

- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms;
- affirms life and regards dying as a normal process;
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death;
- integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care;
- offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death;
- offers a support system to help the family cope during the patients illness and in their own bereavement;
- uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated;
- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness;
- is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications.

**Reference: World Health Organization (WHO) definition of Palliative Care:*

<http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/>

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR PCRN FUNDING

3.1. Project requirements

The PCRN must be satisfied that:

- The majority of the research funded by the PCRN is completed within Victoria and the applicant is based at a Victorian Organisation (co-investigators and/or collaborators may work interstate or internationally).

- Proposed projects must have specific aims and outcomes that are achievable in the designated timeframe.

3.2. Administering Organisation requirements

Applications must be made under the auspices of a Victorian hospital, research organisation or university. A single organisation should be designated as the Administering Organisation, which must:

- have in place policies and procedures for the management of public funds;
- have in place policies for the proper conduct of research in relation to ethics and good scientific conduct;
- have in place policies for the appropriate management and exploitation of Intellectual Property;
- in the case of research being undertaken with collaborative partners, obtain the consent of all Investigators named in the application and their organisations.

3.3. Research Organisation requirements

The application must provide evidence that there is a suitable environment in which to undertake the research. The Research Organisation is expected to ensure that there is effective supervision and mentoring of the researcher and/or research group and have a process for evaluating the effectiveness and suitability of any supervisory and/or mentoring arrangements.

The Research Organisation will provide the facilities and infrastructure required to undertake the proposed research.

The relevant delegate of the Research Organisation must certify in the application that they approve of and endorse the proposed project.

4. SELECTION

Applicants will be informed via email of the receipt of their application within five working days after the closing date for funding.

PCRN personnel will initially screen applications to ensure that eligibility criteria have been met.

An independent Evaluation Panel established from the PCRN Advisory Committee will then assess all submissions against the selection criteria and the applicant with the highest assessment score will be offered the grant (refer to section 4.4). The panels will, consistent with these guidelines:

- rank applications based on the specific selection criteria weighting (refer to section 4.4);
- make recommendations to the PCRN on the applications which meet appropriate standards for funding;

- provide advice on applications where further collaboration may be sought.

After the PCRN has completed its evaluation process, feedback on applications will be available on a request basis.

4.1. PCRN discretion

The lodging of an application does not confer any entitlement upon the applicant. The determination to fund is totally within the discretion of the PCRN.

4.2. Privacy and confidentiality

All information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential. Documents containing personal information will be handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (VIC). Personal information will only be disclosed with the permission of the individual to whom it relates, or where the Act allows.

Applicants acknowledge that announcement of the funded projects will involve the dissemination of information to the public about the general nature of the funded projects.

4.3. Conflict of Interest – Evaluation Panel members

The PCRN requires its Evaluation Panel members to act in an ethical manner, declare conflicts of interest and withdraw from considering applications where such conflict does or may exist.

4.4. Selection Criteria

| | CRITERIA | WEIGHTING (%) |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1. | <p>Alignment with PCRN goals</p> <p>The research meets the PCRN mission. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve palliative care outcomes for cancer patients and families informed by high quality research. • How adoption of the research findings is anticipated to occur and how quickly the research could have an impact. • Evidence of cross-disciplinary approaches with researchers, clinicians, consumers, clinician-managers, health care policy makers and/or industry. • Collaborative arrangements. • How the results of the research will be communicated to other researchers, clinicians, students, consumers and health care decision-makers. • How the research will build capacity and skills in Victoria. | 25 |

| | | |
|--------------|--|--------------|
| 2. | <p>Importance of project</p> <p>The research is designed to address an important problem or clinical need in patient care. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the clinical need being addressed in the research. • How the research will result in improved patient outcomes. | 25 |
| 3. | <p>Quality of project</p> <p>The quality of the research, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility • Rationale • Methodology • Timeframes • Innovation | 25 |
| 4. | <p>Applicant expertise and capacity</p> <p>Capacity to undertake the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of the applicant (relative to the opportunity to conduct independent research). • Support for conducting research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existing infrastructure; – Mentoring; – Collaboration. | 25 |
| TOTAL | | 100 % |

5. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Offer of funding will be made to the Applicant, as the initiator of the application. Acceptance of the grant must be approved by the Administering Organisation.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the PCRN, through the nominated Administering Organisation.

Refer to Appendix 1 for information on administration and reporting requirements for PCRN funding.

6. HOW TO SUBMIT

All applicants must complete a *PCRN Small Project Grants Application Form*. A copy of this form can be downloaded from: <http://www.pcrnv.com.au/>

Submission of Applications

The PCRN will only accept electronic submission of applications in Word format – PDF will not be accepted, except for Section E – Certifications of the application form.

The PCRN will not accept hardcopy or faxed applications.

Signatures: Electronic signatures are accepted.

Applications will be accepted if they are emailed on or before the closing date. Completed application forms are to be emailed to: pcrnv@svha.org.au

Applications must be received by 14/04/2017

Please note that incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

For queries in relation to the PCRN Small Grants Initiative please email pcrnv@svha.org.au or call 03 9416 0000.

7. FUNDING TIMETABLE

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Funding round announced | 16/01/ 2017 |
| Applications open | 16/01/ 2017 |
| Closing date for applications | 14/04/ 2017 |
| Evaluation Panel meets to review applications | 08/05/2017 |
| Decision & recommendation by PCRN Advisory Committee | 19/ 05/ 2017 |
| Advice to Applicants | 02/ 06/ 2017 |
| Project Funding Start Date | 01/07/2017 |

APPENDIX 1 – Administration and Reporting Requirements for PCRN Project Funding

1. Applicant

The Applicant will be responsible for guiding and managing the research through to completion. This will include liaising with collaborators and coordinating reporting requirements of the grant with the Administering Organisation.

2. Administering Organisation

The Administering Organisation will be responsible for administration of the grant, in accordance with the PCRN Funding Agreement.

Payment of funds will be made to the Administering Organisation as set out in the funding agreement schedule. Funds must only be used for the purposes set out in the agreement.

3. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

GST will be paid on top of grant amounts where appropriate. This will be determined by the Administering Organisation's GST status. This status must be identified by the financial delegate of the Administering Organisation.

4. Reporting

In accordance with the PCRN's Funding Agreement, funding recipient will be required to submit a six month report and a final report (*refer to Appendix 2 for reporting requirements for PCRN project funding*).

The reporting schedule is outlined in the following table:

| Report | Reporting frequency | Due |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Six month report | Once only | Within 6 months of scheduled project start date as set out in the Funding Agreement. |
| Final report | Once only | Within 6 weeks of scheduled project completion as set out in the Funding Agreement. |
| Financial reports (to be included in final report) | Once only | Within 6 weeks of scheduled project completion as set out in the Funding Agreement. |
| Ad hoc reports | As requested by PCRN | Upon request with a negotiable time frame not greater than six weeks. |

These reports will enable the PCRN to assess whether the project is proceeding satisfactorily and that funds are being acquitted in accordance with the original application goals.

5. Acknowledgement of Support

Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the PCRN in any publications, public announcements, scientific meeting presentations or discussion forums relating to research conducted with the assistance of funding from the PCRN.

APPENDIX 2 – Reporting Requirements for PCRN Project Funding

Palliative Care Research Network Small Project Grants – Six Month Report

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Applicant Name: | |
| 2. Organisation : | |
| 3. Project Title: | |
| 4. Start Date of Project: | |
| 5. Current Status of Project: | Provide a summary (up to 500 words) of your project's progress. The agreed milestones for your project were set out in your funding agreement. Indicate whether each deliverable has been achieved, and if not, provide a short explanation as to the issues involved, and steps taken to resolve them. |
| 6. Project Outputs: | List submitted and accepted conference abstracts, conference presentations and peer reviewed publications, where relevant. |

Palliative Care Research Network Small Project Grants – Final Report

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Applicant Name: | |
| 2. Organisation : | |
| 3. Project Title: | |
| 4. Start Date of Project: | |
| 5. Current Status of Project: <i>(please tick)</i> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed: | Completion date:/...../..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In progress: | Give reasons below and expected date of completion: |
| 6. Reasons for non-completion and/or project delay: | |
| 7. Summary of Findings: | Provide a summary (up to 500 words) of your findings. The agreed milestones for your project were set out in your funding agreement. Indicate whether each deliverable has been achieved, and if not, provide a short explanation as to the issues involved, and steps taken to resolve them. |
| 8. Project Outputs: | List submitted and accepted conference abstracts, conference presentations and peer reviewed publications, where relevant. |