



Cancer Council NSW Project Grants

Project Grants Application Guidelines

Grant Round 2026

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1. Cancer Council NSW

1.1 Overview

Cancer Council NSW ('Cancer Council') is Australia's leading cancer charity, uniting the community, providing support, investing in research and saving lives. Cancer Council is the only cancer charity that works across every area of every cancer:

- funding and conducting world-class research that underpins our work across the cancer journey
- preventing cancer
- supporting people as they navigate the cancer journey
- advocating to ensure governments take action on cancer.

Cancer Council is committed to funding research that enhances outcomes across the entire cancer journey and is of value to the community.

1.2 5-Year Strategy

Cancer Council's 5-Year Strategy outlines its ambitious plan to make a lasting impact as it continues to tackle cancer. As the leading cancer charity in the NSW, Cancer Council is committed to improving the lives of those affected by cancer and ensuring that no one walks alone. Over the next five years, Cancer Council will focus on growing its impact in areas of greatest need, enhancing the lives of cancer survivors and working closely with the community to drive better outcomes.

Current challenges faced are:

- Over the next 25 years, around 1.52 million people in NSW will be diagnosed with cancer.
- There are more than 15,000 cancer related deaths in NSW each year.
- There is a 71% survival rate five years after cancer diagnosis in NSW. This means there are more people living with and beyond cancer who need supportive care.
- People are impacted by cancer disproportionately in NSW, depending on a range of risk and behavioural factors, access to healthcare and barriers to accessing interventions.

Cancer Council responds to these challenges with:

- Reduce cancer risk through prevention and early intervention.
- Improve cancer survival through world-class research.
- Enhance the quality of life of people affected by cancer through transformative support.
- Improve equity in cancer outcomes through bold advocacy.

2. Scope

Cancer Council Project Grants (Project Grants) for 2026 are open to all Australian researchers. Project Grants will be awarded for up to three years, commencing in April 2026.

Project Grants support research in any aspects of cancer, including: its causes, mechanisms, prevention, treatment and care, and the organisation and performance of cancer control services.

Grants are valued between \$300,000 and \$600,000 over three years (minimum budget request is \$300,000). The maximum budget which can be requested is \$200,000 per annum. Cancer Council reserves the right to offer a grant a sum that differs substantially from that requested by the applicants.

Applications for Project Grants funding are received through the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Ideas Grants submission and review processes. The NHMRC conducts a peer review on all Ideas Grant applications, those assessed as fundable are then subject to an additional review by Cancer Council's Consumer Review Panel. The final decision on funding for Project Grants is with Cancer Council.

This national scheme meets Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) requirements to be reported as Category 1.

3. Consumer Involvement

The cancer community has a unique insight into the problems faced by those who have been affected by cancer. Therefore, it is mandatory for researchers applying for Cancer Council funding to involve consumers in their research work.

Consumers are people who have been affected by cancer – patients, survivors, carers, or close family members or friends of someone diagnosed with cancer or when conducting certain kinds of public health research, members of the general community. A consumer is also usually linked to an organised group who voices the perspectives of patients as well as their carers, families, and loved ones; and has been trained to take part in research decision-making processes as a representative of the broader cancer community.

Involvement of consumers in research work means that the named consumer(s) contributed to the planning and development of the research proposal, aided in preparation of the additional questions, assists in preparing and reviewing the annual progress reports and will be engaged in the ongoing research work by regular meetings and support(s) interpretation and communication of results of the research.

The Project Grant applications will undergo Consumer Review (please see Consumer Review Guidelines on Cancer Council's [website](#) for more detail).

4. Eligibility

4.1 Administering Institution

Each Project Grant will be administered by a single Administering Institution. The Administering Institution guarantees the infrastructure necessary to support the research will be available. Its explicit support for and commitment to the application is essential before any application can be considered.

The Administering Institution will be held responsible for the proper administration and expenditure of the grant and for ensuring that all reports required are submitted by the due date.

4.2 Chief Investigators

A Project Grant is led by the Chief Investigator (CI) A and by up to nine additional CIs (B-J). The Administering Institution certifies that the CIA:

- resides in Australia (or intends to reside in Australia) throughout the funding period
- is an Australian citizen, has resident status or has an appropriate visa to work in Australia for the entire duration of the funding period.

In addition, the following Eligibility Criteria will be considered:

- Researchers may be a CIA on a maximum of one successful Cancer Council Project grant application per funding round and be a named investigator (CIB-CIJ) on a maximum of two active Project Grants. The CIA can submit multiple applications per funding round, but can only accept a single funding offer if successful.
- At least one named and qualified consumer must be involved in the research proposal. For further guidance, please refer to the Consumer Review Guidelines which can be found on Cancer Council's [website](#).
- Applicants applying for funding from both NHMRC and Cancer Council must adhere to both the NHMRC and Cancer Council eligibility criteria and guidelines. For further information on the NHMRC's Ideas Grants, please visit NHMRC's [website](#).
- The list and sequence of all named CIs on the Cancer Council application must be the same as that on the NHMRC Idea's Grant application.
- Current funding recipients applying for new funding should note that Cancer Council must have received all due Annual Progress, Final and Follow-up Reports.

4.1 Cross Cancer Council Scheme Eligibility

- Researchers from any Australian state or territory are eligible to apply for Cancer Council Project Grants.
- Researchers based in South Australia and Western Australia are eligible to apply to Cancer Council in their state AND Cancer Council funding.
- Researchers ineligible to apply for their state's grant scheme are still eligible to apply for a Cancer Council Project Grant.
- Applicants applying for funding from both their state's grant scheme and a Cancer Council Project Grant must adhere to the relevant scheme's eligibility criteria and guidelines. If both

the state Cancer Council application and Cancer Council Project Grant application are successful, only one of the two offers can be accepted.

5. Funding Conditions

Cancer Council awards funding for discrete projects and does not permit grantees to hold duplicate funding for the same purpose from multiple sources. Cancer Council expects grant applicants to accept funding from other funding bodies (such as the NHMRC) if offered, allowing other Cancer Council applicants to be funded. Applicants who have been awarded funding from any other source for the same purpose will become ineligible. The CIA is required to inform Cancer Council immediately should funding from other sources for the same purpose be awarded.

Cancer Council will not award any grant to any researcher or Administering Institution who receives funds, directly or indirectly, from High-risk Industries (an industry materially involved in the manufacturing, distribution and/or marketing of tobacco or vaping products, alcoholic beverages or other carcinogens as known) or organisations reasonably considered by Cancer Council to be associated with the High-risk Industries. If the Administering Institution, or any CI applies for, or receives, funding or other assistance or benefit from High-risk industries Cancer Council may immediately terminate this Agreement by notice to the Administering Institution.

The grant must be spent wholly for the purposes for which it was requested and so certified by the CIA and the Administering Institution. If the research is terminated early or completed at a lower than initially envisaged cost, Cancer Council must be advised and any unspent funds returned.

Payments in respect of any grant shall be within the terms and conditions specified in the funding offer and set out in the Research Grant Agreement.

The Administering Institution ensures that more than 50% of the grant funding is spent on the Project in Australia.

6. Expenditure Guide

Cancer Council will support budget items that are integral to achieving the approved research and that are clearly outlined in the application. Use of grant money must be within the conditions stipulated in the signed Research Grant Agreement and consistent with the approved budget.

6.1 Acceptable Budget Items

Project Grant funds must only be used for costs associated directly with the proposed research in the application. The budget submitted within your application will be separated into the following categories:

- Personnel
 - it is not the intent of Cancer Council to enable salary savings by the CI's institution, however, CIA salary requests can be included in the budget if well justified. The Administering Institution must provide written assurance at time of award that the CI requesting salary support will be offered an employment contract exceeding the duration of Project Grant funding. If salary support for a CI is sought, Cancer Council reserves the right to request additional justification before agreeing to this funding.
- Services
 - publication costs (open access only)
 - ethics / governance costs for related research
 - consumer remuneration (e.g. travel, time served on meeting, expenses)
- Equipment
 - equipment or apparatuses over \$10,000 must be specified in the application
- Travel Costs
 - costs associated with domestic and international travel essential to the Project (economy travel only) as per approved budget
- Consumables

6.2 Unacceptable Budget Items

Budget items that will not be supported include overhead costs including but not limited to:

- operations and maintenance of buildings
- use of facilities and libraries
- hazardous waste disposal
- regulatory and research compliance
- Information Technology costs
- personal memberships of professional organisations and groups
- staff training and development costs not directly related to the Project
- research infrastructure including:
 - physical space and all the services associated with it
 - furniture for research staff
 - administrative services
 - office and laboratory services
 - animal house facilities
 - computer networks and basic network utilities
 - personal computers
 - utilities (electricity / gas / water)
 - patent costs
 - Associate Investigators' salary
 - student scholarships

6.3 Salary Support

Cancer Council follows NHMRC's Direct Research Costs Guidelines, with the exception of salary requests which are not restricted to NHMRC's pre-defined Personnel Support Package (PSP) levels. Amounts requested for personnel support may cover all salary and salary on-costs (e.g., payroll tax, workers compensation, leave loading, and superannuation).

Grant-supported personnel will be employees of the Institution(s) in which the research is conducted and will be subject to the conditions of employment of those Institutions. Cancer Council will make no contribution to the costs of their employment outside the grant offered.

7. Application Submission Process

Applications to the Cancer Council Project Grants comprise:

1. NHMRC Ideas Grant application, to be submitted to the NHMRC in accordance with their guidelines.
2. Submission of responses to the a) Supplementary Questions and b) Consumer Review Questions via the online grant submission form on the Cancer Council website.

NHMRC Ideas Grant application (requirements for Cancer Council funding)

1. Applications submitted via Sapphire must select "Cancer Council" as a funding option
2. Applicants must provide consent for NHMRC to release application data to partner organisations (that is, Cancer Council).

Visit the NHMRC [website](#) for information about applying to the Ideas Grant scheme and for access to Sapphire.

7.1 Supplementary Questions – Cancer Council specific

- Applications must be completed as part of Cancer Council online grant submission form which can be found on the Cancer Council [website](#).
- The Supplementary Questions included in the online grant submission form identify which Cancer Council(s) you are submitting your application to and seeks information specific to that Cancer Council. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the Eligibility Criteria and Guidelines of the Cancer Council(s) to which they are applying.
- Applicants must explain how they will modify the aims and objectives of the proposed study to fit within the funding limits of the Cancer Council scheme.
- Information provided in the Supplementary Questions will not be provided to the NHMRC and is for the exclusive use of Cancer Council to assist consideration of funding applications.
- Select the Cancer Council check box under the question "Which Cancer Council/s are you applying to?"
- Fill in the Supplementary Questions for Cancer Council Project Grants which are as follows:

- NHMRC Application ID
- Which Cancer Council/s are you applying to?
- NHMRC 9-page Research Proposal upload
- Chief Investigator A contact details
- Lay title and summary of your project (150 word limit)
- Research team – list of all Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators
- Administering Institution details
- Cancer type
- Study Information:
 - Broad and specific research areas as classified by the [Common Scientific Outline \(CSO\)](#)
 - Relevance to the causes, diagnosis, treatment or prevention of cancer (2500-character limit)
 - Age group
 - Type of research
 - Cancer population
- Is your application being considered for funding by the NHMRC and/or Cancer Australia?
- CCNSW - scope of research and budget
 - Project timeline (2500-character limit)
 - Budget
 - Modifications (2500-character limit)
 - Justification for salary requests (2500-character limit)
- Ethics and approvals
- Consumer review upload

7.2 Consumer Review Form

The Consumer Review responses require applicants to illustrate how the proposed research Project will address the five criteria:

- 1) Magnitude of problem and extent of benefit;
- 2) Pathway for realising the benefit,
- 3) Potential for application of findings,
- 4) Equity, and
- 5) Consumer Involvement.
 - Please refer to the Consumer Review Guidelines which can be found on the Cancer Council [website](#) for further guidance.
 - The Consumer Review questions are to be completed via the Consumer Review Form. Applicants will be prompted to upload the Consumer Review Form as part of the online submission form. The Consumer Review Form can be downloaded from the Cancer Council [website](#).
 - Cancer Council's Consumer Review Panel will be provided with *only* the responses to the Consumer Review Form questions. Ensure the Consumer Review responses can be read as stand-alone information, without reference to the NHMRC application and Supplementary Questions responses.

- Please ensure that the questions are addressed in lay and accessible language, providing the relevant information only. Word limits refer to the maximum length allowable but do not need to be fully used.
- Please involve your Project consumer in filling in these forms to ensure the responses are easily understandable to lay people without a research specific background. The consumer review will constitute a large part of your final application scoring.
- The Consumer Review Form must be completed adhering to the formatting requirements and page limits set out in the Consumer Review Guidelines for Project Grants.
- Applicants are to upload a single WORD file - name [App ID]_ConsumerForm_CIA Family Name, e.g., '9123456_ConsumerForm_Smith' when prompted as part of the Cancer Council online grant submission form (MS Word format only).
- Scanned documents will not be accepted.
- Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

8. Cancer Council Review Process

Cancer Council's research funding comes from donations from the general public. Consequently, funding research that is both of significant scientific merit and of value to the community we serve and represent helps to ensure Cancer Council responds to the genuine requirements of the community that supports us. Review of applications occurs in two stages. Applications are initially reviewed through the NHMRC Ideas Grant peer review process. Those applicants highly assessed by the NHMRC but unsuccessful in obtaining Ideas Grant funding are then reviewed for benefit and community engagement by Cancer Council's Consumer Review Panel.

Applicant responses in the consumer review form will be scored against the consumer review criteria by a panel of trained research consumers (the Consumer Review Panel) convened by Cancer Council. To determine the final ranking of applications, equal weighting is given to the NHMRC scientific review score and the consumer review score, that is, the Consumer Review Panel score comprises 50% of the final score assigned during the assessment process.

After consumer review both scores (NHMRC and consumer review) are considered equally and a final ranked list will be established. This list will be reviewed by the Cancer Research Committee (CRC, please see below) and the top ranked eligible applications suggested for funding to the Board. The decision of the Board is final.

More information about Cancer Council's application and assessment processes can be found on Cancer Council's [website](#).

8.1 Cancer Research Committee

The Cancer Research Committee (CRC) is established as a committee of the Cancer Council Board and provides oversight and strategic guidance for Cancer Council NSW's research funding program. Members of the CRC are researchers with a wide range of expertise, including clinical research, members of the cancer community, the Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Council and a representative of the Board.

The Cancer Research Committee has responsibility to ensure that procedures for allocating research funding and monitoring research progress and outputs are rigorous, transparent and systematic and conform to the highest standards of accountability and strict governance.

9. Grant Administration

9.1 Research Grant Agreement

After Board approval funding offers will be made to the successful applicants and their Administering Institutions. Upon acceptance of the offer, a Research Grant Agreement will be issued to the Administering Institution. The Administering Institution and CIA must accept the terms of the Research Grant Agreement and sign the Agreement before payments are made. No changes to the Agreement are allowable. It is recommended all parties familiarise themselves with the Research Grant Agreement prior to submission. The Research Grant Agreement is available to review on Cancer Council's [website](#). Please find key dates and deadlines in Table 2.

Table 2 Key Dates and Deadlines

Date	Milestone
12 March 2025	NHMRC Ideas Grant / Cancer Council Project Grant applications open
09 April 2025	Minimum data due for NHMRC Ideas Grant via Sapphire
7 May 2025	Closing date for NHMRC Ideas Grant applications via Sapphire
29 May 2025	Closing date for submission of Cancer Council Project Grants application via the Cancer Council online grant submission form.
Approx. November 2025	Cancer Council Consumer Review Panel convenes 4-6 weeks after NHMRC funding outcomes are released.
December 2025	Council Cancer NSW Board convenes. Cancer Council advises applicants of funding outcomes

Note: If NHMRC's Ideas Grant timeline is delayed, other key dates may also be delayed.

10. Reporting

CI's are contractually required to report on progress of the funded projects. Annual Progress Reports and Final Reports outlining the progress versus agreed milestones, research outputs and financials will be submitted using the provided templates.

Annual Reports are to be provided in Year 1, 2 and 3 and the Final Report in Year 4 of the grant funding period (Figure 1). In Year 5 following the end of the Project Cancer Council requests the submission of a Follow-Up Report to measure impact of any funded research. Submission of this report forms part of the requirements for funding. Please see the Research Grant Agreement for details.

These reports are due on or before February 28 each year.

Failure to submit reports on time may lead to suspension of funding as outlined in the Research Grant Agreement. Cancer Council reserves the right to recommend the suspension and / or termination of funding to a grant if progress is unsatisfactory. Successful CI's will be required to submit regular Financial Reports outlining expenditure of funds in relation to the grant. Cancer Council reserves the right to withhold payment if more than 25% of the budget in the reporting period is underspent.

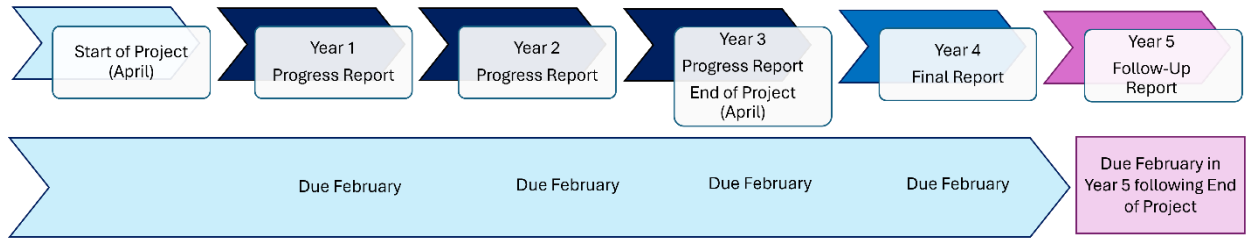


Figure 1 Cancer Council's Project Grants Reporting Schedule.

11. Variation Requests

Administering Institutions / CIA can request variations related to the Project, which must be submitted in writing via email to research@nswcc.org.au or as advised by the Research, Strategy and Operations (RSO) office at Cancer Council.

Examples of variation requests include:

- No-cost extensions
- Changes to personnel
- Budget reallocation >25%

Decisions on variation requests are at the absolute discretion of Cancer Council.

12. Enquiries

For enquiries about the **Cancer Council** Grants, please contact research@nswcc.org.au.

For enquiries about the **NHMRC** application process contact the NHMRC Research Help Centre on 1800 500 983 or email help@nhmrc.gov.au.