



ANZCA
FPM

**ANZCA
CLINICAL
TRIALS
NETWORK**

Research funding opportunities in
Australia: Guidance for anaesthesia
investigators

August 2025

Purpose of document:

This document provides anaesthesia, perioperative, and pain medicine researchers with practical guidance on navigating the Australian research funding landscape. It outlines major funding pathways, strategies for preparing competitive applications, and available support from the ANZCA Clinical Trials Network (CTN) to help investigators secure funding and build sustainable research programs.

Acknowledgements:

The development of the Anaesthesia Research Co-ordinator Network (ARCN) and ANZCA CTN toolkit is being led by the CTN office team, in collaboration with the ARCN sub-committee and the CTN executive. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the ANZCA CTN members, CTN office, ARCN sub-committee, and CTN executive in the creation, preparation, development, and review of this document.

Disclaimer:

The information in this document is for general guidance only. ANZCA CTN does not make any representations or warranties (expressed or implied) as to the accuracy, currency or authenticity of the information provided.

Copyright statement:

© Copyright 2025 – Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. All rights reserved.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from ANZCA. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, 630 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia. Email: ceo@anzca.edu.au

DOI

10.60115/11055/1336

Suggested citation for this document:

ANZCA Clinical Trials Network. *Research funding opportunities in Australia: Guidance for anaesthesia investigators*. Melbourne: Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists; 2025. doi 10.60115/11055/1336.

Document history:

Version	Contributors	Reviewed/Approved	Date Approved by ARCN Sub-Committee & CTN Executive	Changes
1.0	Paige Druce Prof David A. Scott AM	Karen Goulding Gillian Ormond Prof David A. Scott AM	1/8/25	Creation

Table of contents

1. Introduction	4
2. The Australian health research funding landscape	4
3. Funding categories	4
Category 1: National Competitive Grants	4
a. National Health and Medical Research Council	4
b. Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	5
Category 2: State and territory government schemes	5
4. Examples of alternative and supplementary funding streams	5
a. Colleges, societies and foundations	5
b. Hospital foundations	6
c. Philanthropic trusts and donors	6
d. International opportunities	6
e. Sub-study and nested study grants	6
5. Targeted support for ECRs	6
6. Finding and tracking grant opportunities	6
a. GrantConnect	6
b. Mailing lists and networks	6
7. Preparing competitive grant applications	7
Consumer involvement: Now a requirement	7
8. How the CTN Office can support your grant journey	7
9. Contact and further information	7

Research funding opportunities in Australia: Guidance for anaesthesia investigators

1. Introduction

Securing funding is a cornerstone of conducting high-quality clinical research. For researchers in anaesthesia, perioperative and pain medicine, understanding the diverse landscape of funding opportunities is essential to the successful development and delivery of studies.

This document based on a presentation by Paige Druce at the ANZCA CTN workshop 2023 offers a guide to funding pathways in Australia, with practical advice on finding opportunities, preparing competitive applications, and leveraging support from the ANZCA Clinical Trials Network (CTN) office.

Australia invests significantly in health and medical research, with billions of dollars available across government, state, hospital, philanthropic and international sources. The CTN has successfully leveraged these funding streams to support multicentre clinical trials or single-site studies leading to multi-centre trials, and this guide outlines how emerging and experienced researchers can do the same.

2. The Australian health research funding landscape

Overview of Health and Medical Research Funding (2020–2021):

- Total Expenditure: \$6.9 billion.
- Primary Contributor: Australian government.
- State/Territory Governments: ~13%.
- Non-Government sector (philanthropy, industry, societies): ~6%.

The CTN's funding portfolio reflects this national distribution. Since its inception, the CTN has secured over \$73 million in funding from a variety of sources:

- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) (Australia), and New Zealand government grants.
- The ANZCA Foundation.
- Hospital and health service research programs.
- Philanthropic and international funding schemes.

3. Funding categories

Category 1: National Competitive Grants

a. National Health and Medical Research Council

[National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#)

[Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Scheme](#)

- Supports large-scale, high-quality clinical trials.
- Annual funding pool: ~\$70 million.
- Funding duration: 1–5 years.
- 2024 success rate: ~11.3%.

Investigator Grants

- Supports individual researchers at all career stages.
- Consolidated salary and research support package.
- Levels: EL1, EL2, L1, L2, L3.
- Annual pool: \$360–\$380 million.
- Duration: 5 years.
- Enables clinicians and academics to build sustained research programs.

b. Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

- \$20 billion endowment for strategic health research.
- Priority-driven funding calls aligned with national needs.
- Initiatives include rare diseases, translational research, and early/mid-career researcher (EMCR) schemes.
- Also supports other areas e.g. International Clinical Trial Collaborations.
- Success rates vary by initiative (e.g., 5.4% for EMCR grants, 30% for rare diseases).

Category 2: State and territory government schemes

- Region-specific funding opportunities.
- Examples:
 - [NSW Health Translational Research Grant Scheme](#)
 - [QLD Metro South Health Research Support Scheme](#)

These schemes support local innovation, often offering seed funding, pilot project support, or infrastructure enhancement.

4. Examples of alternative and supplementary funding streams

a. Colleges, societies and foundations

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) Foundation

- A number of grants and named awards available.
- Can include a higher degree scholarship.
- Supports new investigator grants or may support sub-studies in an existing project.
- Applications close by April 1st each year.

Clinical Trials Network pilot/feasibility study grants

- Up to \$10,000 one-off.
- Award based on presentation at CTN annual trials workshop as well as succinct formal submission.
- Valuable to guide protocol for larger multicentre trial and aids definitive grant application.

Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA)

- Early Career Research & trainee rounds in March and October.
- Other prize and grant programs throughout the year.

Society for Paediatric Anaesthesia in New Zealand and Australia (SPANZA)

- Annual grant rounds totalling up to \$40,000

Disease or Area-Specific Foundations

- Cancer Council e.g. [Cancer Council Vic](#)
- [Heart Foundation](#)

b. Hospital foundations

Most large hospitals have associated foundations offering:

- Seed funding.
- Project grants.
- Infrastructure grants.
- Equipment support.

Example: Dr Tom Painter received a Hospital Research Foundation grant to expand infrastructure and launch the ROCKeT trial at Royal Adelaide Hospital.

c. Philanthropic trusts and donors

Examples include:

- [Ian Potter Foundation](#)
- [MINDEROO Foundation](#)
- Hospital/university advancement arms.

These grants often require clear alignment with philanthropic objectives and may support community, Indigenous health or capacity-building projects.

d. International opportunities

- National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)) (USA).
- Department of Defense ([DoD](#)) (USA).
- National Institute for Health and Care Research ([NIHR](#)) (UK).
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research ([CIHR](#)) (Canada).

Australian institutions may be eligible as collaborators or sub-awardees.

e. Sub-study and nested study grants

Many larger trials incorporate mechanisms to support nested sub-studies that address secondary or exploratory questions.

5. Targeted support for ECRs

ECRs are a strategic priority for most funders, with dedicated schemes across:

- [NHMRC](#) and [MRFF](#)
- Universities.
- State health departments.
- Societies (e.g., [ASA](#), [SPANZA](#)).
- Philanthropic organisations.

Fellowships and project grants for ECRs help establish track records and transition researchers toward independence.

6. Finding and tracking grant opportunities

a. GrantConnect

[GrantConnect](#)

- Official portal for Australian Government funding.
- Allows for custom alerts and filters.

b. Mailing lists and networks

- Subscribe to newsletters from:

- Your university or hospital research office.
- National societies.
- CTN mailing lists.

7. Preparing competitive grant applications

Key elements of a strong application:

- Clear and compelling rationale.
 - Multi-centre or large grant applications include a succinct literature review/specific meta-analysis.
 - A pilot/feasibility study to support the methodology.
- Alignment with funding call priorities.
- Clear aims with aligned outcome measures.
- Feasible design with expert team and infrastructure.
- Transparent and justified budget.
- Defined impact and translation pathway.

Consumer involvement: Now a requirement

Engaging consumers meaningfully is now mandatory for most funding schemes.

Best practices:

- Involve consumers early in idea development and design.
- Co-develop research priorities.
- Include consumers in grant development and governance.
- Budget for remuneration and participation costs.

Avoid:

- Tokenistic engagement (e.g., just piloting).
- Vague or general descriptions.

Resources:

- [MRFF Consumer Involvement Guidelines](#)
- [NHMRC Consumer and Community Involvement Guidelines](#)

8. How the CTN Office can support your grant journey

The CTN Office offers structured support to maximise your funding success:

- Mentoring and peer review: Get feedback on your draft applications.
- Letters of support: From CTN leadership or host institutions.
- CTN endorsement process: Enhance credibility and impact.
- Get advice on consumer engagement.
- CTN workshop presentations: Gain real-time feedback from:
 - Senior trialists.
 - Statisticians
 - Co-ordinators and trial managers
 - Craft group leaders.

9. Contact and further information

To request CTN Office support, or discuss a grant in development:

Email: ctn@anzca.edu.au

Website: <https://www.anzca.edu.au/research/anzca-clinical-trials-network>