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## NATIONAL BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

# COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ACCELERATOR (CRA) ROUND 2 - 2026 GRANT GUIDELINES

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### Key Dates:

<b>EOI Applications open</b>	31 March 2026
<b>EOI Applications close</b>	2 June 2026 at 5pm NSW local time
<b>Full Application open (by invitation)</b>	22 July 2026
<b>Full Application close</b>	24 September 2026 at 5pm NSW local time
<b>Full Application Interviews</b>	To be scheduled late October 2026
<b>Outcome advice to Applicants</b>	1 March 2027
<b>Commencement of Funding</b>	Prior to 30 June 2027

### Enquiries:

[research@nbcf.org.au](mailto:research@nbcf.org.au)

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## 1. The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF)

The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) is Australia’s largest not-for-profit organisation funding world-class breast cancer research towards our vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer.

Since our inception in 1994, NBCF has invested over \$250 million dollars towards more than 650 world-class research projects across Australia. In this time, the death rate from breast cancer in Australia has reduced by over 40%.

We have seen remarkable progress, but the job is not done.

At NBCF, we’re determined to create a better tomorrow. We know research matters, and it is central and critical to improving breast cancer outcomes. That’s why we fund the very best breast cancer research in Australia by awarding grants via open national, competitive, and rigorous peer review processes.

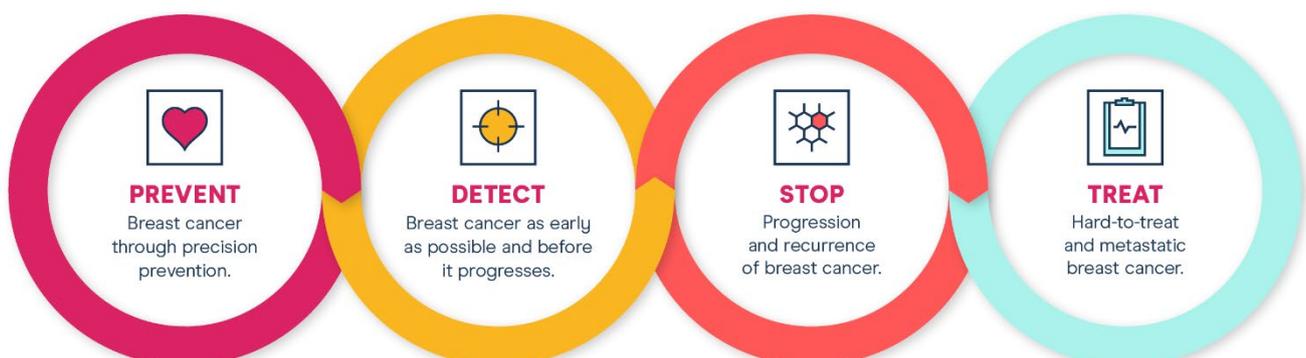
### 1.1 Pink Horizon Research Strategy

The *Pink Horizon Research Strategy*, launched in November 2023, is a pioneering five-year research strategy intended to support a diverse yet connected portfolio of research at a scale of investment that matches the boldness of our vision. NBCF is investing up to **\$125 million over 5 years** to help drive progress towards ending the 3,300 deaths from breast cancer each year in Australia.

The *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* is informed by our knowledge of who is dying from breast cancer and was developed with deep engagement with researchers, clinicians, and people with lived experience of cancer. This ensures that research objectives target the real-world challenges and opportunities that are critical to realising our vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer.

The strategy directs investment towards research that asks and addresses significant, intractable questions, driving the breakthroughs required to reduce mortality. Through targeted and sustained funding, and a commitment to collaboration and impact, we will enable and accelerate the innovative research needed to end deaths from breast cancer.

The NBCF *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* objectives are:



### 1.2 Funding Principles

All research proposals supported under the Pink Horizon Research Strategy must describe and demonstrate:

- How the research will contribute to advancing progress towards the NBCF vision of *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*.



- Active involvement of people with a lived experience of breast cancer appropriate to the type of research.
- A proactive commitment to multidisciplinary, national and/or international collaboration.
- Clear opportunities for early and mid-career researcher development.
- Openness to contribute actively as part of the NBCF research community (for example, attend scientific exchange forums, participate in future peer /expert review panels if required).
- Willingness to share ideas and data to accelerate progress towards Zero Deaths from breast cancer.

## 2. Collaborative Research Accelerator Grant Scheme

The strategic intent of the Collaborative Research Accelerator (CRA) grant scheme is to provide significant and recurrent funding for large-scale collaborative research activity. Funding aims to bring together the multidisciplinary skills and expertise of a collaborative ecosystem of researchers and research teams working together to address an intractable question with a clear line of sight to *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*.

The CRA grant scheme aims to enable visionary, transformative research at a scale and pace that cannot be achieved through singular, short-term research granting efforts. By encouraging cross-institutional collaboration, reducing duplication of effort and leveraging co-funding, NBCF aims to amplify the reach and impact of the research - accelerating discoveries that reduce mortality and bring us closer to a future where no life is lost to breast cancer.

### 2.1 Key Grant Details

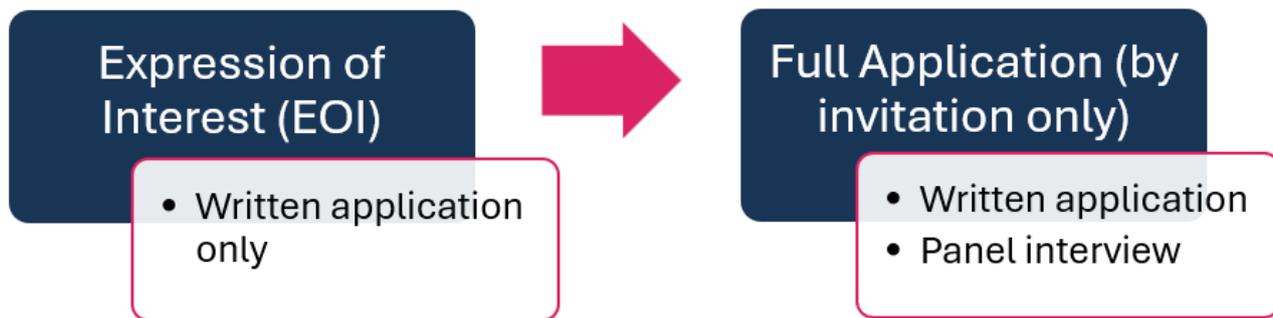
**Grant Amount:** \$25 million (including up to \$20 million NBCF funding plus up to \$5 million (20% co-funding)

**Grant period:** maximum of 5 years

#### Key Dates:

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Full Application Interviews	To be scheduled late October 2026
Outcome advice to Applicants	1 March 2027
Commencement of Funding	Prior to 30 June 2027

**Application format:** This funding call will follow a two-stage application process:



### 3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Alignment of research question to one or more NBCF Pink Horizon research objective(s): Prevent, Detect, Stop or Treat.
- Lead Institution must be an Australian Administering Institution with an ABN committed to sub-contracting other collaborating institutions.
- Principal Investigator must be an Australian citizen / permanent resident or have the appropriate working visa valid for the duration of the grant and be affiliated with / employed by an Australian Administering Institution.
- Proposal must include at least two collaborating research institutions, including more than one Australian institution.
- Total grant value is equal to or less than AUD\$25,000,000 over 5 years.
- Application must include a commitment to provide at least 20% in co-funding, comprising a minimum 10% cash contribution. The remaining balance can be in-kind support or further cash contributions. Applicants must provide details of their co-funding commitment, specifying both the total amount and the proportions of cash and in-kind contributions.
- Only one CRA can be submitted by a Principal Investigator in any CRA grant round.
- A Principal Investigator can only hold one active CRA grant at any point in time.
- Active involvement of people with a lived experience of breast cancer appropriate to the type of research (including a minimum of two named consumers).

Applicants should note that they are required to provide detailed information in their application to address these eligibility criteria.

NBCF will not consider any application that does not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

Projects are ineligible for funding by NBCF, if funded or under offer of funding, from another source for the same purpose (see Section 9.2).

See Section 9 for further conditions and limits.

#### 3.1 Institutions

##### Lead and National Collaborating Institutions

The Lead and national Collaborating Institutions must be Australian administering institutions (university, hospital or medical research institute) that meet the defined research governance

requirements as specified by the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#)<sup>1</sup>. See Sections 10.2 and 10.3 for further information relating to administering institution contractual conditions and project compliance.

*Conditions:*

- Successful award of a previous, current or future NBCF grant/award will not preclude a lead or national collaborating institution's eligibility to be named as a lead or collaborating institution on a CRA application.

## International Collaborating Institutions

NBCF recognises the value that international collaboration offers to Australian research efforts and strongly encourages collaboration to strengthen impact. Non-Australian (International) Institutions can be included where:

1. the research endeavour will be strengthened by this inclusion; and
2. where the research expertise involved is not available in Australia.

International institutions can form part of a Research Workstream led by an Australian Lead or Collaborating Institution. However, an International Institution cannot be a Lead Institution or lead a workstream. See Section 9.3 for all conditions related to international institutions.

*Conditions:*

- Successful award of a previous, current or future NBCF grant/award will not preclude an international institution's eligibility to be named on a CRA application.

## 3.2 Investigators

### Investigators

Applications are open to researchers of any discipline or at any career stage, provided they are employed by an approved Administrative Institution in Australia, or by a recognised international research institution (university, hospital or medical research institute).

Types of investigators are:

- **Principal Investigator (PI):** PI is responsible for leading the proposed research, must be an Australian citizen, have resident status or have an appropriate visa to work in Australia for the entire duration of the funding period. The PI must be based in Australia for work purposes for the duration of the grant.
- **Co-Investigators (Co-Is):** Investigators with a specific expertise that is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. At least half of the nominated Co-Is must be Australian citizens, have resident status or have an appropriate visa to work in Australia for the entire duration of the funding period. Co-Is are expected to remain as active researchers for the duration of the grant. A portion of the Co-Is will be nominated as Workstream Leads in the application. Workstream Leads must be employed at the Lead or a National Collaborating Institution.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/manage-your-funding/nhmrc-funding/administering-institutions#:~:text=NHMRC%20funds%20research%20through%20institutions,meet%20defined%20research%20governanc e%20requirements.>

- **Associate Investigators (AIs):** Investigators providing intellectual or practical input, such as consumers, laboratory support or in providing access to unique samples. AIs may be advisors and mentors to the project team to deliver the proposed work.

Early to Mid-Career Researchers (EMCR) should be actively involved in this grant opportunity as co-investigator or Associate Investigators. An Early to Mid-Career Researcher is defined as an individual who is within ten years of their PhD award date, excluding career disruptions.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consider involving people with lived experience of breast cancer as members of the research team, including where appropriate as named investigators.

*Conditions:*

- Only one application can be submitted by a Principal Investigator (PI) in any CRA grant round.
- A PI can only hold one active CRA grant at any point in time.
- There is no limit on the number of Co-Is that can be named on an application.
- There is no limit on the number of AIs that can be named on an application.
- There are no restrictions on the number of applications a Co-I or AI can be named on for this grant opportunity, and a PI can be named on another application as a Co-I or AI.
- Successful award of a previous, current or future NBCF grant/award will not preclude an individual's eligibility to be named as a PI, Co-I or AI on a CRA application, with the exception of a PI who holds an active CRA grant. NBCF Endowed Chairs are eligible to apply for and / or be named on a CRA application.
- An investigator cannot submit an application that is the same as or similar (in whole or in part) to a project funded by NBCF, or any other funder, or on work already published.

### 3.3 Additional Eligibility Requirements

An application may be deemed ineligible if it does not meet the eligibility criteria and other requirements set out in these guidelines. This could include (but is not limited to) reasons such as the requested budget being over the maximum amount available and/or including ineligible expenditure not in line with [NBCF's Grant Expenditure Guidelines](#), minimum data not being entered into the application form in the [NBCF Grants Portal](#), not having the required documentation or sign-offs upon submission, or the proposed research duplicates research previously or currently being undertaken (see Section 9.2).

## 4. Funding Information

### 4.1 Funding Amount and Timeframe

- It is anticipated that 1 CRA grant will be funded in each CRA grant round
- Total grant value is equal to or less than AUD\$25,000,000 over 5 years (up to \$5,000,000 per year across 5 years)
- NBCF's financial contribution will be equal to or less than AUD\$20,000,000 (up to AUD\$4,000,000 per annum)
- Application must include a commitment to provide at least 20% of the total grant funding request in co-funding, comprising a minimum 10% cash contribution and the remainder as in-kind support. The remaining balance can be in-kind support or further cash contributions (see section 4.3)
- Commencement of funding will be upon funding agreement execution and must be before 30 June 2027.

## 4.2 Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Applications may include salaries for investigators, additional other personnel, consumer engagement costs, and student stipends needed to deliver the project, as well as costs of materials and equipment. NBCF encourages the inclusion of early- and mid-career researchers and supports career development across all career stages.

Funding can support all reasonable and justified research project costs in line with [NBCF's Grant Expenditure Guidelines](#). Refer to that document for all eligible and ineligible costs.

### Additional eligible expenditure specific to the CRA grant opportunity

**International institutions:** A maximum of 20% of the total value of the CRA grant is permitted to be paid to International Institutions. See Section 9.3 for international institution conditions.

## 4.3 Co-funding Contribution

An application must include a commitment to provide at least 20% in co-funding, comprising a **minimum 10% cash contribution**. The remaining balance can be in-kind support or further cash contributions.

Applicants must provide details of their co-funding commitment, specifying both the total amount and the proportions of cash and in-kind contributions at EOI application stage. At the full application stage, this must be confirmed through letters of support from all collaborating institutions, specifying their respective co-funding contributions (see Section 8.2).

This co-funding contribution must directly support the program of research. The co-funding contribution cannot be used to offset organisational overhead costs (for example: administrative and management expenses, intellectual property management, utilities, facility support, and maintenance of equipment or specialized premises related to research).

### In-kind contributions

Up to 10% of total project expenditure can be in the form of in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions are eligible non-cash contributions. These can include facilities, equipment and services provided by lead and collaborating institutions and/or labour contributions for research personnel or other specialist expertise critical to the successful delivery of the project. **In-kind contributions must directly relate to eligible activities to count towards your total eligible grant value.**

In-kind contributions may include items such as:

- Proportional salaries for research personnel or other specialist experts where it is demonstrated that they will be working directly on the project.
- Access and/or use of facilities, equipment and services provided by a lead or collaborating institution at no cost.

In-kind contributions should be valued at cost.

## 5. Assessable Criteria

Applications are assessed by an independent panel of national and international experts, including people with lived experience of breast cancer.

The panel evaluates both EOI and full applications against the **four** assessable criteria (below) and scoring descriptors (Appendix 2: Scoring Matrices).

There are three weighted assessable criteria for the CRA grant, with varying percentage weightings. In addition, there will be a fourth assessable criteria, scored using a different rating scale. This is to reflect the size of this research grant and NBCF's commitment to fund only the highest quality research program that will achieve its outcomes through strict governance, appropriate budget management and strong risk mitigation.

The assessable criteria are:

	<b>Assessable Criteria</b>	<b>Total weighting (out of 100%)</b>
1	Research Methodology, Quality and Feasibility	35%
2	Transformative Potential and Impact	35%
3	Capacity and Capability to Deliver	30%
4	Overall Value, Governance and Risk	Non-weighted (rated using a separate scale)

More details for each assessable criterion are outlined below.

### **5.1 Assessable Criteria 1: Research Methodology, Quality and Feasibility (35% weighting)**

Reflects the scheme's intent to fund original, high-quality and high-impact research that addresses complex, persistent or intractable challenge/s in breast cancer which impede progress toward Zero Deaths from breast cancer. Assessment will consider the clarity and alignment between the research questions, proposed methods, scientific quality and feasibility of the project plan, including realistic timelines and milestones for delivering a cohesive program of research. Proposals must also demonstrate how the research aligns with, and delivers on, one or more of the *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* objective/s and how the program collectively addresses a critical gap in the field. In addition, the assessment will evaluate the strength of the collaborative approach, including how research across multiple workstreams and participating institutions will be coordinated, integrated, and supported by meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of breast cancer.

Responses MUST clearly articulate:

- **Research**
  - the research question(s) and the proposed approach for addressing them
  - a robust research methodology, with appropriate milestones and timeframes for delivering the overall program of research and workstreams within the five-year grant period
  - an explanation of each the research workstreams, including how they interconnect to form a cohesive program of research that collectively addresses the research question
  - originality of the research and how it builds on (rather than duplicates) existing research to address a critical gap in the breast cancer field
  - how the proposed research aligns with one or more of the Pink Horizon Research Strategy objective/s and directly contributes toward NBCF's vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer
- **Research coordination and integration**
  - how the research will be organised across multiple workstreams and institutions, and how these interdependent components will be coordinated to form a cohesive program that delivers against the overarching research purpose
- **Consumer involvement**
  - how people with lived experience will be involved in the proposed research, both as dedicated research consumer partners and through other community consumer

engagement (e.g. focus groups, community contributors), to provide diverse insights and ensure meaningful input across the entire grant period to ensure the research remains relevant and grounded in real-world impact

- the approach for attracting and supporting participants in proposed clinical research studies

## **5.2 Assessable Criteria 2: Transformative Potential and Impact (35% weighting)**

Reflects the scheme's intent to fund a highly ambitious, impactful program of research, delivered at a pace and scale that necessitates multidisciplinary, and multi-institutional collaboration. The proposal must demonstrate the transformative potential to meaningfully reduce deaths from breast cancer, supported by a clear and robust and achievable pathway to impact. Assessment will consider the program's transformative potential and pathway to reducing mortality, the strength and diversity of the proposed collaboration, and the extent to which the proposed research is informed by, and delivers meaningful impact for, people affected by breast cancer.

Responses MUST clearly articulate:

- **Transformative potential and impact**
  - the transformative potential of the program that could lead to direct improvements in mortality reduction, including a clear estimation of the potential quantum of impact (specifically lives saved) by the end of the grant period and at relevant timepoints thereafter, and the assumptions underpinning estimates of impact
  - a defined, realistic translational pathway to impact and timeframe in which research outcomes will be implemented, including strategies for scaling and sustaining impact beyond the grant period
- **Collaboration**
  - a clear description of collaboration (including unique contributions and interdependencies) across disciplines, institutions, jurisdictions, and borders, fostering multidisciplinary approaches that matches the complexity and ambition of the research
  - how the collaborative structure will accelerate research, translation, scalability, and sustainability of outcomes
- **Consumer impact**
  - the significance of the focus of the study and proposed solution for people affected by breast cancer
  - describe how the needs, values and priorities of people with lived experience of breast cancer have informed the program's design, development and planned translation and implementation

## **5.3 Assessable Criteria 3: Capacity and Capability to Deliver (30% weighting)**

Reflects the scheme's intent to fund an expertly led, well-governed program of research. Assessment will consider the overall composition and strength of the research team across collaborating institutions, as well as the individual researcher's expertise, skills, experience, and leadership capacity of team members to deliver of the program of work at this scale and complexity. Assessment will consider whether the team (researchers and consumers) collectively brings the breadth, diversity, and proven track record required to execute an ambitious, collaborative research program. Consideration will also be given to the team's commitment to developing emerging research leaders and to their capability and readiness to meaningfully involve and support people with lived experience of breast cancer throughout the research.

Responses MUST clearly demonstrate:

- **Team expertise and diversity across the collaboration**
  - the research team's collective experience appropriate to the scale, complexity, and ambition of the research, including a proven track record of delivering high-impact, collaborative research and leadership in their respective fields
  - the roles and responsibilities of each team member and collaborating institution, ensuring they collectively demonstrate the appropriate mix of skills and knowledge (e.g. across disciplines, genders, cultures, career stages and research sectors) to enable successful program delivery
- **Development**
  - a clear plan to involve and create meaningful opportunities for early and mid-career researchers, supporting their development and integration into the research and governance structures
- **Consumer involvement**
  - the research team has the right experience and capacity to involve and support consumers with lived experience of breast cancer in the proposed research in a meaningful, effective and efficient manner

#### **5.4 Assessable Criteria 4: Overall Value, Governance and Risk (Non-weighted – assessed using a separate rating scale)**

Reflects the scheme's intent to fund a research program that will achieve its outcomes through strict governance, appropriate budget and strong risk mitigation. Assessment using the separate rating scale (see Appendix 2: Scoring Matrices) will evaluate:

- whether the budget (including the nature and value of co-funding and in-kind contributions) is appropriate, well-justified, and offers good value for the funding requested to deliver the research program and anticipated impact
- the robustness of the proposed governance structure, including accountability, decision-making transparency, effective coordination across institutions and with consumers, and the adequacy of mechanisms for monitoring and adaptive management to keep the program on track
- the risk management plan's adequacy, including identification of key risks and mitigations including how any assumptions and dependencies will be addressed.

## **6. Consumer Involvement**

The appropriate level and type of consumer involvement will vary depending on the nature of the project. NBCF expects applicants to:

- Include a minimum of two named consumers on their application (who are expected to provide written agreement (e.g. via email or a letter addressed to the PI) that they agree to be named as a consumer in the application, prior to submission)
- Consider including named consumers as Associate Investigators (strongly encouraged)
- Conduct ongoing meaningful (bidirectional) engagement in the preparation of the application, which will be continued throughout the project should the application be successfully funded

Applicants are advised to refer to NBCF's [Guidelines for Consumers and Researchers](#).

For the CRA grant, consumers are expected to be included in the CRA Governance Framework.

## 7. Governance and Structure of the Research Team

CRA's are designed to fund an interconnected suite of multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research, involving a diverse research team.

- Each CRA must nominate a **Lead Institution** and a **Principal Investigator (PI)** who will be responsible for:
  - submission of the application
  - signing the Funding Agreement with the NBCF
  - receiving and distributing the CRA funding
  - agreeing and signing Institution Agreements with each Australian Collaborating Institution
  - overseeing delivery of the CRA
  - overarching CRA reporting and other obligations requested by NBCF.
- Each CRA will be made up of a series of connected **Research Workstreams**. Research Workstreams must be led by the PI or one of the Co-I team based at the Lead or Collaborating Institutions. Research in these workstreams can be undertaken in one or across multiple institutions (including International Institutions). There is no restriction on the number of Research Workstreams.
- CRA's may involve **international researchers (see Section 9.3 for conditions)**. Where included as part of a Research Workstream, International Institutions should nominate one or more Co-I(s).
- There may be other Participating Organisations, such as clinical trial sites, local health districts and Commercial Entities (see Section 9.4) who will be involved in the research program but not as a Lead or Collaborating Institution. These should be detailed in the application forms

### 7.1 Governance Committee

At a minimum, the NBCF requires applicants to:

- establish a self-formed Governance Committee to oversee the integrity, performance and collaborative nature of the program of research
- maintain and apply a Governance Framework detailing how the grant will operate
- ensure governance processes are open, transparent, and available to all Collaborating Institutions.

NBCF requires applicants to describe in detail how they propose to ensure the integrity and performance of the research performed as part of their application.

Each Collaborating Institution will remain responsible for authorising the commencement of research and for the appropriate governance of research activity undertaken at that institution in line with appropriate guidelines. Collaborating Institutions and researchers may establish their own governance structures and must conduct research in alignment with their own organisational policies and processes.

## Composition of Governance Committee

Applicants will be required to establish a self-formed Governance Committee that comprises:

- a Governance Lead (most likely this will be the PI)
- each Co-I named as a Workstream Lead
- at least one member from each Collaborating Institution (if not captured above)
- at least one early career researcher as defined in NBCF's investigator categories (< 3 years postdoctoral experience)
- at least one consumer

## Governance Framework

The Governance Committee will be responsible for overseeing the Governance Framework. This includes ensuring that:

- research activity aligns with the proposed goals of the CRA
- ways of working are in line with responsibilities outlined in these guidelines
- responsibilities and accountabilities for Collaborating Institutions and researchers working as part of the grant are agreed, understood, enacted and maintained
- all contributors to the CRA are committed to self-regulation to preserve the integrity of the research
- risks are documented, mitigated, managed and reported
- the rights and reputations of researchers and research participants are respected, and conflicts of interest declared, managed and reported
- research governance activities are monitored and evaluated, and the framework is modified as appropriate
- outcomes of the research are communicated responsibly.

## 8. Application and Review Process

The applications include administrative and assessable sections and are to be completed on an online application form for submission via the [NBCF Grants Portal](#). PIs must first register and create an account in the Grants Portal. Refer to the [NBCF Grants Portal Application Submission Guide](#) found on the NBCF website for further instructions. Copies of the application forms will be made available to support preparation and collaborative input.

### 8.1 Application Process

This funding call will follow a two-stage application process:

1. **Expression of Interest (EOI)** - written application submitted via the [NBCF Grants Portal](#).
  - The EOI Application is a shorter, streamlined application aimed to provide an overview of the research project and team.
  - The EOI Application must be completed and submitted by the CRA PI.

Top ranking EOI applications that best meet the EOI criteria will be invited to submit a more comprehensive Full Application. The Full Application will be required to provide further detail about the proposed research and justification for funding.

2. **Full Application** (by invitation only following EOI stage)
  - a. Written application – completed and submitted by the CRA PI via the [NBCF Grants Portal](#).

- b. Panel Interview, during which applicants will present their full application proposal, address the key assessment criteria and address questions from the review panel.

## 8.2 Completing the Grant Application

Both the EOI and Full Application will be completed via the [NBCF Grants Portal](#), with associated documents to be uploaded. The budget and risk templates are available via the Grants Portal.

Refer to the [NBCF Grants Portal Application Submission Guide](#) for full instructions.

### Checklist:

Item	Stage (EOI and Full Application)	Description	Format
<b>Application content</b>	EOI and Full	Direct input into NBCF Grants Portal	Application templates will be made available on NBCF website
<b>Budget</b>	EOI and Full	Summary budget information to be captured in NBCF Grants portal (EOI and Full). Separate budget spreadsheet to be completed and uploaded at Full Application stage	Budget template available via NBCF Grants Portal
<b>Risk Management template</b>	Full only	Separate risk register (including mitigation strategy) to be completed and uploaded	Risk template available via NBCF Grants Portal
<b>Consumer commitment letters</b>	EOI and Full	Written agreement to be named as a consumer in the application (see Section 6)	No prescribed template
<b>Lead institution commitment letter</b>	EOI and Full	Commitment letter from lead organisation confirming endorsement of the application, agreement to administer the research, provision of appropriate facilities and services, all collaborating institutions (both national and international) and a summary of agreed co-funding contributions (cash and in-kind)	No prescribed template
<b>Collaborating institution letters (both national and international)</b>	Full only	Commitment letters from collaborating institutions confirming endorsement of the application, agreement to administer the research, provision of appropriate facilities and services and co-funding contributions.	No prescribed template

<b>Relative to opportunity / career disruption breaks evidence</b>	Full only	Letters (e.g. from institutions / employers) confirming any relevant career disruptions of PIs or Co-Is	No prescribed template (see Appendix 3: Relative to Opportunity Assessment and Career Disruptions for details)
<b>Funding Agreement</b>	Full only		Available via NBCF Grants Portal

### 8.3 Review Process

The NBCF Research team will check all CRA Expressions of Interest (EOIs) and Full Applications for eligibility, completeness, and adherence to guidelines.

#### Expert Review Panel

Eligible applications will be assessed at both EOI and Full Application stage by an independent, expert review panel. The review panel will consist of a non-scoring Chair and members comprised of scientists, clinician researchers, and consumers.

The role of the Chair is to ensure that a fair, consistent, and equitable process is adhered to, and to facilitate reaching agreement on the final ranking through a balanced and considered discussion of applications.

The role of the members is to evaluate and score applications using the assessable criteria in Section 5 and score descriptors in Appendix 2: Scoring Matrices and participate in discussions of the applications.

The Chair and all members must act in confidence and are required to sign a Deed of Confidentiality. Reviewers must declare interests of scientific as well as a non-scientific nature, following NBCF's [Declaration of Interest Guide](#).

The review panel provides a funding recommendation to the NBCF Board of Directors. The NBCF Board retains ultimate authority for all funding decisions.

#### Score Weighting

EOI and Full Applications will be assessed according to the 3 weighted assessable criteria (Section 5.2) by both scientific and consumer reviewers. Consumer reviewers scoring will account for 20% of the total percentage weighting, reflecting the significance of the consumer voice in the CRA grant review and decision-making process.

Consumer and scientific weightings will vary across the 3 weighted assessable criteria as per the table below. This approach ensures the consumer voice is elevated in areas most relevant to those with lived experience, the challenge being addressed, consumer involvement, and the potential impact gained.

Criterion (Total Weighting)	Scientific Reviewers	Consumer Reviewers
Research Methodology, Quality and Feasibility (35%)	30%	5%
Transformative Potential & Impact (35%)	25%	10%
Capacity and Capability to Deliver (30%)	25%	5%
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>

The scientific reviewers only will assess the fourth assessable criteria (overall value, governance and risk) using a separate rating scale (see Appendix 2: Scoring Matrices).

## 8.4 Feedback on Applications

EOI applications will not receive specific feedback on their applications.

All Full Applications will receive general feedback following the outcome of their applications, which may include reviewer comments.

## 9. Additional Grant Conditions

### 9.1 Intellectual Property and Commercialisation

NBCF encourages and supports a broad range of breast cancer research, including early-stage research projects with commercial potential that can generate new Intellectual Property (IP) and may lead to commercialisation of a product (or service). However, NBCF will NOT fund projects directly focussed on the commercial development of a product (or service), as there are alternative avenues of funding available.

Applications where pre-existing IP is the major foundation for the project can apply for a CRA Grant, however, the application cannot be for the commercial development of that IP.

Pre-existing IP is considered as any IP that has already been created, developed, funded, derived or otherwise brought for further development, either by the Investigators or by a commercial entity linked to the Investigators.

### 9.2 Justification of Research Originality and Non-Duplication

Projects are ineligible for funding by NBCF, if funded or under offer of funding from another source. NBCF will not fund research that it considers is insufficiently different to research that is either currently funded or the subject of another funding offer. If funding for a project (or similar projects) is offered concomitantly by NBCF and by another research funder, NBCF reserves the right to withdraw the offer of funding wholly, or in part, in its absolute discretion in order to maximise the opportunity for breast cancer research in Australia.

Whether a project is the subject of other funding is 'similar' to the NBCF project will be determined by the independent external review, under the governance of the NBCF Research Advisory Committee, at its absolute discretion, following its review of both the application submitted to NBCF and the application made to the other funding body. For the purposes of making this decision, the Administering Institution must provide a copy of the other funding application to NBCF if requested.

### 9.3 International Institutions

NBCF recognises the value that international collaboration brings to Australian research efforts. Non-Australian (International) Institutions can be included within a CRA where the research endeavour will be strengthened by this inclusion and where the research expertise involved is not available in Australia. Funds can be used to support directly associated research initiatives or to purchase research services from an international supplier where these services are not available in Australia.

A maximum of 20% of the total value of the CRA grant is permitted to be paid to International Institutions. However, an International Institution cannot lead a Workstream, and a researcher based at an International Institution cannot be nominated as a Workstream Lead. International Institutions can, however, form part of a Research Workstream led from an Australian Lead or national Collaborating Institution.

The contract for services and payment to International Institutions should be via the Lead Institution or national Collaborating Institution leading the relevant Research Workstream. Involvement of International Institution(s) must be specified in the Funding Agreement. The Lead Institution will be responsible for reporting to NBCF any funds paid to an International Institution as part of the CRA financial reports and audited financial statements.

A co-funding contribution (cash and/or in-kind) from participating International Institution(s) is encouraged. Contributions from international institutions will count towards the 20% co-funding contribution required.

If a CRA intends to involve an International Institution, applicants must clearly describe:

- the specific international expertise / technique / resource required to achieve the outcomes of the CRA
- why the research cannot be conducted in Australia and / or how the international expertise will strengthen the CRA research endeavour
- how the knowledge / techniques / resources generated through the international activity will be transferred back to Australia
- how the research conducted overseas will benefit Australians affected by breast cancer.

### 9.4 Commercial Entities

For-profit / commercial entities may participate as part of a CRA where their contribution will strengthen the research. For profit / commercial organisations will not be funded directly as a Lead or Collaborating Institution. NBCF reserves the right to review individual requests for participation in a CRA by a for-profit / commercial entity in line with its conflict-of-interest policy.

## 10. Successful Grant Applications – Funding Agreement

### 10.1 Funding Agreement

Upon acceptance of an offer of funding from NBCF, a funding agreement will be prepared and issued to the Lead Institution for review and signing. This funding agreement will certify that the institution endorses the application, is willing to administer the research, and has the appropriate facilities and services to be made available for use by the applicant.

The agreement will include: (a) the research to be undertaken and milestones identified; (b) the total budget; (c) expected distribution of funds to Collaborating Institutions; (d) details of any International

Institutions involved and associated budget allowance and any cash/in-kind contributions; (e) total co-funding commitment; (f) the governance structure/framework and expectations; (g) terms and expectations for delivery of the grant; (g) overarching reporting requirements; (h) variation terms and all other general agreement terms.

A copy of the funding agreement will be made available to those invited to submit Full Applications.

All parties must accept the terms of the funding agreement and sign the agreement before the project commences, and any payments are made.

## 10.2 Institution Agreements

**Institution Agreements** are agreements between the Lead Institution and each Australian Collaborating Institution participating in the grant. These Agreements should indicate acceptance by each Collaborating Institution of overarching terms defined in the Funding Agreement. Institutional Agreements should include details of the research, funding, budget, co-funding contribution, reporting expectations and insurances required for the research to be undertaken at the Collaborating Institution.

International (non-Australian) Institutions should have an agreement in place with either the Lead or one of the Collaborating Institutions specifying terms for their involvement and including detail of the research, budget, co-funding contribution, reporting expectations and anything else relevant to the work to be conducted.

The application must certify that all institutions involved endorse the application, are willing to administer the research, and have the appropriate facilities and services to be made available for use by the applicants.

## 10.3 Compliance

Lead and Collaborating Institutions must have in place, and maintain for the term of the funding agreement, appropriate insurances, and policies and procedures for the management of public funds, management of Intellectual Property, and good scientific conduct. All institutions and NBCF-funded research projects must comply with the requirements for responsible and ethical research practice including, but not limited to:

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
- Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (NHMRC, 2013)
- National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research
- Principles and guidelines for the care and use of non-human primates for scientific purposes (NHMRC, 2016)
- Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (NHMRC, 2018)
- Ethical guidelines on the use of assisted reproductive technology in clinical practice and research (NHMRC, 2017)
- Guidelines for Genetic Registers and Associated Genetic Material (NHMRC, 1999)
- Guidelines under section 95A of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards
- National Clinical Trials Governance Framework
- Gene Technology Act 2000

## 11. Successful Grant Applications - Monitoring

### 11.1 Agreement Variations

The PI / Lead Institution can request amendments to the funding agreement, such as adding a new Collaborating Institution, transfer of PI or changes to research milestones. These requests must be made to NBCF via the Governance Committee in line with the terms outlined in the funding agreement.

New Research Workstreams and Co-Is can be added to the grant within the approved budget at any stage if the proposed research aligns with the goals and / or if additional expertise is required to address the research question. NBCF should be notified of any changes following review via the Governance Committee.

### 11.2 Staying up to date

Lead Institutions must inform NBCF of any significant organisational or business changes, especially those affecting your ability to complete the grant, continue operations, or meet financial obligations.

### 11.3 Reporting Requirements

PIs will be contractually required to report on progress of funded projects per the schedule of reporting provided in the funding agreement. Annual Progress Reports, Final and Follow Up Reports will be submitted via [NBCF Grants Portal](#).

The report templates will be made available to successful applicants.

- **Annual Progress Reports** must be submitted in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 via the NBCF Grants Portal and include (but not limited to):
  - progress against agreed milestones
  - research outputs and impact
  - budget progress (both as a whole and per workstream)
  - co-contributions received (as expected or otherwise)
  - evaluation of the governance structures and framework.
  - *(May also require meeting with NBCF team to discuss.)*
- In Years 2.5 and 4, formal progress evaluation will be conducted by NBCF, including in-person presentations and interviews. Junior researchers are encouraged to be included in these presentations
- The **Final Report** and **Follow-Up Report** must be submitted in Years 5 and 7
- NBCF may continue to collect information on research outcomes and impacts beyond the 7-year Follow-up Report to support long-term reporting and evaluation
- At the completion of the funding, an **audited financial statement** is required.

NBCF reserves the right to audit financial statements (both whole and per Research Workstream). NBCF reserves the right to amend, suspend or terminate funding for a specific Research Workstream or the entire CRA in the event that:

- progress is unsatisfactory
- reports are not submitted on time
- if more than 20% of the funds are unspent at the time of the Progress Report.

If governance processes, including the function of the Governance Committee, are deemed unsatisfactory, NBCF reserves the right to request the appointment of an external governance mentor.

## 12. Additional Ongoing Requirements

### 12.1 Peer Review Committee Participation and Community Engagement

Administering Institutions (Lead or Collaborating Institutions) must agree to ensure that any of their research personnel operating as a PI or Co-I will, from time to time, and as reasonably requested by NBCF:

- join an NBCF Peer Review Committee and participate in assessing and scoring applications for NBCF funding grants and other activities
- provide presentations, tours, and host meetings with NBCF donors.

### 12.2 Content and media opportunities

NBCF requests that all planned content opportunities (photo moments, written content) related to the awarded grant are shared with NBCF ahead of time to assess the opportunity to collaborate and/or amplify across NBCF owned, earned, or paid channels. This is an important aspect of the terms of engagement as it assists in demonstrating NBCF's impact and supports future fundraising activities. NBCF will lead all media activity related to the awarded grant. This ensures a coordinated and consistent approach to how the research program is represented publicly and helps maximise visibility and impact across all communications.

### 12.3 Acknowledgement of Support

All publications including journal articles/books, media releases and presentation of data derived from the awarded grant must acknowledge the support of NBCF. NBCF requests that the correct branding (NBCF logo) is used and that investigators reference their NBCF grant code.

## 13. Privacy and Confidentiality

NBCF respects and upholds your applicable rights to privacy protection under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (including the Australian Privacy Principles), in regulating how we collect, use, disclose and hold your personal information. Please refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

The security of confidentiality of your personal information is important to NBCF, and we aim to apply robust practices to ensure privacy is protected and respected. Privacy management is a continuous and evolving process, and we regularly update our practices to accommodate change in technology, the organisation's function and legislation. Grant application information such as name, contact details, and identification details are collected. NBCF may disclose your personal information to any other individuals or organisations with your prior consent or where required or authorised by law. The parties to which we disclose personal information include our contractors who provide service, for example conducting surveys, facilitating information collection, event registration, fundraising, database management, printing, mailing, data storage, banking, payment processing, auditing, accounting, legal, business consulting, marketing, research and technology services.

## 14. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to all committed individual, community and corporate donors, and would like to acknowledge their support and commitment to funding breast cancer research.

NBCF acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

## 15. Enquiries

Enquiries can be directed to the NBCF Research team at [research@nbcf.org.au](mailto:research@nbcf.org.au). Please include the application ID in the subject line of the email.

## Appendix 1: Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Administering Institution</b>	An Australian university, hospital or medical research institute that meets NHMRC's research governance requirements and is eligible to administer NBCF funding.
<b>Annual Progress Report</b>	A yearly report submitted by the PI outlining progress toward milestones, outputs, finances, governance evaluation, and co-contributions.
<b>Associate Investigator (AI)</b>	Investigator providing intellectual or practical input (e.g., consumers, sample access, lab support) and may act as an advisor or mentor.
<b>Career Disruption / Career Break</b>	A prolonged interruption ( $\geq 1$ month) to a PI or Co-I's research capacity due to parental leave, major illness, carer responsibilities, COVID-related factors, or similar.
<b>Co-funding Contribution</b>	Minimum 20% of total grant request, including at least 10% cash, with the remainder as in-kind or additional cash contributions.
<b>Collaborating Institution</b>	Partner institution that is eligible to collaborate in a CRA; must meet NHMRC governance requirements. International institutions may collaborate under specific conditions.
<b>Collaborative Research Accelerator (CRA)</b>	A large-scale, multi-institutional, multidisciplinary grant scheme funding transformative research that addresses intractable breast cancer questions.
<b>Consumer</b>	A person with lived experience of breast cancer (patient, survivor, carer, family member) involved in research design, governance, conduct, or dissemination.
<b>Consumer Commitment Letter</b>	Written agreement (email or letter) from each named consumer confirming their willingness to be included in the application.
<b>Consumer Engagement</b>	Meaningful, bidirectional involvement of people with lived experience in planning and delivering the research. Includes both named partners and broader contributors.
<b>Co-Investigator (Co-I)</b>	Researcher with expertise critical to the research. At least half must be Australian-based for the duration of the grant.
<b>Declaration of Interest</b>	A mandatory disclosure of conflicts of interest by reviewers, based on NBCF's Declaration of Interest Guide.
<b>Early to Mid-Career Researcher (EMCR)</b>	Researcher within 10 years post-PhD, excluding career disruptions; encouraged to be Co-Is or AIs.
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Requirements all applicants must meet, including alignment with Pink Horizon objectives, institutional eligibility, co-funding, consumer involvement, and other constraints.
<b>Expression of Interest (EOI)</b>	First-stage, shorter application outlining the research overview and team composition.
<b>Full Application</b>	Detailed, invitation-only application including methodology, budget, risk management plan, and confirmed co-funding.

<b>Funding Agreement</b>	Legal agreement between NBCF and the Lead Institution outlining the research program, budget, milestones, governance and reporting obligations.
<b>Governance Committee</b>	A self-formed committee overseeing collaboration, integrity, and performance, comprising the PI, workstream leads, one representative per Collaborating Institution, an ECR, and a consumer.
<b>Governance Framework</b>	Documented structure that defines roles, responsibilities, ways of working, risk management, and communication processes for the CRA.
<b>In-kind Contribution</b>	Non-cash contributions such as facilities, equipment, services, or labour that directly support the project and are valued at cost.
<b>Institution Agreement</b>	Agreement between the Lead Institution and each Collaborating Institution defining roles, budget, co-funding, reporting and research arrangements.
<b>International Institution</b>	Non-Australian institution bringing expertise not available in Australia; cannot be the Lead Institution; up to 20% of grant value may be directed to them.
<b>Lead Institution</b>	Institution responsible for submitting the application, administering funds, signing agreements, and overseeing the CRA.
<b>Multi-institutional Collaboration</b>	Partnerships across multiple Australian (and where appropriate international) institutions to deliver a unified program of research.
<b>NBCF Pink Horizon Research Strategy</b>	NBCF's five-year research strategy guiding investment to reduce mortality by focusing on intractable research challenges.
<b>Principal Investigator (PI)</b>	Lead researcher responsible for coordinating the CRA, overseeing delivery, and reporting; must be Australian-based with appropriate residency/visa status for the grant duration.
<b>Progress Evaluation</b>	Formal evaluations in Years 2.5 and 4 involving presentations and interviews with NBCF.
<b>Relative to Opportunity</b>	An assessment approach taking into account personal circumstances that have affected research productivity.
<b>Research Workstream</b>	A distinct but interconnected component of the overall research program, led by the PI or a Co-I, undertaken across one or more institutions.
<b>Risk Management Plan</b>	A plan identifying risks, mitigation strategies, and monitoring processes for delivering the project.
<b>Scoring Matrices</b>	Benchmarks used by reviewers to assess applications against each assessable criterion.
<b>Vision of Zero Deaths</b>	NBCF's overarching goal of eliminating deaths from breast cancer.
<b>Workstream Lead</b>	Co-Investigator responsible for leading and coordinating a research workstream.

## Appendix 2: Scoring Matrices

These scoring matrices are a guide for assessing applications against technical criteria. It offers benchmarks to support consistent and fair scoring but is not a checklist. Assessors should use a “best fit” approach, selecting the score that reflects the overall merit of the application. This ensures assessments are thorough, equitable, and transparent.

### Assessable Criteria 1: Research Methodology, Quality and Feasibility (35% weighting)

SCORE						
FUNDABLE		COULD FUND			BELOW MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FUNDING	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are exceptionally clear, highly innovative, and strongly aligned with Pink Horizon objectives.</li> <li>• Methodology is near-flawless with robust milestones and timeframes ensuring feasibility.</li> <li>• Workstreams are fully integrated into a cohesive and cross-institutional program of research.</li> <li>• Demonstrates outstanding originality.</li> <li>• Addresses a critical gap in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are very clear, innovative and well aligned with Pink Horizon objectives.</li> <li>• Methodology is very strong with clear milestones and timeframes.</li> <li>• Workstreams are well integrated into an organised program across multiple institutions.</li> <li>• Demonstrates high originality.</li> <li>• Addresses an important gap in breast cancer research.</li> <li>• Expected to deliver significant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are clear and aligned with Pink Horizon objectives, with minor concerns.</li> <li>• Methodology is strong with appropriate milestones and timeframes, minor concerns noted.</li> <li>• Workstreams are mostly integrated with cross-institutional involvement noted.</li> <li>• Demonstrates originality.</li> <li>• Addresses a relevant gap in breast cancer research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are generally clear and aligned with Pink Horizon objectives but raise some concerns.</li> <li>• Methodology is adequate with minor flaws in milestones or timeframes.</li> <li>• Workstreams show partial integration and limited or siloed cross-institutional involvement.</li> <li>• Originality is moderate.</li> <li>• The gap addressed in breast cancer research is less critical.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach lack clarity or alignment with Pink Horizon objectives.</li> <li>• Methodology raises major concerns about feasibility.</li> <li>• Workstreams are poorly integrated or siloed in institutions.</li> <li>• Originality is limited.</li> <li>• The gap addressed in breast cancer research is unclear.</li> <li>• Impact towards vision of Zero Deaths is uncertain.</li> <li>• Minimal involvement of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are unclear and poorly aligned with Pink Horizon objectives.</li> <li>• Methodology is flawed with significant feasibility concerns.</li> <li>• Workstreams lack integration and little to no consideration for cross-institutional cohesion.</li> <li>• Originality is very limited.</li> <li>• The gap addressed in breast cancer research is weak.</li> <li>• Impact towards vision of Zero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question and approach are absent or inappropriate and no alignment with Pink Horizon objectives</li> <li>• Methodology is absent or wholly inadequate.</li> <li>• Workstreams are not described or connected and there is no cohesion between institutions noted.</li> <li>• No originality.</li> <li>• Does not address a gap in breast cancer research.</li> <li>• Will not contribute to</li> </ul>

<p>breast cancer research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected to deliver major advances towards vision of Zero Deaths.</li> <li>• Comprehensive involvement of people with lived experience across the timeframe of the grant.</li> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is comprehensive, well-resourced, and fully integrated into the research design.</li> <li>• Where relevant, very clear, strong and feasible approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants.</li> </ul>	<p>advances towards vision of Zero Deaths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong involvement of people with lived experience throughout the grant.</li> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is clear, robust, and integrated into the research design.</li> <li>• Where relevant, clear and feasible approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to deliver meaningful advances towards vision of Zero Deaths.</li> <li>• Good involvement of people with lived experience.</li> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is sound and practical, though some details require clarification.</li> <li>• Where relevant, somewhat clear and feasible approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected to deliver modest advances towards vision of Zero Deaths.</li> <li>• Adequate, but limited involvement of people with lived experience.</li> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is basic and lacks depth or integration.</li> <li>• Where relevant, adequate approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants, with minor flaws.</li> </ul>	<p>people with lived experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is unclear or incomplete.</li> <li>• Where relevant, poor approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants.</li> </ul>	<p>Deaths is highly unlikely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little to no involvement of people with lived experience.</li> <li>• Consumer engagement plan is absent or tokenistic.</li> <li>• Where relevant, significantly flawed approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants.</li> </ul>	<p>vision of Zero Deaths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No involvement of people with lived experience.</li> <li>• No plan for consumer engagement provided.</li> <li>• Where relevant, approach for attracting and supporting clinical research study participants is absent.</li> </ul>
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**Assessable Criteria 2: Transformative Potential and Impact (35% weighting)**

SCORE						
FUNDABLE		COULD FUND			BELOW MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FUNDING	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates exceptional transformative potential with a clear, robust pathway to significantly reduce breast cancer mortality.</li> <li>• Collaboration is exemplary, spanning disciplines, institutions, jurisdictions, and borders and is fully sustained throughout the program.</li> <li>• Provides a compelling and well supported estimation of quantum of impact (lives saved).</li> <li>• Translational pathway is highly defined, realistic, and scalable.</li> <li>• Program design strongly reflects needs, values, and priorities of people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates very strong transformative potential with a clear pathway to reduce mortality.</li> <li>• Collaboration is strong and sustained across multiple disciplines and institutions.</li> <li>• Provides a clear estimation of impact with reasonable assumptions.</li> <li>• Translational pathway is well defined and scalable.</li> <li>• Program design reflects needs and priorities of people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates strong transformative potential with minor concerns.</li> <li>• Collaboration is good and spanning relevant disciplines and institutions.</li> <li>• Provides estimation of impact, though some assumptions require clarification.</li> <li>• Translational pathway is clear, but scalability is less certain.</li> <li>• Program design includes input from people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates moderate transformative potential with notable concerns.</li> <li>• Collaboration is adequate but limited in scope or sustainability.</li> <li>• Estimation of impact is vague or lacks strong justification.</li> <li>• Translational pathway is partially defined, and scalability is unclear.</li> <li>• Program design includes little input from people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates limited transformative potential.</li> <li>• Collaboration is narrow or poorly described.</li> <li>• Estimation of impact is weak or unsupported.</li> <li>• Translational pathway lacks clarity and details for scalability.</li> <li>• Program design shows minimal evidence of input from people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates very little transformative potential.</li> <li>• Collaboration is minimal or tokenistic.</li> <li>• Estimation of impact is absent or unrealistic.</li> <li>• Translational pathway is unclear or infeasible.</li> <li>• Program design lacks meaningful input from people with lived experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates no transformative potential.</li> <li>• No collaboration described.</li> <li>• No estimation of impact provided.</li> <li>• No translational pathway described.</li> <li>• No input from people with lived experience evident.</li> </ul>

**Assessable Criteria 3: Capacity and Capability to Deliver (30% weighting)**

SCORE						
FUNDABLE		COULD FUND			BELOW MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FUNDING	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates exceptional collective expertise aligned with the scale and complexity of the research.</li> <li>• Proven track record of delivering high-impact, collaborative research and leadership.</li> <li>• Outstanding mix of skills, disciplines, genders, cultures, and career stages.</li> <li>• Strong commitment to early- and mid-career researcher development.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are highly appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers is very strong, ensuring effective delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates very strong expertise and experience.</li> <li>• Excellent track record of collaborative research.</li> <li>• Very good mix of skills and career stages.</li> <li>• Clear commitment to early- and mid-career researcher development.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are strongly appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers is strong.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates strong expertise with minor gaps.</li> <li>• Good track record of collaborative research.</li> <li>• Appropriate mix of skills and career stages.</li> <li>• Commitment to early-career researcher development evident.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers is fair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates adequate expertise with some concerns.</li> <li>• Track record is moderate.</li> <li>• Mix of skills and career stages is limited.</li> <li>• Commitment to early-career researcher development is minimal.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are very somewhat appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers raises minor concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates limited expertise.</li> <li>• Track record is weak.</li> <li>• Mix of skills and career stages is poor.</li> <li>• Minimal commitment to early-career researcher development.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are marginally appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers raises major concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates very little expertise.</li> <li>• Track record is very weak.</li> <li>• Mix of skills and career stages is inadequate.</li> <li>• No clear commitment to early-career researcher development.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are not appropriate and aligned with the research program.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers are inadequate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team demonstrates no relevant expertise.</li> <li>• No track record.</li> <li>• No mix of skills or career stages.</li> <li>• No commitment to early-career researcher development.</li> <li>• Consumer skills, experience and backgrounds are absent.</li> <li>• Research team's expertise and capacity to support consumers is absent.</li> </ul>

**Assessable Criteria 4: Overall value, governance and risk (non-weighted – rating scale)**

<b>Rating</b>		
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Marginal</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application provides excellent overall value and is an excellent investment.</li> <li>• The proposed budget is detailed, aligns very well with the scope and scale of the proposed research program, and is sufficient to undertake all components of work.</li> <li>• The proposed governance framework is robust and will ensure appropriate management and delivery of all aspects of the program.</li> <li>• The applicant's risk management plan is well considered and appropriate to the research program.</li> <li>• Cash and/ or in-kind contributions will support the delivery and completion of the research program and likely adoption of the research findings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application provides good overall value and is a good investment.</li> <li>• The proposed budget, with some minor shortcomings, is substantiated and will meet the scope and scale of the proposed research program.</li> <li>• The proposed governance framework is considered and may ensure appropriate management and delivery across aspects of the program.</li> <li>• The applicant's risk management plan is appropriate to the research program, with some minor shortcomings.</li> <li>• Cash or in-kind contributions may support the delivery and completion of the research program and likely adoption of the research findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application provides marginal overall value and is a poor investment.</li> <li>• The proposed budget is higher than expected for a research program of the same scale and scope, with some line items questionable.</li> <li>• The proposed governance framework is not robust and will not ensure appropriate management and delivery of all aspects of the program.</li> <li>• Cash or in-kind contributions will not support the delivery and completion of the research program and likely adoption of the research findings.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3: Relative to Opportunity Assessment and Career Disruptions

### Relative to Opportunity

Capability of the research team is assessed with consideration of the achievements of individual researchers 'relative to opportunity'.

Circumstances considered under relative to opportunity include:

- Amount of time spent as an active researcher; this specifically excludes consideration of full-time or part-time work
- Employment outside the research sector including time spent working in industry
- Career disruption (further details below)
- Available resources (including situations where research might be conducted in remote or isolated communities)
- Clinical, administrative or teaching workload
- Relocation of an applicant and his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity
- Restrictions on publication associated with time spent working in other sectors (e.g. industry, policy, and government)
- Typical performance of researchers in the research field in question

### Career Disruption/Breaks

Career Disruption/Breaks is a sub-category of 'relative to opportunity' that will be considered when determining the duration of the applicant's postdoctoral experience.

A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an investigator's (PI or Co-I) capacity to work, due to:

- Parental leave
- Major illness
- Carer responsibilities including parental leave and care for immediate family (e.g. spouse, children or elderly parent)
- Covid-19 pandemic related disruptions

The interruption will involve a continuous absence from full-time work for periods of one month or greater and/or a long-term partial return to work (e.g. part-time absences from work due to circumstances classified as career disruptions).

PIs and Co-Is should provide details of relative to opportunity including the effect this has had on their research, research achievements and productivity relative to the stage of career, along with supporting documents (e.g. letter from employer) for consideration.