



THRIF-KTDRA CNARTS Research Project Grants 2025

Guidelines v1.0

Round closes: Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 4:00pm (ACDT)

Table of Contents

1. About Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia.....	3
2. About the Round.....	3
3. Requirements	3
3.1 Administering Institution.....	3
3.2 Eligibility Requirements for Chief Investigators	4
3.3 Incomplete, False or Misleading Information.....	4
3.4 Terms and Conditions for Funding.....	5
4. Funding	5
4.1 Funding Amount	5
4.2 Salary Support.....	5
4.3 Direct Research Costs.....	6
5. Application Stages and Assessment.....	6
5.1 Stage 1: Full Application	6
5.2 Stage 2: Further Information / Interview	7
5.3 Funding Decision.....	7
6. How to Apply	7
6.1 Round Timetable (indicative)	8
APPENDIX A – Assessment Criteria.....	9

1. About Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia

Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia (KTDR) supports ground-breaking translational medical research that is helping to improve the lives of people suffering with these diseases.

KTDR supports research on the mechanisms of disease and potential avenues for improving patient outcomes in transplantation and immunological kidney diseases. While there is a focus on the Central and Northern Adelaide Renal and Transplantation Services (CNARTS), KTDR also proudly promotes wide collaboration with many research groups in Australia and world-wide, working to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with diabetes and kidney disease.

KTDR is a charity of The Hospital Research Foundation (THRF) Group. THRF Group consists of 12 charities and supports the community by funding vital medical research and patient care initiatives, and will be the entity administering this round.

2. About the Round

The THRF-KTDR CNARTS Research Project round is seeking proposals relating to any aspect of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research.

Proposals must be for research projects that are:

- Led by a staff member of CNARTS or with meaningful CNARTS staff member involvement on the investigator team
- Ready to commence by or before June 2026
- Currently unfunded or have funding due to cease by or before June 2026.

THRF Group particularly encourages proposals incorporating:

- Teams combining suitably experienced research and clinical personnel.
- Transdisciplinary teams combining ideas and approaches from different fields. Such teams could include personnel from engineering, computer science, or other suitable “non-medical” disciplines, and/or suitable industry organisations.
- Early career researchers.
- Effective and meaningful consumer participation and engagement.

Proposals **must not duplicate or substantially overlap with** existing projects or pending proposals.

Assessment Criteria for the round are detailed in Appendix A.

3. Requirements

3.1 Administering Institution

Applications must be submitted via a single, eligible Administering Institution. The Administering Institution (AI) must, *inter alia*:

- (a) have publicly available policies and procedures governing the responsible and ethical conduct of research of the AI in accordance with NHMRC Approved Standards and Guidelines, including the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and all applicable Commonwealth, State and/or Territory laws and regulations;
- (b) be able to commit and manage the time contribution of the Chief Investigator A (CIA) to the project; and
- (c) commit to the provision of the general facilities and supporting resources necessary for the project’s conduct.

If an application is approved for funding, THRF Group will enter into a funding agreement with the nominated AI detailing appropriate management and administration requirements for the approved project.

Please note: For applications submitted with the University of Adelaide or University of South Australia as the Administering Institution, the appropriate current entity can be chosen at time of submission. Provision will be made for the change of Administering Institution to the new Adelaide University in 2026 as required.

3.2 Eligibility Requirements for Chief Investigators

The first-named investigator on an application – Chief Investigator A (CIA) – will be considered the Project Leader, who has the primary responsibility to run and report on the project (if approved). The CIA must be a salaried staff member of the nominated Administering Institution. A CIA with more than one formal appointment can only nominate one organisation to be the Administering Institution (AI) for the purposes of this round.

The CIA must hold either:

- 1) a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) (either a Masters by Research or a PhD) in line with Australian Qualifications Framework Levels 9 or 10 (see www.aqf.edu.au/framework/aqf-levels) from a recognised institution, or
- 2) an equivalent combination of relevant skills, training, and/or experience. Evidence for claims of equivalence is to be provided in the CIA biosketch.

For this round:

- An applicant may only submit a maximum of one (1) application as CIA.
- Up to three (3) additional Chief Investigators (*i.e.* CIB – CID) may be included on each application.
- CIs can be involved in no more than two (2) applications (including involvement as CIA).

THRF Group reserves the right at its sole discretion to exclude from further consideration any application(s) contravening these limits.

All CIs must:

- be able to demonstrate a track record relevant to the field of this round;
- provide a meaningful contribution and time commitment to the proposed project over its duration;
- not be a currently enrolled HDR candidate; &
- have met their obligations regarding previous THRF Group-funded projects, including submission of satisfactory reporting as per the relevant funding agreement/s.

Investigators playing a minor role in the project and/or with an intermittent/low time commitment should be indicated as Collaborators/Associate Investigators. Currently enrolled HDR candidates contributing to the project should also be similarly listed.

Researchers (i) located outside South Australia, and/or (ii) whose **only** organisational appointment is by a non-salaried honorary, visiting or affiliate appointment, cannot be CIA, but may be listed as an additional Chief Investigator (CIB – CID), or included as a member of the broader project team.

3.3 Incomplete, False or Misleading Information

All information submitted to THRF Group (including EOs, full applications and reports) must be complete, current and accurate at the time of submission, and free of false or misleading information.

Examples of false or misleading information include, but are not limited to, providing:

- dishonest statements regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought;
- incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding;
- inaccurate claims in publication records; or

- incomplete or misleading information of ethics and governance requirements or other factors that may impact the researcher's ability to commence the research program in a timely manner.

If THRF Group becomes aware of omissions or inclusion of misleading information in an application, it may choose to exclude an application from assessment, withdraw funding, and/or refer the matter to the AI.

3.4 *Terms and Conditions for Funding*

If a project is selected for funding, THRF Group and the AI will enter into a formal funding agreement detailing funding terms and conditions. Unless otherwise agreed, the project must commence within six (6) months of receiving notification of the award, but not before the funding agreement is fully executed and all relevant ethics approvals and collaborative agreements are in place.

The funding agreement between THRF Group and the AI will include provisions that Chief Investigators must:

- provide regular reports on the progress of the research through SmartyGrants as requested. Progress will be monitored against agreed milestones, and evidence of outputs and outcomes will be required;
- present their project at CNARTS forums as requested;
- report any unexpected delays or changes to the research plan to THRF Group – KTDRA in a timely manner;
- acknowledge THRF Group – KTDRA funding support in all presentations and publications relating to the project;
- provide updates upon request to THRF Group - KTDRA;
- participate in media opportunities coordinated by THRF Group & KTDRA where necessary, including local radio and local and national media announcements. Relevant media advice and preparation will be available via THRF Group's Communications team;
- ensure THRF Group - KTDRA is consulted regarding any media opportunities led by the recipient's university, SA Health or other organisation, and seek in advance THRF Group - KTDRA approval regarding the content, timing and release of public announcements, media releases, and/or online information relating to the project; and
- assist in future grant reviews if requested by THRF Group (where reasonably practicable).

4. Funding

4.1 *Funding Amount*

The maximum funding that can be requested is up to \$50,000 (total) over (up to) two (2) years. Funding can be requested to support salaries and direct research costs as further described below.

Funding cannot be requested to support organisational indirect costs, infrastructure levies, or administrative costs. THRF Group reserves the right to vary the available funding in this round at its sole discretion.

4.2 *Salary Support*

Salary support may be requested for CIs and/or other personnel needed for the project. The need for any such salary support must be well-justified. For the avoidance of doubt, salary support may be requested for Collaborators/Associate Investigators, but such requests must be very well-justified.

Salary support requests should include the base salary and direct on-costs, such as leave accruals and the superannuation guarantee contribution. Such on-costs are limited to a maximum 30% of the base salary request. Applicants must verify their AI's base salary scales and rate of on-costs before finalising budgets in the application form. Project staff are to be appointed at standard award

conditions, commensurate with experience, as determined by the AI.

Due to the limited term of project funding, stipends for Higher Degree by Research students should not be included in proposal budget requests.

4.3 *Direct Research Costs*

Direct research costs are those directly related to the conduct of the project and may include research reagents, consumables, services, software, minor equipment (<\$10,000 unit cost), and travel for the purposes of conducting the research program. For clarity, conference attendance, publication, open access fees, patenting and/or IP protection costs are not considered direct research costs and should not be included in proposal budget requests.

5. Application Stages and Assessment

This round will follow a two-stage process as outlined below. THRF Group reserves the right to modify or amend these stages at its sole discretion.

- Stage 1. Full Application
- Stage 2. Further Information / Interview

These stages are described in further detail below.

5.1 *Stage 1: Full Application*

Eligible applicants may submit a full application in the specified format through THRF Group's SmartyGrants platform. Full applications must provide sufficient detail on scientific merit, feasibility and budget considerations, and expand on how project outcomes can deliver beneficial impacts to CNARTS and patient healthcare more broadly. Full applications must also include [biosketches](#) for CIB-CID (as applicable) and [AI endorsement](#) on the prescribed forms.

SmartyGrants will be open for 6 (six) weeks to allow preparation and submission of applications. THRF Group expects applicants to provide all necessary information to make evaluation possible on the SmartyGrants full application form, but reserves the right to request additional information if needed.

Eligible full applications will be assessed by (non-conflicted) members of the KTDRA Advisory Committee, with staff from CNARTS, Renal Laboratory and THRF Group. Conflicts of interest will be managed by the Chair. External reviewers may be invited if required.

Further details on the assessment criteria and scoring system are provided in Appendix A. All assessment criteria will be considered in the context of the Round Objectives, and THRF Group's Purpose more broadly. Please note that assessors will follow the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy (www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/policy-and-priorities#download), and will be required to deal with applications and assessment matters confidentially.

Lay language components of the invited submissions may be used to engage consumers in aspects of the decision-making process.

In the case that no submission is deemed worthy of funding, THRF Group may close the round without awarding funding. If THRF Group reasonably considers any applications to be similar or complementary to other applications received, THRF Group may request that the applicants consider some or greater cooperation between the researchers (where appropriate). There is no obligation imposed on applicants under this condition. Any cooperation that might arise from such a suggestion by THRF Group would be voluntary.

It is the CIA's responsibility to ensure that the nominated AI certifies the full application in the [specified format](#) as part of the submission.

5.2 Stage 2: Further Information / Interview

Before the final decision is made, THRF Group – KTDRA may request further information or detail from applicants and/or the AI. Shortlisted applicants may also be interviewed by a panel convened by THRF Group – KTDRA.

5.3 Funding Decision

The final funding decision will be made by THRF Group, informed by reviewer assessments, and determined by funding availability. This decision will be final, and no further negotiations will be entered into.

THRF Group reserves the right not to fund any application for any reason, including where the relevant project personnel and/or Administering Institution have not fulfilled their obligations under previous THRF Group funding agreement/s, including but not limited to reporting, financial acquittal, and acknowledgement requirements.

Successful applicants and their AI will be notified by THRF Group, and THRF Group will prepare a funding agreement for the nominated AI.

6. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted online through THRF Group's SmartyGrants platform. Please note:

- **Only electronic submission through the SmartyGrants system will be accepted.**
- **Applicants must click on the "Submit" button when the application is finalised.**
- **Applicants will then receive a confirmation of application submission by email.**
- **If the email is not received (after checking junk/spam folders), applicants should assume that the submission has not occurred and re-attempt submission.**

Please also note:

- The SmartyGrants PDF download/preview may not reflect all required questions within the application form as some sections may be conditional. We strongly recommend working through the online form within the SmartyGrants system well before the deadline to ensure you understand all of the information that will be required to complete the submission.
- Unless otherwise specified in the application form, all uploaded files should be provided in PDF format. File names should include a short description of the item followed by the CIA's family name, for example "Transcript_Smith.pdf".
- Links to download the correct version of the biosketch and AI endorsement templates are provided within these guidelines and within the SmartyGrants form.
- Unless otherwise requested by THRF Group, information additional to that requested in the application form will not be considered for assessment.

Apply at:

<https://hospitalresearch.smartygrants.com.au/2025-KTDRA>

Round closes on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 4:00pm (ACDT)

All queries should be directed to grants@hospitalresearch.org.au

Incomplete, late or incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered

6.1 Round Timetable (indicative)

Round opens	Monday 27 th October 2025 at 12:00 PM (ACDT)
Round closes	Wednesday 10 th December 2025 at 4:00 PM (ACDT)
Outcomes	Indicatively 6-8 weeks after close of round

Please note that THRF Group is unable to provide specific dates for stages noted as 'indicative' above.

APPENDIX A – Assessment Criteria

All Assessment Criteria will be considered in the context of the Round Objectives, and THRF Group’s Purpose to:

“Together, fight for better health and wellbeing for our community through life-changing medical research and improved healthcare”.

Unmet Need (20%)

The proposal addresses an unmet need that is, in the context of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research, an issue of:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Critically important</p> <p>The proposal compellingly articulates the urgency/criticality of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> its significance to consumers; its alignment with the round objectives; & describes how if addressed and resolved, it would be extremely significant in improving clinical care and health outcomes.
4	Next 10%	<p>Highly important</p> <p>The proposal provides a very strong case for the importance of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> its strong relevance to consumers; its alignment with the round objectives; & describes how if addressed and resolved, it would significantly improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
3	Next 15%	<p>Important</p> <p>The proposal provides a good case for the importance of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> its relevance to consumers; its alignment with the round objectives; & describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
2	Next 20%	<p>Somewhat important</p> <p>The proposal provides some justification for an unmet need in the field and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> its relevance to consumers; its alignment with the round objectives; & <p>describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would somewhat improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.</p>
1	Bottom 50%	<p>Not competitive</p>

Approach, Innovation and Feasibility (30%)

The project’s approach to addressing the defined area of unmet need, relative to the field, is:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>The project’s approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> convincingly addresses the defined unmet need; is highly innovative, bringing together ideas, methodologies and technologies in ground-breaking new ways; clearly and meaningfully engages consumers across all project elements; is extremely cost-effective and of high value for money; & will almost certainly achieve its stated aims.

4	Next 10%	<p>Very good</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly addresses the defined unmet need; displays very good methodological and/or technological innovation; meaningfully engages consumers very well in key project elements; shows high cost-effectiveness or value for money; & is highly likely to achieve its stated aims.
3	Next 15%	<p>Good</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the defined unmet need; displays sound methodological and/or technological innovation; engages consumers in key project elements; shows good cost-effectiveness or value for money; & is more likely than not to achieve most stated aims.
2	Next 20%	<p>Reasonable</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the defined unmet need to some degree; displays elements of innovation; reasonably engages consumers in some project elements; is reasonably cost-effective; & should achieve some stated aims.
1	Bottom 50%	<p>Not competitive</p>

Impact (30%)

<p><i>In the context of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research, the project's ability to deliver new knowledge, relevant outcomes and sustainable impacts for CNARTS and healthcare more broadly is:</i></p>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>The project will almost certainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strongly advance the field (e.g. extremely substantial shift in the current paradigm or highly significant breakthrough); deliver outstanding, critically relevant outcomes; & the project has a highly credible and clearly articulated future translation pathway to sustainably deliver strongly positive patient/healthcare impacts.
4	Next 10%	<p>Very compelling</p> <p>The project is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> markedly advance the field (e.g. substantial shift in the current paradigm or significant breakthrough); deliver excellent, strongly relevant outcomes; & the project has a well-described future translation pathway to sustainably deliver positive patient/healthcare impacts.
3	Next 15%	<p>Compelling</p> <p>The project has good potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measurably advance the field (e.g. move the current paradigm or deliver an important breakthrough); deliver good, relevant outcomes; & the project has outlined future translation steps which could lead to positive, longer-term patient/healthcare impacts.

2	Next 20%	<p>Somewhat compelling</p> <p>The project has some potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add to the field (e.g. expand the current paradigm or add important new knowledge); • deliver outcomes of some value and relevance; & • the project has identified some of the steps to take towards positive patient/healthcare impacts beyond the funding period.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

Project Team (20%)

Relative to opportunity, the demonstrated quality and relevance of the skills, experience and capability of the CIA and team to deliver the project is:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>Relative to opportunity, there is no doubt the CIA and team have the combined capacity and capabilities to execute the project and deliver outcomes, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly demonstrated access to all necessary resources, infrastructure and technologies; • an outstanding mix of expertise and experience; & • connections to CNARTS.
4	Next 10%	<p>Very good</p> <p>Relative to opportunity, there is very high confidence the CIA and team have the combined capacity and capabilities to execute the project and deliver outcomes, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very good access to necessary resources, infrastructure and technologies; • a very good mix of expertise and experience; & • connections to CNARTS.
3	Next 15%	<p>Good</p> <p>Relative to opportunity, there is good confidence the CIA and team have the combined capacity and capabilities to execute the project and deliver outcomes, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good access to most supporting resources, infrastructure and technologies; • a good mix of expertise and experience; & • connections to CNARTS.
2	Next 20%	<p>Reasonable</p> <p>Relative to opportunity, there is reasonable confidence the CIA and team have the combined capacity and capabilities to execute the project and deliver outcomes, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasonable access to resources, infrastructure and technologies; • a reasonable mix of expertise and experience; & • connections to CNARTS.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive