Peer Review: 2025 Early- to Early-Mid-Career Researcher Seed Grants
7-Category Descriptor Scale

Seed Grants of up to $80,000 each are available for early- to early-mid-career researchers, for projects of up to 18 months addressing (at least) one of our Priority Areas below. See Tab 2 for full descriptions.

1. Research in priority populations (as defined) in any stage of care.
2. Translational and implementation research.
3. Long-term community support beyond 6 months post-stroke.
4. Long-term psychosocial recovery beyond 6 months post-stroke.

Category	**7**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Category Descriptor	**Highest International Quality and Research Performance**	**Excellent**	**Highly Competitive**	**Good**	**Satisfactory***	**Marginal***	**Poor***
Notes	*It is anticipated that only 1-5% of applications will fall into this category.*	*The panel regards these applications as in the "absolutely must fund" category. It is anticipated that 5-10% of applications will fall into this category with a maximum of 10% in categories 6 & 7.*	*The panel regards these applications as in the "strong desire to fund" category. It is anticipated that approximately 15% of applications will fall into this category.*	*The panel regards these applications as in the "fundable" category, budgetary restrictions aside. It is anticipated that approximately 25% of applications will fall into this category.*	**It is anticipated that approximately 50% of applications will fall into categories 1, 2 or 3.*		
Criteria:							
Relevance **See Sections 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 2.6**	The planned research: • **directly targets** one of the four **priority areas** of research listed above • is outstanding in the degree to which recruitment is inclusive across diverse groups • has very advanced procedures in place to ensure participation of people with lived experience and/or community	The planned research: • ***directly addresses*** one of the four **priority areas** of research listed above • is excellent in the degree to which recruitment is inclusive across diverse groups • has advanced procedures in place to ensure participation of people with lived experience and/or community	The planned research • ***addresses*** one of the four **priority areas** of research listed above • is very good in the degree to which recruitment is inclusive across diverse groups • has adequate procedures in place to ensure some participation of people with lived experience and/or community	The planned research • although it ***addresses*** one of the four **priority areas** of research listed above, this is only 40-60% of the focus of the application • is adequate in the degree to which recruitment is inclusive across diverse groups • has little or no established procedures to promote participation of people with lived experience and/or community	Category 3 includes applications which, budgetary restrictions aside, are fundable, based on a satisfactory research approach and design. There is no question that the applicant(s) will be able to undertake the research. However, on balance the application is one that is not competitive in the Stroke Foundation round this year.	These applications display a number of good features but are not competitive.	Unfundable grants (reasons must be clearly articulated to applicants).
Research Program **See Section 2**	The **proposal has a research plan that**: • is **well-defined**, highly coherent and strongly developed. • has a **near flawless** study design. • is **highly feasible** with all of the required expertise, research tools and techniques established. • would be highly competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally.	The **proposal has a research plan that**: • is clearly **defined**, coherent and well developed. • has a strong study design. • is **feasible** with all required tools, techniques and expertise established. • is likely to be competitive with strong, similar research proposals internationally.	The **proposal has a research plan that**: • is **generally clear** in its scientific plan and is logical. • raises only a few **minor concerns** with respect to the study design. • is **feasible in all, or almost all areas** - required techniques and tools either established or nearly established. • may not be highly competitive with similar research proposals internationally.	The **proposal has a research plan that**: • is **generally solid** in its scientific plan, but may not always be clear in its in its intent and may lack some focus. • raises **several concerns** regarding the study design. • raises **doubts** about the feasibility in some areas. • is not likely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally.			
Impact **As a guide, please consider Sections 1.7 and 2**	The planned work will result in a **highly significant** advance in knowledge which addresses an issue of **great importance** to the prioritised area of stroke and ***will*** translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and practice of clinical medicine, public health, or in health policy. The planned research: • will ***almost certainly*** result in **highly influential** publications • will ***almost certainly*** be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings, often with relevance across several fields. • is **highly** innovative and introduces advances in concept(s) • will use **very advanced** approaches which will optimize outcomes nationally	The planned work will result in a **significant** advance in knowledge which addresses an issue of importance to the prioritised area of stroke and **is likely** to translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and practice of clinical medicine, public health, or in health policy. The planned research: • will **likely** result in **influential** publications • will **likely** be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meetings. • is **highly** innovative in concept • will use **advanced** approaches to enhance outcomes with wide reach	The planned work will **advance** knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to the prioritised area of stroke and **may translate** into fundamental outcomes in the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy. The planned research • is likely to result in some **very strong** publications • **could** be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meetings • **is** innovative in concept • Will use **well established** approaches to good effect with potential for wide reach	The planned work may **incrementally** advance knowledge which addresses an issue of some importance to the prioritised area of stroke, but is **unlikely to translate** into fundamental outcomes in the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy. The planned research • may result in some **good but not excellent** publications • Is **unlikely to** be the subject of invited plenary sessions at international meetings • less solid in concept • Will in the main use **standard** approaches with somewhat limited reach			
Team Track Record **See Section 3**	**Relative to opportunity**, the applicant(s): • has expertise that **specifically targets the proposed research** both in terms of its depth and/or breadth. • has over the last 7 years, a combined record of research achievement quality and productivity and/or translation into practice that is **outstanding by international standards** commensurate with their field of research. • if junior members are involved they are supported by **outstanding** senior members who will provide a **very strong** mentoring environment.	Relative to opportunity, the applicant(s): • has expertise that is **highly relevant** to the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth. • has over the last 7 years, a combined record of research achievement quality and productivity and/or translation into practice that is **excellent by international standards** commensurate with their field of research. • if junior members are involved they are supported by **excellent** senior members who will provide a **strong** mentoring environment.	Relative to opportunity, the applicant(s): • has expertise that is relevant to the proposed research, and there are only **minor concerns** regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise. • has over the last 7 years, a combined record of research achievement quality and productivity and/or translation into practice which places it **well above average** for their peers or cohort. • if junior members are involved they are supported by members with **very good and growing** reputations who may provide some mentoring	Relative to opportunity, the applicant(s): • has expertise that is relevant to the proposed research, but there are **some significant concerns** regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise. • has, over the last 7 years, a combined record of research achievement quality and productivity and/or translation into practice, that places them at an **average** level for their peers/cohort. • if junior members are involved they are supported by members with **good and growing** reputations, but there is little or no evidence of a mentoring framework to support them			

2025 Research Priority Areas

1. Research in priority populations (as defined) in any stage of care.

Study areas include (but are not limited to):

- Early recognition of stroke and emergency response (i.e., increased speed from recognition to diagnosis and treatment). This could include (but is not limited to):
  - less common warning signs; and
  - studies in all age groups or a specific age group, such as younger people and children.
- Improving access to acute stroke services and specialist care; or
- Developing and evaluating health services or pathways to improve stroke outcomes.

Priority populations definition

Priority populations are those that are more likely to be affected by health conditions than the general population, resulting in a greater burden of disease and inequality in health outcomes. These populations include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- People living in rural, regional and remote communities;
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged Australians;
- People living with mental illness; and
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

2. Translational and implementation research.

Projects must specifically assess how to improve adoption or implementation of evidence-based treatments/processes, that have been shown to be effective, within health care or home settings.

Only studies using a translational design, where the core component is implementation of existing evidence will be considered for funding.

Studies to test or develop new or unproven treatments/processes, will not be considered for funding within this priority area.

Researchers are recommended to focus on areas where there is a strong clinical guideline recommendation but there is a known gap in care. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- improved early access of reperfusion (increased % of patients receiving reperfusion within 60 mins); or
- routine fitness training for those involved in inpatient or community rehabilitation; or
- tailored information provision; or
- embedding communication partner training in an acute stroke unit for staff and volunteers; or
- better detection and management of atrial fibrillation.

3. Long-term community support beyond 6 months post-stroke.

Projects must focus on improved connection to and delivery of community-based care for people living with stroke. Outcomes must be measured at least 6 months after a person's stroke.

Settings and examples include (but are not limited to):

- Community health services
- Primary care
- Interventions for improved continuity of care
- Reduced social isolation
- Support for childhood stroke
- Support for post-stroke complications (in all age groups), such as (not limited to) epilepsy
- Long-term outcomes from previously conducted pilot work.

4. Long-term psychosocial recovery beyond 6 months post-stroke.

Projects must focus on psychological needs and emotional and social wellbeing for people living with stroke which may include the relationships with their family/carer.

Outcomes must be measured at least 6 months after a person's stroke. Study areas include (but are not limited to):

- Mental, emotional and social wellness
- Recovery of cognition
- Communication
- Childhood stroke