The Australian Respiratory Council
Research Portfolio Guidelines

The Australian Respiratory Council (ARC) is a charitable, non-government organisation committed to improving respiratory health and supporting the elimination of tuberculosis (TB) in Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. ARC achieves its mission through supporting research, scholarships, strategic partnerships, technical assistance, capacity building, project implementation and targeted funding that strengthens health systems and improves health outcomes.

ARC has a long-standing commitment to supporting research, innovation and evidence-based practice in tuberculosis (TB) and respiratory health. Since the organisation's establishment in 1913, ARC has contributed to improving respiratory health outcomes through research, advocacy, capacity strengthening and program implementation.

The ARC Research Portfolio Guidelines provides a framework to guide investment in research, knowledge generation, implementation science and research capacity strengthening across Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. These guidelines align with ARC's mission of improving lung health through the translation of research and evidence into sustainable health solutions.

ARC is cognisant that there is a need to balance research funding with budget and the regulatory requirements for demonstrating expenditure on charitable purposes with income generation through public appeals.

Recognising ARC's role as a small but influential organisation, the priority is to:

- Fund high-impact implementation research
- Strengthen research partnerships
- Support early and mid-career researchers
- Build multi-disciplinary research capacity in the Indo-Pacific region
- Translate evidence generated through research into policy and practice
- Use the funding and results from the ARC seed funding awarded to researchers to attract larger research investment
- Support innovation that accelerates TB elimination and respiratory health in Australia and the Indo-Pacific region
- Position ARC as a recognised regional partner in implementation science, operational research and knowledge translation for respiratory health and TB.

Research Values

ARC's research activities will be guided by the following values:

- Scientific excellence and innovation
- Research integrity
- Translation of research outcomes into practice
- Equity and inclusion
- Cultural respect and safety
- Partnership, collaboration and capacity building
- Accountability and transparency.

The funding provided in the past through the ARC's grants and Fellowship Program has made a significant impact on the research landscape in Australia. Through the allocation of funding it is ARC's intention that there is a return on investment to create additional funding for research in respiratory health.

Governance and oversight

The allocation of research priorities and funding is determined each year by ARC's Board of Directors. An annual review of research themes and priority areas will be undertaken by the Chair of the Research Committee and Executive Director. A recommendation of the themes, priorities and funding will be presented for Board endorsement annually.

ARC Research Committee

ARC has a Research Committee that provides advice and recommendations to the Board of Directors on the following:

- Matters relating to research activities including strategic areas and priorities for research funding, joint funding opportunities with other organisations, the type and number of research grants
- The applicants for research grants to be awarded under the ARC Research Support Grants Scheme
- Advice on appropriate matters referred to the committee by the Board of Directors or other Board committees.

Committee Members

Professor Greg Fox (Chair of the Committee)
Clinical Associate Professor Simone Barry
Dr Andrew Burke
Professor Justin Denholm
Dr Chris Lowbridge
Professor Daniela Traini
David Macintosh AM (ex- officio as President of ARC).

ARC Research Support Grants

Research themes and priority areas

In 2026/2027, funding will be awarded for researchers and scholars undertaking research activities in basic science, clinical research and public health relating to the following themes: (i) infectious lung diseases due to *M. tuberculosis* or other respiratory pathogens, and (ii) chronic respiratory diseases related to environmental factors such as tobacco or bushfire smoke exposure.

Projects that address ARC's areas of interest and community issues or the health of disadvantaged groups that relate to the work that the ARC undertakes within Australia and the Indo-Pacific region are particularly prioritised.

Grant administration

An annual call for submissions will be posted on ARC's website and social media platforms and circulated through the following agencies and networks: the Australasian Clinical Tuberculosis Network; the Australian TB Research Centre of Excellence; the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research; the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Australian Society of Infectious Diseases and the National TB Advisory Committee jurisdictional representatives.

Detailed information on grant terms and conditions is made available to applicants. These conditions include funding tenure and administration, project and financial reporting requirements, notification of additional funding and publications arising from the project.

Grant assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed by the Research Committee according to the alignment with the research themes and priority areas, the scientific quality of the application, the capability of the applicant and potential impacts of the proposed work.

The scientific quality of the study will be assessed, including the clarity of the study hypotheses and objectives, the strengths of the study design, feasibility and the likely impacts of the proposed research.

The capability of the applicant will be assessed, based upon the (i) expertise and experience relevant to the proposed project and (ii) the impact of their research over the last 5 years, supported by evidence, relative to opportunity.

The likely impact of the project, including its potential impact on health and its potential to leverage large scale competitive funding.

Research funding is awarded in open competition on the basis of merit following assessment by ARC's Research Committee.

A quorum exists where there are at least three members of the Committee available to meet and/or review grant applications. At least two, preferrable three members of

the committee will independently review and score the shortlisted applications. Applications will be assessed in accordance with their alignment with ARC's research themes and priority areas, the scientific quality of the application, the capability of the applicant and potential impacts of the proposed work.

Funding recipients are required to actively assist in the promotion of their project with ARC. It is also expected that the research results of all projects will be made available through scientific publication. Publications and presentations should acknowledge that the work was undertaken while in receipt of funding from ARC.

Research Project Reporting

Funding recipients are to provide a narrative and financial report (in a standard format) on completion of the project (at 13 months). The report enables ARC to assess the project outcomes and impact, and the receipt of further funding to continue and/or extend the research work. ARC will publish these reports in the annual report.

Conflict of Interest

Research Committee members are not prohibited from applying for research or fellowship funding provided by ARC. In the event that a Research Committee member were to apply for an ARC Research Support Grant, and/or be involved in the research proposal/research team then the Committee member is required to abstain from the discussion and review of the application.