



Research Program *'Improving Patient Flow in Queensland Public Hospitals'* Special Funding Round

Last updated: August 2022

PLEASE READ GUIDELINES CAREFULLY
BEFORE SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

About the Emergency Medicine Foundation and the Research Program

The Emergency Medicine Foundation (EMF) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion and delivery of a research, educational and promotional grant programs in the field of emergency healthcare to enhance the patient experience and outcomes, save lives and promote system sustainability in Queensland.

EMF supports high quality research directed at improving the healthcare of patients in emergencies within the pre-hospital and emergency department settings. EMF has several research initiatives including its flagship Queensland Research Program which is fully funded by the Queensland Government through Queensland Health.

EMF is collaborating with the Healthcare Improvement Unit at Clinical Excellence Queensland on a large research program to find effective, evidence-based solutions to improve patient flow in Queensland's public hospitals. The first component of this program is a study to analyse patient flow in Queensland hospitals. The second component of the program is this competitive Special Funding Round. Through this Special Funding Round, EMF will support clinician-led projects that aim to improve patient flow and reduce crowding across Queensland hospitals.

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1 About the Special Funding Round

Hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) are designed and resourced to be the first point of call for patients requiring urgent medical care. Since 2011-12, demand for ED services in Australia has outpaced population growth – culminating in over 8.8 million ED patient presentations in 2020-2021. EDs are impacted by several significant challenges leading to delays in patient flow. While demand for ED services is a contributor – EDs do not operate in isolation and are impacted by factors across the entire health system.

EMF is collaborating with Queensland Health’s Healthcare Improvement Unit at Clinical Excellence Queensland on a large research program to find effective and evidence-based solutions to improve patient flow in Queensland’s public hospitals. The research program is jointly funded by EMF and Queensland Health and consists of two components. The first component is a whole-of-system study aiming to establish the magnitude of factors leading to challenges with emergency access in Queensland public hospitals. The second component is this Special Funding Round which will support clinician-led projects aiming to improve patient flow and reduce hospital crowding.

1.1 Topics and funding

Queensland based researchers are invited to submit proposals aiming to improve patient flow and reduce crowding across Queensland hospitals. Proposals may fall into the following areas:

- Exploration into services and models across the continuum of care to ensure emergency patients are treated at the right time, in the right place and by the right health professional.
- Targeted initiatives that focus on pre-hospital emergency care, the ED and intensive care to improve patient flow and streamline patient admission processes.
- Broader, whole of hospital solutions than can be trialled in selected settings or in multi-centre collaborations between major tertiary hospitals as well as regional hospitals.
- Technological solutions that can help identify and tackle delays in the patient journey (for example by providing real time analytics).

Examples for proposals include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of safety and efficacy of existing hospital avoidance strategies
- Accuracy of triage assessments in the pre-hospital environment and/or in the ED
- Dedicated pathways to expedite investigations, e.g. through ordering of investigations on the ramp, or direct admission of patients with chronic disease to specialist teams in haematology, oncology, respiratory etc.
- Investigation of current discharge protocol and personnel involved, i.e., allied health staff or inpatient teams to optimise admission and/or discharge
- Implementation of dedicated personnel or model of care, e.g., dedicated discharge team, or expanding working hours for dedicated discharge teams to optimise discharge and improve patient flow
- Examination of ED presentations and post-discharge data to establish potential factors and pathways to reduce representation
- Impact of post discharge care teams including General Practitioners and hospital multi-disciplinary teams responsible for the first weeks post discharge to reduce representations.

EMF expects funding requests to range from \$15,000 to \$200,000 for short term (6-12 months) and medium-term projects (12-24 months). In exceptional circumstances, EMF may consider a higher funding request, but this must be discussed with EMF in advance and exemption requests submitted to EMF by **24 August 2022**. Projects that can be completed within 12 months of funding being awarded will be prioritised. While the proposed research does not have to be led by emergency clinicians, strong representation of emergency clinicians on the research team will be viewed favourably.

Potential applicants who are uncertain whether their proposal meets the objectives of the Special Funding Round are encouraged to contact EMF Research Manager via email to grants@emffoundation.org.au as soon as possible.

1.2 Important Dates

Date (2022)	Actions
1 Aug	Expressions of Interest open
5 Sep	Expressions of Interest close
6 – 8 Sep	Eligibility and compliance check (applicants need to be contactable)
Mid-late Sep	Shortlisted applicants invited to submit full application
31 Oct	Full applications close
1 – 4 Nov	Eligibility and compliance check (applicants need to be contactable)
Early Dec	Announcement of funding outcomes

2 How to Apply

For this Special Funding Round, EMF is applying a two-step application process to support researchers and to reduce their workload:

Step 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)

- Applicants are invited to submit an EOI and only those who successfully traverse the EOI process will be asked to submit a full application.
- EOIs must be submitted via SmartyGrants, EMF’s online grants management platform. Applicants can login or register with SmartyGrants [here](#). A Microsoft Word application template for the EOI is available on the [EMF website](#) to assist with offline preparation.

Step 2 – Full application:

- Shortlisted applicants will have approximately five weeks to prepare and submit a full application. Please note that being asked to submit a full application does not guarantee that a proposal will be successful in gaining funding.

- Full applications must be consistent with the submitted EOI in scope and budget request and must be submitted via SmartyGrants. A Microsoft Word application template will be available on the [EMF website](#) in due course.
- The Principal Investigator, the Head/s of Department/s (or equivalent) and the Administering Institution are required to sign and upload an Application Certification Document (available on the [EMF website](#) in due course).
- Ethics approval or a waiver of consent by an NHMRC recognised Human Research Ethics Committee must be provided within six months of a grant being awarded before EMF will enter into a Funding Agreement and release funds.

Eligibility checks

Applicants must satisfy EMF's eligibility check for their application. This includes:

- full compliance with the closing date and time of the grant round
- satisfactorily meeting eligibility, content and format requirements
- the Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators being compliant with reporting for their EMF grants, as applicable.

Review process

For this Special Funding Round, EMF will apply a streamlined review process. A Review Panel consisting of members of the Project Steering Committee and external reviewers will select the preferred EOIs to submit a full application as well as review the full applications and select applications for funding.

3 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 General Eligibility

To be eligible to receive funding in this Special Funding Round, the proposed research must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The proposed research must be directed at improving patient flow in Queensland public hospitals and reducing access block in Queensland public emergency departments.
- The proposed research must be conducted in Queensland. This does not however preclude collaboration with experts elsewhere in Australia or internationally, but EMF will only support the Queensland site/s of a collaboration.
- The proposed research must have an eligible Principal Investigator (refer to Section 3.3).
- The proposed research can be conducted by teams with a diverse range of specialised skills and perspectives beyond the emergency healthcare space but there must be a strong representation of emergency clinicians on the team.
- EMF and Queensland Health must be acknowledged in any future publication or presentation that uses data or other information from the Queensland site/s.

3.2 Administering Institution

The Administering Institution will be responsible for the administration of the funding - should the grant be approved for funding by EMF - and must be Queensland based. The Principal Investigator must have a formal affiliation with the Administering Institution.

The funds must be administered through one of the following:

- a public Hospital and Health Service
- the Mater Hospital Brisbane
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Retrieval Services Queensland
- a hospital-based trust fund or equivalent
- a university or
- a medical research institute

EMF can consider requests for other institutions in Queensland to administer the funds. These requests must however be discussed with EMF and exemption requests submitted to EMF by **24 August 2022**.

3.3 Principal Investigator

All applications for funding must have a Principal Investigator, who will be responsible for the proposed research and be the corresponding applicant with EMF. The Principal Investigator typically conceives and writes the grant application and is the person with the primary responsibility for the oversight and management of the research activity. All Principal Investigators must meet each of the following requirements:

- Be based in Queensland for at least 80 per cent (%) of the funding period. Periods greater than three months (continuous) outside of Queensland require prior approval from EMF
- Be compliant with final and progress reporting, if they had been awarded EMF funding in the last five years as Principal Investigator
- Submit a CV less than 12 months old, detailing relevant research experience with a maximum of three pages.

Should the Principal Investigator's employment or personal situation change, a notification via the grant variation request process (refer Section 7.6) will be required.

Members of the EMF Board, EMF Research Committee, the Project Steering Committee and past and present paid members of EMF staff are not eligible Principal Investigators.

Principal Investigator time may be considered for funding for up to \$80 per hour (including on-costs). Salary requests for senior clinicians however will not be considered. Any salary request must be justified in the budget section of the application form and a strong rationale provided.

3.4 Co-Investigators

Applications may include Co-Investigators (referred to in the funding agreement as Specified Personnel) who must contribute in a significant way to the development and/or conduct of the research. Co-Investigators may be staff specialists, trainees, senior medical officers, clinical nurses, paramedics, relevant allied health personnel or other professionals, such as mathematicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, lawyers, scientists, health economists, anthropologists or engineers.

The maximum number of Co-Investigators per grant application is eight.

All Co-Investigators must be compliant regarding final and progress reporting for all EMF grants on which they are Principal Investigator, if applicable. Grant applications with non-compliant Co-Investigators will be deemed ineligible. To ensure eligibility, the Principal Investigator may remove the non-compliant Co-Investigator from the application team; or the non-compliant Co-Investigator can submit the outstanding information or report requested by EMF.

All Co-Investigators must provide a CV less than 12 months old, detailing relevant research experience with a maximum of three pages.

Members of the EMF Board, EMF Research Committee, the Project Steering Committee and past and present paid members of EMF staff are not eligible Co-Investigators. This does not include EMF volunteers.

Co-Investigator time may be considered for funding, for example for specific activities that the Co-Investigator or Co-Investigator's team undertake using specified skill sets. The salary request must be justified in the budget section of the application form and a strong rationale provided. Salary requests for senior clinicians however will not be considered.

3.5 Associate Investigators

Applications may include Associate Investigators who provide intellectual input into the research and whose participation warrants inclusion of their name on any publications.

The maximum number of Associate Investigators per grant application is eight.

Members of the EMF Board are not eligible Associate Investigators. This does not include EMF volunteers.

Associate Investigator time may be considered for funding, for example for specific activities that the Associate Investigator or Associate Investigator's team undertake using specified skill sets. The salary request must be justified in the budget section of the application form and a strong rationale provided. Salary requests for senior clinicians however will not be considered.

4 Guidelines for Budget

EMF expects funding requests to range from \$15,000 to \$200,000 for short term (6-12 months) and medium-term projects (12-24 months). In exceptional circumstances, EMF may consider a higher funding request, but this must be discussed with EMF in advance and exemption requests submitted to EMF by **24 August 2022**.

4.1 Eligible Expenditure

Eligible expenditure must be integral to undertaking the research project and may include:

- the Queensland components of national/international research
- employment of personnel (research staff and research consultants for specific activities)
- direct research costs
- travel for multi-site research
- technical services, supplies and research facilities
- dissemination expenses with strong rationale.

All budget items requested from EMF must be justified. Budget items are open to scrutiny and a strong rationale for funding should be provided. Where applications include requests of over \$5,000 to engage third-party services or skilled specialists, e.g. health economists or statisticians, a detailed quote for the service must be provided.

4.2 Ineligible Expenditure

EMF does not fund or pay:

- indirect costs of research
- infrastructure (physical space, furniture, consumables not specific to the project etc.)
- salary for senior clinicians
- purchase of capital equipment
- institutional overheads and administrative charges
- publication and open access fees.

4.3 Research Support Personnel and On Costs

Funding is principally intended for research staff and research consultant activities, including but not limited to statistical support, health economics, data collection, and study coordinator. Salary requests for senior clinicians will not be considered. EMF may consider requests for payment for time of Principal Investigators for up to \$80 per hour (including on-costs) and for Associate Investigators and Co-Investigators for specified skill sets but these requests must be justified with a strong rationale.

No funding for research that has already occurred (retrospective funding) will be awarded.

EMF contributes to the cost of employing research support personnel. EMF funds up to 20% of direct on-costs for a research support activity. Direct on-costs only include leave loading and superannuation entitlements accrued during the employment period for the research support activity. Direct on-costs do not include overheads, such as institutional overheads and administrative charges, severance pay or entitlements carried over from previous positions.

EMF encourages applicants to check the appropriate percentage for acceptable direct on-costs with their Business Manager (or equivalent).

At any stage during the assessment and recommendation process, EMF reserves the right to question the on-costs percentage provided in an application budget and request further information from the appropriate Business Manager.

4.4 Direct Research Costs

Costs must be integral to achieving the aims, objectives, outcomes and directly related to the Research Proposal set out in the application, as approved by EMF.

4.5 Travel, Conferences and Presentations

Contribution towards travel will hinge upon the nature of the proposed research. If the travel is integral to undertaking the research project, such as multi-site collaborations, this cost should be included in the grant application budget indicating the mode of travel.

The cost for conference attendance and presentations for dissemination are eligible expenses; however, these dissemination expenses must be accompanied by a strong rationale for inclusion in the budget and will be open to scrutiny and reduction during the assessment and decision process. The strong rationale for funding should be reflected in the budget justification section of the application form.

4.6 Use of Research Facilities

EMF seeks to promote collaboration between researchers and to remove barriers that prevent multi-organisational emergency healthcare research; however, EMF only contributes funds to the direct costs of the proposed research.

4.7 Infrastructure

The Special Funding Round does not fund infrastructure costs. EMF may contribute funds to access established research facilities that are integral to undertaking the proposed research.

4.8 National/International Research

EMF will only fund the Queensland components of national/international research. Sites in other states/countries would be expected to source funding from other funding agencies. The only exception is where a study collects national data but is fully run from Queensland by researchers based in Queensland.

4.9 Capital Equipment

The Special Funding Round does not fund capital equipment including computer equipment. If the equipment is critical for the proposed research, applicants must justify the request to purchase capital equipment in the Expression of Interest. Funding sought for any single piece of equipment must not exceed the value of \$10,000.

5 Review Criteria

Expression of Interest stage

EOIs will be assessed on how well they meet the objectives of the Special Funding Round (refer to Section 1), the scientific quality and the likelihood the project will be completed. Members of the Review Panel will score all EOIs using the 1 to 5 scale listed below.

Full application stage

Full applications for Special Funding Round will be assessed against the following review criteria:

- Scientific Quality, particularly regarding robustness of design and methods
- Relevance to the objectives of the Special Funding Round (refer to Section 1)
- Principal Investigator and Team
- Budget
- Potential for translational impact

Members of the Review Panel will score EOIs and full applications using the following scale:

- 5 – Strong:** fully addresses the criterion and sets forth a compelling argument as to the application’s merit in this area
- 4 – Acceptable:** Enough of the key points in the criterion are covered to make a legitimate case for consideration. Additional information gives significant enough argument to be seen as a highlight in the application
- 3 – Average:** Either enough of the key points in the criterion are addressed or sufficient evidence is provided, to make a case for meeting the criterion. However, the narrative is such that it is unremarkable and does not rise beyond cursory interest
- 2 – Weak:** Addresses only some of the elements within the criterion with sufficient detail in the application
- 1 – Very weak:** Does not sufficiently address the elements within the criterion to be considered

6 Post Decision Process

6.1 Notification of Decision

EMF will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants of the outcome of their grant applications in writing.

Enquiries relating to the notification of the decision should be forwarded to EMF's Research Manager via email to grants@emfoundation.org.au.

6.2 Funding Agreement

An agreement will be executed between EMF and the Grant recipient through the Administering Institution. This agreement will detail scheduled payments and the Project Plan, determined by EMF in conjunction with the Principal Investigator after approval of the Application.

Payments will commence on execution of the Funding Agreement and not prior.

Where Specified Personnel are not employed by Queensland Health or Mater Hospital Brisbane, and will personally own the intellectual property arising from the funded research, the Specified Personnel must also be party to the Funding Agreement.

EMF will only execute the agreement upon receipt of Ethics Approval Documentation from an NHMRC recognised Human Research Ethics Committee for the proposed research from the Principal Investigator.

The agreement must be executed within six months from the date of notification; any grant not claimed in this period will be forfeited, unless otherwise approved by EMF. It is not the responsibility of EMF to remind applicants that their grant is nearing expiry.

6.3 Payments

Payments on all awarded grants will be paid to the eligible Administering Institution. The Administering Institution must keep the funding in a bank account with a reputable financial institution and maintain a separate ledger for all receipts and expenditure in relation to the Project. Funding must not be held in a personal bank account.

Payments will generally be made six monthly and in advance, except for the final payment which will be released upon receipt and acceptance of the Final Report. Schedules of payments will be documented in the Funding Agreement. If the required ethical clearances or progress reports are not received, payments will be deferred.

Administering Institutions must provide EMF with a tax invoice in accordance with the GST Act.

6.4 Timing of Research

Grant recipients must commence their project within six months of outcome notification, except where EMF has granted special permission to do otherwise.

Grant recipients must complete their project within the specified time frame of the Funding Agreement.

Proposed alterations to the original approved project plan must be submitted in writing and in advance to EMF and documented on a Grant Variation Request Form, available through SmartyGrants. Requests for access to a Grant Variation Request Form can be made by emailing grants@emfoundation.org.au

6.5 Requests for formal outcome reviews

EMF grant outcomes are final. Any requests for formal outcome reviews will be considered by EMF at its discretion and may proceed to a formal review by an independent committee or party.

7 Investigator Responsibilities and Considerations

7.1 Reporting

All recipients of the Special Funding Round funding must provide a biannual financial acquittal statement (prepared by the Administering Institution) and a progress report providing summary statistics of grant outcomes and progress against milestones.

The biannual progress reports, final report and financial statements should be aligned with the following reporting periods:

Reporting Period	Due Date
January to June	22 September
July to December	22 March
Final Report	3 months after completion

All Reports must be submitted via SmartyGrants.

The Final Report must be provided within three months after the grant has been completed and must include comprehensive and detailed information on the project's outputs and outcomes.

Failure to provide reports within three months of the due date may prevent progress payments and potentially make the PI and CIs ineligible to apply for future EMF grants.

EMF recognises that many of the grant outcomes (including publications and leverage of funding) may occur after the tenure of the grant and EMF reserves the right to request information on research outcomes beyond submission and acceptance of the Final Report.

7.2 Publications

Grant recipients are expected to disseminate their research findings in peer reviewed journals and conference presentations. It is strongly recommended that publications are in line with reporting guidelines found at the [EQUATOR Network website](#).

The support of EMF must be acknowledged in all publications or media publicity arising from research supported through this Special Funding Round.

7.3 Acknowledgement

An acknowledgement of the funding from EMF must be visible either on equipment or in any brochures, reports, posters, multimedia material or other publicity.

7.4 Media coverage of the research

The receipt of a grant from the Special Funding Round places obligations on successful applicants to accommodate reasonable requests made by EMF or public relations firms engaged by EMF to participate in media or publicity. High impact publications arising from funded research or key presentations at national or international conferences are excellent topics of interest for the media.

7.5 Conduct and ethics

Research funded by the Special Funding Round must be conducted in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2007, updated 2018) and the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) (2007, updated 2018).

Ethics approvals may be required from multiple sites. Clearances for research that involves humans, animals, genetic manipulation of organisms or dangerous substances must be obtained from the appropriate Ethics Committee and/or Biosafety Committee prior to the commencement of the research.

7.6 Major alterations to a research project plan or budget

Major alterations to a research project plan or budget may include changes in the project scope and aims, changes in ethics approvals, project extension or suspension, changes to specified personnel or collaborating institutions, etc.

Any proposed changes to the original approved funding proposal must be provided to EMF four weeks prior to the effective date of change. Full details of proposed alterations to either project plan or budget must be submitted in writing and in advance to the EMF and documented on a Grant Variation Request Form, available through SmartyGrants. Requests for access to a Grant Variation Request Form can be made by emailing grants@emfoundation.org.au

The appropriate EMF authority will review the Grant Variation Request and determine if the request is appropriate and reasonable. EMF will notify the Principal Investigator of the outcome in writing.

EMF must be notified via the grant variation request process of any continuous investigator absence. This is applicable where the investigator will be absent for six months (continuous) or greater. Refer to Section 3.3 for criteria applicable to the Principal Investigator.

Please email grants@emfoundation.org.au to request access to a grant variation request form.

7.7 Unused and/or Surplus funds

Awarded funds must be used expressly for the purposes set out in the approved application budget. All unspent and/or surplus funds must be returned to EMF within 30 days of the EMF invoice date.

Principal Investigators are accountable for how the funding is spent and any surplus or deficit funding requires a clear explanation.

7.8 Termination of a Grant

Subject to any special conditions specified at the time an award is offered, these conditions shall apply to all grant recipients. An award will be terminated if the recipient(s) does not observe the conditions of the award.

On termination of an award, any unspent funds must be returned to EMF within 30 days of the termination date.

EMF may periodically vary the conditions under which an award is made and may make the application of such variation prospectively or retrospectively. The eligibility status of funded researchers will be reviewed from time to time. The award will be terminated if a researcher is deemed not to fit the eligibility criteria, unless otherwise agreed by EMF.

If the Principal Investigator or a responsible officer of the Administering Institution is of the opinion that the research project should be terminated, they must notify EMF immediately in writing. The Administering Institution is required to lodge an expenditure statement with EMF showing details of funds expended up to the termination date.

7.9 Change of Employment

EMF must be notified immediately if employment circumstances change after the application for a grant or during the tenure of a grant, particularly when the ability of the investigators to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the award may be affected by the change in circumstances.

The notification must include details of any financial and/or administrative implications for the investigator and implications of the change on their ability to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the grant. Notification must be submitted through the Grant Variation Request Form (please contact EMF via grants@emffoundation.org.au to request access).

EMF retains the right to review the award considering these changes.

7.10 Workload

Named investigators are expected to be able to demonstrate how their clinical workload allows them to commit time to the proposed research as required. This includes time allocated to this application and other EMF and non-EMF related work.

Investigators who are heavily committed in other portfolios should carefully consider their commitment to any new proposed application. The number of investigators should be commensurate to the proposed research activity and the role of each investigator should be substantial and measurable.

7.11 Intellectual Property

Applicants must adhere to the Intellectual Property Policy approved by the governing body of the host research organisation that is congruent with the document “National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research” released in September 2001.

In general, it is expected that any intellectual property generated by research funded by the Special Funding Round will be owned by the host institution; however, should any subsequent royalties or commercial return be generated, it is expected that the host institution would negotiate that EMF receive a proportion of the income stream commensurate with its contribution to the research project.

The rights and responsibilities with regard to the ownership, use and management of Intellectual Property created by successful grant applicants, will be specified in a Funding Agreement to be executed between the Administering Institution and EMF and acknowledged by the successful grant recipient.

7.12 Privacy legislation

Applicants consent to the information supplied as part of their application being disclosed for the purposes of the assessment of their application and for purposes connected with the making and administration of the project grant. Such disclosure includes, but is not limited to, disclosure to relevant representatives and employees of EMF involved in the review and grants funding processes and legal advisors.

EMF's Privacy Policy is based on the Information Privacy Principles contained in the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) and the National Privacy Principles. Personal information will be dealt with in accordance with our policy, which can be viewed [on our website](#).

If you are concerned about your privacy and the confidentiality and security of any information that may be provided to us, please contact us directly at grants@emfoundation.org.au

Appendix A

Principal Investigators may use the template provided below to request consent from all named investigators on the EMF application and complete the Certification Document.

Dear [named investigator],

Application ID and Project Title:

Please provide your consent to be named [Co-Investigator/Associate Investigator] on this EMF grant application as follows:

I, [name of Co-Investigator/Associate Investigator]

- agree to be named [Co-Investigator/Associate Investigator] on this EMF grant application;
- have read this application in full;
- agree to participate in the manner described in the application;
- am compliant regarding final and progress reporting for all active EMF Queensland Research Program grants on which I am the Principal Investigator

[Signature block with complete contact details]
