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**Peter Smith Memorial Bursary – Submission Guidelines**

**Purpose**

The Peter Smith Memorial Bursary supports Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) staff in undertaking research that contributes to improving health and well-being in rural and remote Australia.

Honouring the legacy of Peter “Smithy” Smith, this bursary recognises the vital role all RFDS employees play, across clinical, aviation, engineering, operations and support functions, in delivering impact through research and innovation.

**Funding Available**

The bursary funding totals $250K – with a $25,000 grant available for RFDS staff on an annual basis, for 10 years.

The bursary supports research projects into significant issues affecting the health and well-being of communities in remote and rural Australia, including education and professional development of the selected recipient to create real and lasting benefit to the RFDS.

**Research Impact**

Impact reflects the benefits of the work we undertake and the improved health outcomes of the people in each community we are delivering health services to.

Research impact is the contribution that RFDS research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research. Individual research projects can have one or more impact categories and RFDS research impact categories include cultural, economic, environmental, social impacts; impact on health and wellbeing; policy influence and change; legal or governance impact; and technological developments.

The bursary funding is for projects that will have research impact in one or more impact category.

**Funding Considerations & Expectations**

The bursary is designed to support new or enhanced opportunities that contribute meaningfully to rural and remote health outcomes. While professional development may be part of a proposal, activities that are already funded through other programs or considered part of regular employment responsibilities (e.g., postgraduate coursework required for clinical progression) are **less likely to be prioritised** for funding.

Applicants are encouraged to clearly demonstrate:

* How the activity goes beyond their normal role
* Why it requires support through this bursary
* What additional value, innovation and impact it brings to their local communities, regional, state or RFDS as a whole

**Eligibility**

* Open to all RFDS employees across the federation (clinical, aviation, engineering, operational, administrative, etc.)
* Applicants must propose a research-based project that improves rural and remote health outcomes (directly or indirectly).
* Educational activities are eligible if they are clearly linked to a research or improvement outcome.
* A **CEO Letter of Support** must be included (with any staffing/FTE approval noted).
* **Previous applicants are encouraged to reapply** with revised or new proposals.

**Project Requirements**

* Funded projects must be **completed and reported within 9 months** of the award.
* Applications must include a **timeline of milestones** and **expected deliverables.**
* Successful recipients are expected to participate in **project-completion communications** which include reporting against the bursary project purpose, impact, milestones and deliverables. They will also be required to provide imagery to accompany their report and participate in a short informal video, which will be organised by the Federation Office communications team in coordination with local Section/Ops.

**Eligible Expenses**

Funding may be used for:

* Project expenses and costs
* Travel and accommodation
* Tuition/course fees (if research-aligned)
* Research-related materials, software, or equipment
* **Staffing costs**, including:
  + Compensation for **additional approved hours** (outside normal FTE)
  + **Internal services**, such as data analysis or project support, where these are above routine duties
* **Note:** All staffing-related costs must be:
  + Clearly justified in the application
  + **Approved by the line manager and CEO**, with confirmation included in the Letter of Support

**Application Requirements**

Submit the following via email:

1. Completed **Application Form including:**
   1. Detailed **budget breakdown**
   2. **Timeline with milestones and deliverables**
   3. **Impact statement** outlining benefit to RFDS and rural/remote health outcomes
2. **CEO Letter of Support** (must confirm any internal resource or staffing approval)

**Submission Deadline:** *June 1 each year*  
**Submission Contact:** *Melissa Perkins at RFDS Federations Office @ melissa.perkins@rfds.org.au*

**Approval Process:**

All bursary applications will be reviewed by a review panel at the Federation Office with final approval of the successful applicant approved by the Chief Executive of the Federation. The Health Research Working Group and CEO Working Group will be kept informed of when applications open and number of applications received.

**Outcome Notification:**  
Applicants will be notified of the outcome by **July 15 each year.** This allows time for the bursary review panel to assess submissions, confirm approvals, and communicate next steps. The Health Research Working Group and CEO Working Group will be informed of the successful application and also provided with the details from the final report on completion of the project.

**Bursary Project Outcome Reports:**

The recipient must submit their findings, reports and reflections of the project within 9 months of being awarded the bursary.

**Assessment Criteria**

| **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| --- | --- |
| Relevance to rural/remote health issues | 30% |
| Clarity and feasibility of the proposal | 25% |
| Potential for professional/service impact | 20% |
| Value for money and budget justification | 15% |
| Innovation and strategic alignment | 10% |

Minimum overall score: **70/100** for funding consideration.

**Feedback**

Unsuccessful applicants may request brief written feedback to support future submissions. While detailed reviews are not guaranteed, the assessment panel will aim to provide meaningful input where possible.

Last updated: 1 April 2025