

2026 Seed Funding Research Scheme

Background

The Australia & New Zealand Musculoskeletal (ANZMUSC) Clinical Trials Network is an NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence. To date, its Seed Funding Research Scheme has supported 20 projects related to current or future multicentre trials. Seed funds are granted for research projects that can achieve a tangible outcome within 12-18 months of receipt of grant funds.

ANZMUSC is opening applications for the 2026 Seed Funding Research Scheme to support projects on musculoskeletal health.

The scheme aims to:

- Support ideas and research questions that align with ANZMUSC research priorities and mission by reflecting important disease burden and an important evidence or evidence-practice gap.
- Support ideas that will lead to future external funding applications that ANZMUSC could endorse.

Important details

- The maximum funding request per application is \$20,000. We anticipate awarding a total of 2 grants (or more at lower amounts if appropriate).
- Funding is untied and must be incurred or committed within 12 months of the award.
- Projects involving collaboration between research groups or stakeholders are particularly welcomed. An example of stakeholder engagement is consumer-led or co-designed projects.
- Successful applicants will be expected to complete a report at 12 months and will be invited to present findings at a future ANZMUSC scientific meeting.

Eligibility criteria

- Chief Investigators (CIs) must be registered members of ANZMUSC. Research students can be named as investigators (but not as CIA). You can only lead one application.
- CIA must be an early career researcher (≤ 5 years post PhD full-time equivalent) or clinician-researcher (people whose primary role, i.e. $>50\%$ FTE, is clinical rather than research).

- CIs on the NHMRC ANZMUSC CRE cannot lead an application (i.e. be CIA) but can be named as an investigator.
- The application must include at least one consumer as CI.
- The application must use the MS Word template provided by ANZMUSC which can be downloaded [here](#)
- The application must support research ideas that align with the ANZMUSC mission (<https://anzmusc.org/about-us/>).
- The application must have the potential to lead to future external funding applications (e.g. NHMRC, MRFF).
- For applications relating to a future trial (i.e. feasibility or pilot studies), the proposal should fulfil ANZMUSC criteria for endorsement (<https://anzmusc.org/what-we-provide/trial-endorsement/>) with the expectation that the future trial will be submitted for ANZMUSC endorsement.
- Projects must be undertaken in Australia and/or New Zealand.
- Short-listed applications will be required to give a brief presentation about the project at the 2026 ANZMUSC Scientific Meeting (10th & 11th of November 2026, Sydney).
- The successful applicants will be announced at the Scientific Meeting. If the CIA is unable to attend the Scientific Meeting, the presentation can be provided by any member of the CI team or, if necessary, via a pre-recorded video.
- Projects will be ineligible if they: have already obtained funding from other sources, or if the CIA has previously been awarded seed funding from ANZMUSC or ANZBACK.

Application guidelines

Applications must include:

- Project title
- Chief Investigator A (applicant) details.
- Scientific description of the project (background/rationale, aims and hypothesis, methods, statistical considerations) (*1000 words*).
- Consumer Involvement in proposal development, including active roles that consumers have played or will play as members of the research team. We are seeking examples of direct involvement in the research process, such as co-developing research questions or methodology, assisting with data collection or analysis, contributing to the writing or presentation of results, shaping recruitment strategies to enhance relevance and accessibility, interpreting findings from a consumer perspective, or participating in project governance or oversight. Vague references to plans to "consult" a consumer or "receive input" will not be considered sufficient – please describe specific tasks, responsibilities, or contributions that are

either planned or already in place. Evidence of involvement through a Consumer Advisory Group or reference panel would be considered advantageous (200 words).

- Team Quality and Capability, including evidence of ECR/clinician-researcher involvement as CIA. Applicants should detail (i) the expertise and productivity of team members relevant to the proposed project, (ii) the influence team members have in their specific field of research, and (iii) how the team will work together to achieve the project aims (500 words).
- Significance and Potential Impact of the project, including the likelihood that findings will significantly impact clinical practice and policy and improve outcomes for patients or musculoskeletal healthcare delivery (200 words).
- Alignment of the project with CRE vision and mission (<https://anzmusc.org/about-us/>) and Strategy for seeking future external funding for a trial or engagement to expand on the project (200 words).
- Budget – describing in detail how requested funds will be used (e.g. item, amount, justification). Please include costs and honorariums associated with consumers on the CI team and reimbursement of participants if applicable.

Marking criteria

- Applications will be judged based upon project merit (Scientific Quality, Consumer Involvement, Team Quality and Capability, Significance and Potential Impact, Alignment with CRE mission and Strategy for seeking external funding) relative to opportunity.
- The judging panel will be drawn from members of the ANZMUSC Committees (Executive, Scientific, Consumer Advisory, and Early and Mid-Career Researcher) and CRE CIs, AIs, members and previous awardees.

Category	Score
Scientific Quality (rationale and methodological rigour, i.e. aims and hypothesis, methods, statistical considerations)	/10
Consumer Involvement and consideration of participants (e.g. remuneration and participant wellbeing)	/5
Team Quality and Capability (including ECR/clinician-researcher involvement)	/5
Significance to the field and Potential Impact (e.g. impact on clinical practice, policy and patient outcomes)	/5
Alignment of the project with CRE mission/priorities and strategy for seeking future external funding for a trial	/5
Total score	/30

Scoring descriptions: 0 = very poor; 1 = poor; 2 = satisfactory; 3 = above average; 4 = high; 5 = very high

Submission of applications

Applications should be submitted via the online form [here](#) by **EOD 22 Aug 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants who fail to apply as instructed will not be eligible for consideration. Receipt of your application will be acknowledged by e-mail.

CIs will be notified by mid-September if their application has been shortlisted. Successful applicants will be announced at the 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting (10th November).