



# The Mindgardens Alliance

## Clinical Translational Research Program

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

Comprehensive Brain Disorder Centre

## THE MINDGARDENS ALLIANCE

The Mindgardens Alliance is a joint venture recently formed by the Black Dog Institute, Neuroscience Research Australia, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and UNSW Sydney as equal partners. The Mindgardens Alliance creates a new, innovative organisation to lead, coordinate and drive clinical excellence, research and education in brain disorders, mental health and addiction. Our goal is to establish a world-class comprehensive brain disorders centre that works to improve the health and well-being of local patients and the broader community.

The purpose of the Alliance is to provide national and international leadership in reimagining the way research, clinical services and training work together to improve patient and community outcomes across a range of brain, mental health and addiction disorders. The Mindgardens Alliance facilitates collaborative engagement of its members to identify and leverage new and additional resources to achieve its goals and thus positively impact patients and consumers, clinicians and researchers and the broader community. The Alliance is committed to active engagement from consumers at all stages of the development of research opportunities and clinical services reform.

## SYNOPSIS

The Mindgardens Alliance Clinical Translational Research Program provides funding for collaborative projects undertaken within one of the four Mindgardens Alliance partner organisations. Applicants may include medical, nursing, allied health and population health practitioners. To be eligible for funding, and to encourage multi-disciplinary projects, applicants **MUST** partner with others from a minimum of three of the four Mindgardens Alliance member organisations.

The Clinical Translational Research Program is designed to accelerate the translation of research into practice, services and policy.

A total of three projects will be awarded an amount of \$150,000 each. Projects can be for the duration of 1-2 years.

The application process includes two stages: and expression of interest and invitation of full application. It is expected that around six selected EOIs will move forward to full Application status.

## STRATEGIC PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Clinical Translational Research Program seeks to engage Alliance member staff who are engaged in medical, nursing, allied health and population health delivery in collaborative research and evaluation projects that will translate into better patient outcomes, improve the delivery of health services and population health and wellbeing in the areas of brain disorders, mental health and addiction.

The launch of the Scheme will provide tangible demonstration to the health care partners of the Alliance's vision to transform the understanding, treatment, cure and prevention of brain and mental health disorders.

The objectives (which align with the NSW Health Translational Health Grants Scheme) are to:

- > Foster the generation of high-quality research and evaluation that is directly relevant to clinical, health service and population health practice
- > Support projects that have the potential to be translated into policy and practice
- > Reduce the time from evidence generation to practice implementation
- > Drive collaboration and practice change that improves health outcomes
- > Enhance health and medical research capability within the Mindgardens Alliance

## OUTCOMES

The key outcomes of this initiative will be to:

- > build research capacity in the Alliance's health care practice staff
- > facilitate or strengthen collaboration between staff of Alliance members
- > contribute to improvements to patient or population health care and health outcomes

## GOAL ALIGNMENT

The Clinical Translational Research Program will help the Mindgardens Alliance achieve its objectives by contributing to the following goals:

1. To deliver world's best practice in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental health, brain disorders and addiction.
2. To be recognised as an international leader in all forms of research into mental health, brain disorders and addiction.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following operating principles are relevant to this Initiative:

1. Consumer centric: People are at the centre of all that we do
2. Quality care: We provide safe, high-quality, multidisciplinary care underpinned by equally high-quality systems, processes and improvement methodologies
3. Prevention: We recognise the importance of prevention and early intervention and actively undertake research to find novel and better ways to lower risk.
4. Bench to bedside and back: We encourage scientists, clinicians and consumers to work together in framing and undertaking research and developing evidence-based models of care
5. Scale and impact: Our ambition is to be national and international leaders in all that we do. Our activities are designed for rapid up-scaling based on proof of concept
6. Positive culture: We seek to build and constantly reinforce an open, collaborative, high-performance and equitable culture - a workplace of choice - at all levels of the organisation.
7. Collaboration and partnering: In service of our vision and purpose we partner with organisations and individuals across Australia and throughout the world. We encourage public and private health partnerships to support our mission.
8. Policy influence: We work proactively to get our knowledge out to communities, governments and other stakeholders so that it can be put into practice.

## KEY PARTICIPANTS

The key participant group are those directly involved in provision of health care as this initiative aims to help build both research capacity and to use the outcomes of research to improve health outcomes.

All projects will require leadership from collaborative teams comprising health care professionals and researchers from at least three member organisations.

### DELIVERY MODEL

The call for Expressions of Interest provides a clear way for existing, nascent or new teams to come together to achieve the grant objectives. This will build relationships and collaborations among the teams that will be able to be leveraged for future external competitive funding applications.

This model has been used successfully by UNSW to build capacity and ensure clinical focus for technology development projects in the area of Engineering and Medicine. This model also draws on the recently launched NSW Health Translational Research Grants Scheme (TRGS) on which this program has been modelled (with permission), so ensures a consistent message is sent to the health care sector about 'what is required' and also provides an opportunity for future funding at a larger scale.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Clinical Translational Research Program will utilize philanthropic support provided to the Mindgardens Alliance, to fund 2 or 3 awards, over a 1-2 year period at a value of up to \$150,000 per award. An initial budget allocation of up to \$450,000 has been approved by the Mindgardens Alliance Board.

Projects would normally be expected to be led by a health care sector member and involve collaboration with researchers from at least two other Alliance members.

This program is expected to provide leverage to attract larger (up to \$1M) TRGS grants from NSW Health as well as funding from NHMRC and MRFF.

### LEVERAGE

Cash or in-kind contributions from Alliance members as well as any leveraged external funding would be favourably considered in assessing EOI and full applications.

### CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

Applicants will need to demonstrate how consumers and carers have been specifically engaged and involved in the development of the specific proposal.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Individual applications will be asked to identify appropriate SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timed) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Milestones to enable progress and outcomes to be assessed. These will be evaluated by the CEOs and Executive Committee at 6 monthly intervals. Underperforming teams will be mentored to assist them to achieve their goals.

The assessment of the Clinical Translational Research Program initiative will be based on:

- > Engagement of Alliance members – assessed by number of applications and number of CIs
- > Quality of applications – assessed by review panel rankings
- > Relevance of projects – assessed by potential for projects to positively impact health care
- > Long term leverage – assessed by implementation of outcomes and/or securing further funding for the project or its implementation.

## GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The Executive Committee of the Mindgardens Alliance, assisted by external referees and potential external panel members, will shortlist EOI applications and review and rank full applications for support.

Successful applicants will be required to report on performance on a six monthly basis to the Executive Committee.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The NSW TRGS provides the model for this program and applicants are referred to the following reference material:

OHMR Website: <https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Health TRGS: <https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/translational-research-grants-scheme/>

Translational Research Framework: Testing innovation in policy, programs and service delivery. Sax Institute. 2016. Available at <https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/translational-research-grants-scheme/>