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| SPHERE BIG Ideas 2024 **Health Services Research Grant Scheme**  Guidelines and Application Form |

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| **INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE** |

Maridulu Budyari Gumal, the Sydney Partnership for Health, Education, Research and Enterprise (SPHERE) combines 15 thought-leading organisations in the Sydney region. Each partner is renowned for research, innovation and education with a legacy of ground-breaking initiatives. Building upon our successful Big Ideas model and the 2023 Seed Funding initiatives, SPHERE is proud to announce the launch of the **2024 Health Services Research Grant**.

This grant opportunity seeks to build on large-scale, ambitious programs of work that bring people together across and beyond the SPHERE partnership. We are in pursuit of **Big Ideas** that promise significant impact on healthcare and practice. Successful proposals will address one or more SPHERE priority areas for health services research, tackling system challenges that align with the SPHERE Council's endorsed list of priorities. Additionally, these proposals should outline clear methods for translating research findings into tangible improvements in health outcomes and the efficiency of the healthcare system.

Collaboration among members across our Clinical Themes and Platforms is an essential requirement of SPHERE Health Service Research Grant funding. To facilitate this, we are establishing guidelines for support requests to the platforms and themes. Requests for Clinical Theme or Platform collaboration and endorsement **must be submitted to the Theme or Platform lead at least four weeks prior to the grant submission deadline of Friday, 11th October 2024**. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. This timeframe will allow adequate opportunity for relevant personnel to review and thoroughly evaluate and support the requests. We anticipate that funded projects will stimulate innovation and research translation in healthcare, substantially expanding the knowledge base and practice of clinical medicine and public health. Proposals should demonstrate the potential for high scalability and the capacity to effect change beyond the immediate scope of the project. Partners co-funding the submission are a strong indication of industry and philanthropic support likely to progress to partnership support in the future and that the work has a sustainable foundation.

Submissions should focus on ideas that foster broad collaboration across our Platforms and Clinical Themes. Ideally, proposals could also involve groups or organisations outside SPHERE, promoting a multidisciplinary approach. We are looking for substantive, cross-disciplinary initiatives that capitalise on SPHERE's collective strengths and present a viable strategy for attracting significant additional funding from both internal and external sources.

Our overarching aim is to support innovative projects with the potential to revolutionise healthcare delivery and outcomes. This grant opportunity reflects our unwavering commitment to collaborative, impactful research that addresses real-world health challenges and advances the frontiers of medical knowledge and practice. Health Services Research impact includes but is not limited to social, environmental, health policy and practice, economic, workforce participation and development as well as new knowledge and its transfer.

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| **PRIORITY AREAS** |

**2024 Priority Areas:**

For the 2024 Health Services Research Grants, SPHERE has identified four priority areas:

1. Transition of care, with suggested areas of interest including:

* Transition from paediatric to adult services.
* Transition from justice health to primary care.
* Mental health care for war veterans and armed services personnel.
* Care for priority populations such as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, homeless individuals, and LGBTQI+ people.

1. Building sustainable prevention systems across diverse communities, environments, and determinants of care.
2. Models of home-based or virtual care.
3. Novel models of primary care, with suggested areas of interest including:

* Interface between aged care and access to primary care.
* Audiology and Allied Health models.
* Ageing primary care workforce.
* Nurse practitioners in primary care.
* Dental care and its relationship with primary care, nutrition, and health impacts.

**Eligibility**

To be successful in acquiring SPHERE Health Services Research Grant 2024 support, applications will need to demonstrate:

* How the research is a Big Idea that solves a wicked problem or is the ‘missing link’ in the journey to a larger funding opportunity. A missing link may refer to feedback from an earlier eligible ‘near-miss’ grant application that implied a critical knowledge gap.
* How the project aligns with the pre-determined list of priority areas.
* Collaboration across a minimum of **3 SPHERE Platforms and Clinical Themes**, and ideally include groups or organisations (industry, philanthropy, foundation and government agencies) outside SPHERE.
* Active participation and meaningful involvement of consumers, community, and research end-users (i.e., health services) in the design, delivery, and policy-setting implications arising from the project. Where CCI is claimed as a collaborative partner, it is expected that the relevant advocate is included as a coinvestigator on the grant.
* CIA is a SPHERE member from a partner organisation. While there is a limit of one application per CIA as the lead investigator, co-investigation is otherwise unrestricted.
* Involvement of early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs) in the proposal and project leadership team, supporting their career progression. EMCRs are researchers within 10 years of their most recent relevant highest degree.
* The potential to secure additional funding, from both internal and external sources, to sustain and expand the ongoing research.
* Evidence of ethical consideration by either (a) having submitted your project to a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), where an application number for your project has been generated or approved while currently under review, or (b) being in the process of developing your ethics application.
* Clear pathways to translate research outcomes into improved health outcomes and/or enhanced healthcare system effectiveness.

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| **FUNDING** |

Total funding of $500,000 is available in this round of SPHERE’s Health Services Research Grant 2024 to support up to 3-5 grants of $100,000-$200,000/each (GST exclusive) for expenditure over 12 months and will be awarded according to merit. Funding is contingent on demonstrating a clear pathway to attract significant additional funding from other internal and/or external sources to sustain and build ongoing research.

Payment of grants awarded under the SPHERE Health Services Research Grant 2024 will be made directly to the Chief Investigator A, who must be employed by a SPHERE partner. The funds must be spent in accordance with the budget proposed in the grant application. SPHERE recognises the gaps that can exist between NHMRC contracted awards and the actual salaries required by the institution to staff projects. SPHERE is willing to cover this difference as a direct research cost. To address this, SPHERE is committed to covering the documented difference between the NHMRC contract awards and actual institutional award as a direct research cost. However, to ensure transparency and prevent financial mismanagement, SPHERE will not cover any additional on-costs. Consequently, only direct research costs, as specified in the budget, will be supported. Applicants are advised to assess their facilities’ capability to absorb any supplementary on-costs and plan their applications accordingly.

Grants are non-renewable and must be completed within the timeframe for which the funding is granted. No additional funding will be provided to complete the project. Grant agreements for successful applications submitted to both SPHERE and NHMRC Collaborative HSRGs will be entered into at the time of the embargoed release of the NHMRC Collaborative HSRG 2024. A successful grant submitted to SPHERE and NHMRC HSRGs will not be funded twice.

All projects funded under the scheme will be required to report quarterly to the Theme or Platform sponsor, submit written six and twelve-month progress reports, with the final report due within three months of project completion.

SPHERE reserves the right to roll over allocations to future funding opportunities if applications do not meet a minimum quality.

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| **SUPPORT** |

SPHERE can facilitate networking opportunities and offer guidance to applicants seeking to form partnerships for this health services research grant. This support may include, but is not limited to, fostering connections between research teams, health service providers, and consumer representatives. SPHERE can provide insights and advice on potential partners that align with the identified priority research areas.

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| **TIMELINE** |

The milestones for the Health Services Research Grant Scheme 2024 are:

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| **Milestone** | **Deadline** |
| Call for applications | Friday, 26th July 2024 |
| Project plan to request collaboration from Themes and Platforms | Friday, 14th September 2024 |
| Close of applications | Friday, 11th October 2024 |
| Eligibility and essential criteria check for applications received | Friday, 18th October 2024 |
| Applications sent to review panel | Monday, 21st October 2024 |
| Review panel scores received by SPHERE | By 15th November 2024 |
| Meeting with the review panel to discuss recommendations & projects for funding | By 22nd November 2024 |
| Review panel recommendations reported to Council | By 27th November 2024 |
| Notification to applicants | By 30th November 2024 |
| Disbursement of 50% funds; project commencement | According to grant agreement; Q1 2025 |
| Progress report due – six monthly and prior to release of final instalment. | According to grant agreement; Q3 2025 |
| Final report due 3 months following project completion | According to grant agreement; Q2 2026 |

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| **APPLICATION EVALUATION** |

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed for completeness and adherence to submission requirements. Those that do not meet essential eligibility requirements, or word and page limits will be deemed ineligible for review. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a review panel, consisting of independent members and representatives of the SPHERE Council/ Executive, through a competitive process based on merit and strategic value. The final decision will be notified to the SPHERE Council. Applicants will be notified in writing of the evaluation outcome.

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

* Relevant to at least one priority area as detailed above in the Eligibility and Priority Areas section.
* Potential translation of research into practice change and/or improve service delivery and/or health outcomes.
* CIA is a SPHERE member and can only submit one application as CIA for this round.
* The project must engage broad collaboration and confirms co-production and delivery with at least three (3) other SPHERE Clinical Themes or Platforms. Partners outside SPHERE (state, national and international) should have demonstrated capacity to adhere to NHMRC principles governing RTC accreditation.
* Includes Consumer and Community Involvement (CCI) with clear evidence of co-design and where CCI is a nominated collaboration, participation as an investigator.
* Includes Biostatisticians, Health Economists, Implementation Scientists as Investigators, where appropriate
* Demonstrates capacity to leverage additional funding.
* A detailed and justified budget.

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

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| **#** | **Criteria** | **%** |
| 1. | Project Significance and Impact   * Addresses critical health system needs valuable to community, healthcare providers, and system managers * Demonstrates potential for national and international competitiveness * Clear plan for translating research outcomes into improved health outcomes * Enhances healthcare system effectiveness * Justification as a "Big Idea" with significant potential impact * Alignment with NHMRC objectives to stimulate innovation and research translation in healthcare | 30% |
| 2. | Project Plan   * Well-defined, logical, and strongly developed objectives * Research design effectively addresses stated aims * Demonstrates high feasibility with mitigated risks * Considers available resources (workforce/COVID) and timeframes (HREC) * Innovative approach to addressing health system needs * Clear project monitoring strategies and governance arrangements | 30% |
| 3. | Collaboration, Strength and Record of Achievement   * Demonstrates how seed funding will accelerate a "Big Idea" in the research development pipeline and identifies pathways to larger-scale research translation and collaboration schemes. * Presents a clear strategy for sustainable future funding, with potential to leverage additional funding and new investment opportunities. * Identifies risks (e.g., COVID, workforce, ethics delays) and outlines mitigation strategies. * Plans for continued collaboration beyond project completion to enhance research and translation capabilities while showcasing potential involvement with groups or organisations beyond SPHERE at state, national, and international levels. * The project leadership team has a strong track record and includes early and mid-career researchers, with involvement from at least **three** Clinical Themes and/or Platforms. * Emphasises consumer and community involvement. * Multi-disciplinary team includes biostatisticians, health economists, and implementation scientists, further engaging with groups or organisations beyond SPHERE. | 40% |

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| **SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION** |

The following application template must be used to complete your application. Applications should provide all requested information and not exceed the word count and page limits, use single spaced 11-point Arial font. Only information provided in the application will form the basis of the review process.

Completed applications must be submitted by email to [infoatSPHERE@unsw.edu.au](mailto:infoatSPHERE@unsw.edu.au) and received by **Friday, 11th October 2024.** Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications should be submitted as one PDF file AND one editable Word document. Please label the application using the following format:

* SPHERE\_2024\_Health Services Research Grant Application\_ CIASurname.pdf

Please ensure that the combined size of attached files does not exceed 20MB. Emails with attachments greater than this may not be received. Undeliverable emails will not be considered as a reason to accept late applications.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your submission, please contact Dr Brigitte Gerstl, Research Outcomes Coordinator, SPHERE at [b.gerstl@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.gerstl@unsw.edu.au)

# SPHERE SEED FUNDING GRANT SCHEME 2024

# (HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH GRANT)

# APPLICATION TEMPLATE

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| **SECTION A – PROJECT OVERVIEW** |

1. **Project Title**
2. **Priority Area**

Please indicate your priority area

Transition of care

Building sustainable prevention systems across diverse communities, environments, and determinants of care

Models of home-based or virtual care

Novel models of primary care

1. **Collaboration process**

Describe the collaboration details, including how Consumer and Community Involvement (CCI) will be engaged, consultations with health service managers, and the key collaborations needed for successful project delivery (200 words).

1. **Collaboration across SPHERE**

Explain how your project aligns with the goal of bringing together teams from multiple disciplines across different organisations, at state, national, or international levels. Confirm the co-production and delivery of collaboration with other Platforms and Clinical Themes. Nominate the SPHERE theme or platform sponsoring the submission (300 words)

1. **SPHERE Platforms and Clinical Themes Executive Lead confirming consumer or clinician/research co-production and alignment with their membership and its priorities**

*Note: Requests for individual support from platforms and clinical themes must be submitted at least* ***four weeks*** *(by 19th*September***)*** *before the grant submission deadline to allow sufficient time for review and sponsorship.*

**Platforms Engaged**

(tick all that apply)

Clinical Trials and Data

Implementation Science (Please make sure that you have utilised the web-based referral form)

Knowledge Translation

Healthy Populations and Environments

Innovation and Industry

Consumer and Community Involvement (CCI) (*Note: to select this option, the consumer must be an investigator on the grant*)

**Clinical Themes Engaged**

(tick all that apply)

Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

Age and Ageing

Cancer

Cardiac and Vascular Health

Child UnLimited (Kids to Adults)

Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolic Disease

Early Life Determinants of Health

Maternal and Women’s Health

Musculoskeletal Health

Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction

Palliative Care

**Other Partners Engaged**

(non-sponsoring) (tick all that apply):

Sydney Health Partners

NSW Regional Health Partners

Other national RTCs engaged (*a signature will be required from the COO, Operations Manager or CEO*)

1. Sponsoring Platform/ Clinical Theme Exec name

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

1. Platform/ Clinical / RTC Theme Exec name

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

1. Platform/ Clinical / RTC Theme Exec name

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

1. **Big Idea/Innovation**

Why is your project a “Big Idea”? Describe how it addresses significant health system challenges and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration (300 words).

1. **Project Overview**

Outline how the project will be addressing its Big Idea (500 words).

1. **Risk and feasibility**

Outline the potential risks associated with the project and describe the strategies you will implement to mitigate them (200 words).

1. **Translation of research outcomes**

Outline how the findings of your research will be translated into change of practice, improved service delivery, or enhanced health outcomes. Describe the potential impacts of your research findings on policymaking, clinical practice, or public health interventions (300 words).

1. **Potential for funds leverage**

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| Have you submitted this grant wholly or in part to another open and competitive grant? | |
| Example: 2024 NHMRC Collaborative Health Services Research Grant | Yes  No |
| CIA & primary institutional affiliation |  |
| Email (contact) |  |

Describe how you plan to leverage the funds to ensure the long-term sustainability of the projects. Highlight any strategies for attracting additional funding from internal and external sources to support and expand your research efforts (200 words).

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1. **Contact Details Identify your key contact person(s) for your project.**
2. **Project Plan (Maximum 2 pages)**

Detail the project plan from inception to completion. Where possible, include SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) and consider knowledge translation.

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|  | **Project Objective** | **Activity** | **Timeframe** | **Evaluation Measure(s)** |
| Project initiation |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |
| Research activity related to project aimaimsAims |  |  |  |  |
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| Project dissemination and future steps |  |  |  |  |
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| Project completion |  |  |  |  |
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| **SECTION B – INDICATIVE TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION** |

1. **Project Budget and Justification**

Provide the total funds sought and a breakdown of how the grant funds will be spent. A budget justification should be included for each line item. Personnel should be justified by salary level using award/university pay scales and FTE/hours. Provide details of any in-kind contribution and new leveraged investment (including source and dollar values), where applicable. Include the expenditure attributable to the leveraged partner and confirmation of support.

**Grant funds, in-kind contributions and budget allocation**

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| **Line item** | **Amount ($)**  **Please break down your funding requests for SPHERE into:**   * SPHERE funds * In-kind requests(i.e., existing services, personal time) * Other funding sources | | | **Justification**  **Specify the source of funding in each column.** | | |
|  | SPHERE funds | In-kind funds | Other funding sources | SPHERE funds | In-kind funds | Other funding sources |
| Personnel |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Equipment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consumables |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **SECTION C – PROJECT TEAM** |

1. **Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators**

Please complete all fields for a maximum of 10 CIs and a maximum of 5 AIs.

**Chief Investigator A**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full name (including title) |  |
| Early Mid Career Researcher | Yes  No |
| Primary institutional affiliation |  |
| Email |  |

**Chief Investigators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full name (including title) |  |
| Early Mid Career Researcher | Yes  No |
| Primary institutional affiliation |  |
| Email |  |

<Add more rows as needed>

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| **SECTION D – APPLICANT(S) DECLARATION** |

1. **Approval and Sign-off**

The Chief Investigator A confirms that the information provided is correct, that all team members have reviewed and approved the submission and collaborations across platforms and clinical themes have included coproduction principles that align with the mission and activities of groups.

**Chief Investigator A**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Full Name |  | | |
| Signature |  | Date |  |

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| **SECTION E – CHECKLIST** |

Application does not exceed word count and page limits

Chief Investigator A have approved the submission on behalf of the team

Collaborating Platforms and/or Clinical Themes have endorsed the submission