

**St GEORGE & SUTHERLAND MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

**INTERIM SUPPORT GRANTS**

**DESCRIPTION, ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS**

**for funding commencing in 2011**

**Key dates:**

**Applications open 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2010**

**Applications close 5pm, Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2010**

**Late or incomplete applications will not be considered**

## **1. Description and Objectives of Foundation Interim Support Grants**

These grants are intended to provide 12 months support an investigator who has been successful in securing external peer-reviewed, competitive grant support in the past; whose concurrent grant application to ARC or NH&MRC or equivalent national funding agency, has been ranked highly but was insufficient to secure funding. These grants are intended to complement the existing UNSW Gold Star Awards scheme designed to provide interim support for high quality grant proposals that just miss out on an ARC or NH&MRC grant in the latest funding round and these awards are given on the understanding that the recipients reapply to these funding agencies in the very next funding round. These grants provide a fixed quantum up to a maximum of \$45,000 for 12 months only and are intended to support projects or groups that have a demonstrated track record in order to allow them to resubmit successfully for external funding the following year. Determination of these grant applications will be made following determination of the UNSW Gold Star Awards, generally in November.

## **2. Eligibility**

To be eligible the applicant must simply have submitted a proposal to either ARC or NH&MRC for project grant funding that same year.

Reasons for ineligibility to be considered for a Foundation Interim Support Grant include:

- applicant is successful in securing funding from ARC or NH&MRC or equivalent national funding agency, for the proposed work
- applicant is successful in securing a UNSW Gold Star Award, or support from alternative sources in the current grant round for the proposed work where that support is at least \$40,000

## **3. Terms and Conditions of Award**

### **3.1 Level and Duration of Funding**

Interim Support Grants are awarded for 12 months only. The Board of the St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, on an annual basis, depending upon its discretionary budget, will determine the number of Interim Support Grants, if any, to be made available and the level of funding for each. The amounts provided under the Interim Support Grant scheme will be up to a maximum of \$45,000. From time to time, the Board of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation may adjust the amount awarded to a successful applicant if that applicant has secured significant additional funding from alternative sources, but where such funding is insufficient on its own to provide adequate interim support for that project.

### **3.2 Efforts to Secure Ongoing Funding**

In keeping with the spirit and intention of the Foundation in offering these grants, it is expected that the successful applicants will submit a revised research grant proposal to either ARC or NH&MRC or equivalent national funding agency, the very next funding round.

#### **4. Grant Administration**

The Foundation will make 4 quarterly payments to its awardees in January, April, July and October of the year in which the Grant is held. The funds can, at the discretion of the awardee, be used for any combination of personnel, equipment (excluding infrastructure), consumables, or other expenses, but not for travel. It is intended that the funds will be used within the 12 month stipulated in the award. Except under special circumstances, and only with prior approved by the Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee, there is no provision for carry-over of funds beyond the 12 months. Unused funds as of the termination date of the award must be returned to the Foundation.

#### **5. Reporting Requirements**

***Final progress report:*** - This report, written in terms understandable to the general public, must include a summary of achievements and include a list of publications, and must be submitted before the 14<sup>th</sup> February of the year following completion of the award. This report will also be used to update the Foundation Board and will be included in the Foundation's annual report as well as other promotional material at the discretion of the Board to assist with fundraising or procurement of industry support for these awards.

***Recognition of the Award:*** Appropriate recognition for the assistance of Foundation funding, and any partnering sponsor(s) where applicable, must be included in any publications resulting from work undertaken during the tenure of an grant, by stating that the author (or co-author) holds a St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, Interim Support Grant.

#### **6. Process of Application Review**

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that all conflicts of interest, where they may exist, are dealt with consistently and transparently. All participants in the peer review process for the Foundation will respect confidentiality in relation to the applications and to the peer review process, and will not disclose any confidential information, including the outcomes of considerations. (Refer Appendix 1: "*Guidelines for treatment of conflict of interest*").

Applications will be reviewed by the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), which will score and rank the applications, but any decisions regarding intention whether or not to recommend funding will be withheld until the results of applications for ARC, NH&MRC and UNSW Gold Star Awards are known. In addition to its own assessment of scientific merit, the SAC will also take into consideration the feedback from the Grant Review Panels as well as the final scores given by the external grant agencies. Those awarded Gold Star awards will not be considered further. The SAC will only fund a proposal if it feels that it is of high merit and likely, with 12 month interim support, to have a good chance of success in the next grant funding round. The SAC reserves the right, if applications are of insufficient merit, not to recommend them for further consideration for funding. The SAC will then submit its final recommendations to the Board of the St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. The final approval on awards, if any, and total funds allocated will be made by the Board. All decisions by the Board in the relation to awardees, and allocated funds, and any related conditions that it sees fit to implement, will be final.

## 7. Instructions on Submitting an Application

- Because of the eligibility criteria, the applicant is simply asked to **provide existing documents**, prepared for and resulting from the application(s) to external grant agencies.
- The applicant must incorporate the following **eight** sections extracted from the application that has already been submitted to those external agencies:
  1. *Names and Affiliations and Credentials of all CI's*
  2. *Synopsis page*
  3. *Detailed Background and Research Plan*
  4. *References*
  5. *Track record of Principal Investigator*
  6. *Progress reports on previous grants where relevant*
  7. *Principal Investigator's publications*
  8. *Budget and Budget Justification*
- In addition, the applicant must provide the following **two** additional documents resulting from the review process of their major grant application submitted to external agencies:
  1. *The critical reviews by the Grant Review Panel Assessor and independent reviewers*
  2. *The applicant's (ie chief investigator's) response to the comments by those assessors*
- The applicant must then combine **ALL ten components** into a single document **converted to PDF format**.

### **Contact for additional information or queries related to awards:**

St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation website: [www.stgeorgemrf.com.au](http://www.stgeorgemrf.com.au)

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## APPENDIX 1:

### GUIDELINES FOR TREATMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. The SGMRF is committed to fair review of all grant applications ensuring any Conflicts of Interest are dealt with consistently and transparently. The essence of a quality peer review process demands all participants act in good faith, in an open and sensible manner. The ensuing guidelines will assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Foundation's policy. The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) acknowledges that there are many forms of Conflict of Interest. It is an important fundamental of the peer review process that people within the field have access to other grant applications. It is also recognised that most SAC and many of the Foundation Board members are actively engaged in research considered to be of significant importance to St George and/or Sutherland Hospitals. As such it is not reasonable that SAC members nor members of their research group be excluded from submitting applications for funding for consideration by the SAC.

2. When formally accepting the role as a reviewer for one or more applications received by the Foundation, each reviewer (eg SAC member; external reviewer) must first determine that no potential conflict of interest might arise. Where such potential exists, the invited reviewer will notify the Chair of the SAC where indicated on the invitation document, stating reasons for that opinion. If there is no conflict of interest, he/she must sign the invitation document to indicate this and that he/she can abide by the Foundation's policies and guidelines.

3. The following are the principal areas where conflicts may arise:

- Direct involvement in the application as Chief Investigator or Associate/Principle Investigator.
- Direct or potential involvement due to a personal financial interest in the outcome of the granting process <sup>a,b</sup>.
- Potential involvement as a scientific <sup>a</sup>, or organisational group colleague<sup>b</sup>.
- Perceived involvement due to a family/ personal relationship, either currently or during the past five years <sup>a,b</sup>.
- If at any time there has been a verbal or written dispute between an applicant and the individual acting for the Foundation.
- Any other perceived conflicts.

4. All members of the SAC will be provided with the information on all applicants, their departmental and other affiliations, the assigned reviewers and each reviewer's signed conflict of interest declaration for each application. The full SAC will review this information; all conflicts of interest will be recorded and clarification sought where necessary before finalising reviewers for each application. No reviews can commence until the SAC has approved the matching of applicants and reviewers.

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a. a scientific colleague is defined as another scientist with whom the collaborator has published papers, held grants or acted in a Higher Degree by Research student/Supervisor relationship with any of the applicants during the past five years.

b. a colleague within an identifiable organisational group from which joint benefit may follow award of the grant, ie. Members of the same research group or hospital department.

5. After discussing any conflicts of interest, the SAC may decide that:
- a) the SAC member with conflicts must not be present during any discussion of the application;
  - b) the SAC member has unique knowledge of the research area of the application and may only be present to answer direct questions relating to scientific issues, and is not to be present, or take any further part in the application review process. Note that questions are to be directed after the conflicts of interest have been identified and prior to discussion of the application; or
  - c) no action is deemed necessary.

### **Examples of Conflicts of Interest**

Some examples of conflicts of interest and appropriate SAC decisions:

**Example 1:** A SAC is required to review an application where Prof Brown is an applicant. Dr Smith, a member of the SAC, is also a member of Prof Brown's research unit.

**SAC Action:** Dr Smith is not to be present when Prof Brown's application is being reviewed by the SAC.

**Example 2:** A departmental colleague of Dr Jones (a member of the SAC) has submitted an application for funding for a research area related to hypogeniology. The SAC is required to review this application.

**SAC Action:** Dr Jones has exceptional knowledge in this particular field and her exclusion from discussions may result in the application not receiving fair representation. The SAC decision should be that Dr Jones be directed to answer only specific scientific questions related to the application, and not be present for or take part in general discussions, nor score or have input on the final ranking decision.

**Example 3:** Prof Wilson is the Head of the Department of Interesting Disorders at St George Hospital and is also a member of the SAC. Prof Wilson's Department has submitted an application for the peer review process by the SAC.

**SAC Action:** If the application from Prof Wilson's Department were successful, Prof Wilson could receive financial gain, and therefore should not be present whilst that particular application is being reviewed.