

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Transition of Cancer Council SA Research Funding Administration to the SA Cancer Research Collaborative (SACRC)

Researchers are advised of commitments of Cancer Council SA and the SA Government to each provide \$2 million dollars per year for five years for cancer research in SA. It is intended that with matching arrangements with external agencies, the total sum will total at least \$30M over 5 years. Drafting of the legal agreement for the SACRC is advancing, with a view to sign-off from SA Government, Cancer Council SA and the 3 Partner Universities (University of Adelaide, Flinders University and University of SA) in the first half of 2011. Funding of research through the Collaborative is planned to commence in the 2011-2012 financial year.

In the interim, Cancer Council SA will maintain its direct ongoing funding support of the research workforce (fellowships, chair funding, etc.), research projects and research infrastructure (support for high-technology platforms, clinical trials, other data management etc.). This will provide continuity of research funding through the transition period while SACRC processes are being developed. The SACRC is led by a Leadership Group principally representing the Funders. It comprises a Chair (Professor Richard Head, CSIRO); 2 nominees from SA Government; 2 nominees from Cancer Council SA; and a nominee of each Partner University (DVCs); plus a nominee of the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and 2 consumer/community representatives. The Leadership Group role includes high-level planning of financial research investment, overseeing budget development, and monitoring performance of SACRC from a Funder perspective. It will be accountable for meeting high-level funder deliverables.

The SACRC has a Scientific Advisory Group to obtain specialist advice on research plans and priorities, SACRC research performance, RFA templates for grants, grant selection panels and other research administrative processes. It comprises a Chair (Professor Mathew Vadas, University of Sydney), plus 14 researchers, service providers and policy makers, and 2 consumer nominees of Cancer Voices. The present SACRC arrangement is an interim one. It is intended that SACRC will align with/or become imbedded in SAHMRI, but it is too early in the life of SAHMRI to know the exact form of this relationship.

Researchers can be reassured that Cancer Council SA research funding will continue in the normal manner during the transition period prior to commencement of funding through SACRC. Traditional research project funding will be advertised this December for research implementation in 2012, following the normal annual practice. Scientific ranking of applications will be through the NHMRC, as in previous years. The only difference will be that applicants will be invited to address the relevance of their applications, where applicable, to several SACRC themes / attributes. While NHMRC ratings will be used to determine most applications, those ratings close to the cut-off will be supplemented with ratings of relevance to SACRC directions (potentially accounting for up to 20% of the total score). The assessment process for this supplementary activity will be through an independent panel (further information to be provided in mid 2011).

The SACRC initiative had its origin in the 2006-09 State Wide Cancer Control Plan developed under the aegis of Cancer Council SA with strong SA Government support and endorsement. The SACRC development has also received strong support from the SA Cancer Clinical Network. It will greatly increase availability of funds for cancer research, research workforce development and research infrastructure in SA and strengthen collaborations. It will complement the \$4.4M data redevelopment initiative already well advanced, and jointly funded by Cancer Council SA and the SA Government, to redevelop the SA Cancer Registry, hospital registries and allied clinical databases, establish a SA bio-specimen database, support development of data linkage infrastructure, and trial a cancer data linkage project. It is recognized that without modern cancer research infrastructure, SA cancer researchers would be substantially disadvantaged in competitive bids for NHMRC and other research funding