

# Instructions for Applicants for the 2009 Brain Foundation Research Grants

Applications for the 2009 Brain Foundation Research Grants are now being accepted.

## 1. Background

The Brain Foundation is an Australian registered charity which raises money to fund on-going, crucial research into brain diseases and all other known neurological disorders as well as brain and spinal injuries.

Headache Australia is an initiative of the Brain Foundation which was set up specifically to help those suffering from migraines and chronic headaches. Headache Australia is building a National Information Network of people suffering from migraines and chronic headaches.

The Brain Foundation's Annual Research Grants are funded through the generosity of individual and corporate donors and bequests. The Scientific Committee has a national perspective and supports research projects from every State and Territory in Australia based on merit. Brain Foundation grants are eligible for additional Commonwealth Government funding under the Australian Competitive Grants Register.

The Brain Foundation invites applications nationally for research grants to support research projects in the clinical neurosciences.

## 2. Objectives

The primary objective of the Brain Foundation Research Grants is to support individual researchers and research teams to conduct the highest quality research in brain illnesses and neurological disorders as well as brain and spinal injuries.

A subsidiary objective is to provide opportunities for early career researchers to gain initiating funding for projects with potential.

The quality of the proposed research is judged by the scientific committee according to internationally benchmarked criteria of:

- Scientific Quality; and
- Significance and Innovation.

### **3. Scientific Committee**

All applications for Brain Foundation Research Grants will be assessed by a national scientific committee.

The scientific committee will bring together their cumulative expertise and experience in neurosurgery, neurology and neuroscience when evaluating the merit of applications for funding.

### **4. Assessment Criteria**

All applications will be assessed on both their scientific quality and their significance and/or innovation as follows:

**(a) Scientific Quality (40%)**

This includes the:

- clarity of hypotheses and objectives; and
- strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design and feasibility.

**(b) Significance and/or Innovation (60%)**

This includes:

- The potential to increase knowledge about neurosurgical applications and procedures and neurological disorders and diseases as well as brain and spinal injuries.
- In particular, the potential to enable earlier, more accurate diagnosis of neurological diseases and disorders, and to develop more efficient and effective treatments for these and for brain and spinal injuries.

## 5. Description of Brain Foundation Grants

The 2009 Brain Foundation research grant categories are:

| Category | Description  |
|----------|--|
| 1        | Alzheimer's, Parkinson's & Other Neuro Degenerative Diseases |
| 1A       | Dystonia   |
| 2        | Cerebral Diseases  |
| 3        | Brain Tumours  |
| 4        | Epilepsy   |
| 5        | Neuromuscular Diseases                                       |
| 6        | Paediatric Neurology   |
| 7        | Neuro-trauma   |
| 8        | Headache and Migraine  |
| 9        | Neural Infections  |
| 10       | Other  |

The total amount available for distribution depends on the income of the Brain Foundation in that year. As a guide the grants awarded in 2008 were up to \$40,000 each.

Specific Funding available in 2009:

- Each year Headache Australia through the Brain Foundation makes funds available for research into chronic headaches and migraines.
- Research into Dystonia.
- Research into Parkinson's Disease.

Please note, although funds are available for research into the above specific areas, grants will ONLY be awarded if they meet the assessment criteria of scientific quality and significance and/or innovation.

Research grants awarded by the Brain Foundation are eligible for additional Commonwealth funding through the Australian Competitive Grants Register. This will enable successful applicants through universities to apply for a significant additional amount from this government scheme.

## 6. Eligibility

The grants are open to competition nationally and all researchers in Australia are eligible to apply, however consideration, subject to merit, is given to:

- Early career investigators, either clinicians or neuroscientists, to help them establish an ongoing research program.

- Innovative projects.
- Pilot studies to enable a research project to be developed such that it could be supported by a recognised grant-giving agency in subsequent years.
- Bridging support for a clinician who has a valid reason for being unable to make an application to a conventional grant-giving agency.
- Supplementation of an existing grant from, for example, NHMRC, particularly for grant applications that were successful but funded inadequately to allow satisfactory progress to be made. In this instance applicants should submit the reports on their project from that grant-giving agency, together with ratings, details of the requesting and awarded budget, and full justification for the unfunded items.

Please note the following conditions:

- The Brain Foundation does **not** encourage applications that imply an ongoing commitment beyond a single year, although extended funding will be considered from a future application.
- The Scientific Committee will **not** normally be able to give any priority to projects involving clinical trials.
- The Brain Foundation does **not** fund requests for equipment only.
- Applications for funds for general use will **not** be considered. Funds will **only be** provided for specific projects.
- Projects will only be considered where government or other conventional sources of funds are unavailable.

All applications will be judged by the Brain Foundation's Scientific Committee on the relative merit of a project within a nationally competitive framework and the funds available.

## **7. Special Conditions**

1. Successful grant applicants will receive their award at the Brain Foundation's Research Grants Awards Presentation Night in Sydney. The Brain Foundation encourages and appreciates your attendance at this presentation. In 2009, the Awards Presentation will be held on the evening of **Tuesday 29 September 2009** in The Great Hall at The University of Sydney.

2. Grant recipients are required to provide a brief progress report to the Brain Foundation 12 months after the awarding of the grant. These reports are to be in a language able to be understood by a lay person, no longer than half an A4 page, and accompanied by photographs, diagrams or pictures suitable for publication purposes in the Brain Foundation's newsletter, BRAINwaves, and on the website.
3. Acknowledgement of the Brain Foundation as donor of the grant wherever possible, such as in media interviews, and on papers and publications relating to the research.
4. Where practical and feasible, assist the Brain Foundation on an ad hoc basis by providing expert opinion and information such as:
  - Reviewing information for the Brain Foundation websites and Neurological Directory.
  - The provision of information required by Brain Foundation staff to answer queries from the general public.In setting this condition, the Brain Foundation recognises the time constraints of researchers, and endeavours not to "overload" any one researcher with such requests for assistance.
5. At the invitation of the Brain Foundation, participate in, and present progress report/findings to fellow neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuroscientists at a Brain Foundation event.
6. Grant applicants and recipients are encouraged to become members of the Brain Foundation.

## **8. Closing Date**

The closing date for applications is **Friday 12 June 2009**.

## **9. How to Lodge Your Application**

Please complete the attached form in the following format to apply for a 2009 Brain Foundation Research Grant.

### **9.1 Format of Application**

Applications should be submitted on the *2009 Brain Foundation Research Grant Application Form* provided. This consists of:

- **Section 1 Title Page**
  - **Section 2 Project Detail**      **maximum 4 pages**
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- **Section 3 Appendices**

All applications to be presented in Times Roman, 12 point font, and single spaced at least.

## **9.2 Where to Send Your Application**

Please send a PDF of your application to:

[grants@brinaustralia.org.au](mailto:grants@brinaustralia.org.au)

using the following naming convention (please use upper and lower case and NOT all uppercase):

**Lastname Firstname – Simplified Project Title**

for example, *Smith John – The anatomy of the brain*

You will receive a return acknowledgement email within two weeks. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within two weeks of lodgment, please contact Alison Rhall on 02 9437 5967 or email [grants@brinaustralia.org.au](mailto:grants@brinaustralia.org.au) to ensure that your application has been received.

## **10. Notification to Applicants**

All chief investigators will be advised by email of:

- Receipt of their application by the Brain Foundation.
- Whether or not their application for a research grant was successful by Friday 4 September 2009.

In addition, all successful chief investigators will be notified by telephone. Please ensure that you provide a mobile phone number or a telephone number which is answered during business hours.

## **11. Confidentiality**

Information contained in applications is regarded as confidential unless otherwise indicated and will be received and treated as confidential by the Brain Foundation. It is the responsibility of all Brain Foundation staff and the selection committee members not to disclose to any person confidential information to which they become privy as a result of the exercise of their responsibilities to the Brain Foundation.

Information comprising the names of successful grant applicants and their administering institutions, together with the title of the research project and a lay summary, are

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published in the Brain Foundation's newsletter BRAINwaves and are available through the Brain Foundation's website. The lay summary may also be released to the media.

## **12. Privacy**

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988, which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Act allows.

## **13. Incomplete, false or misleading applications**

Once submitted to the Brain Foundation, the application will be considered final and no changes can be accepted. The application is the main source of information available for assessment. As such it must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the project without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details in the application, particularly concerning any successful grants, must be current at the time of application.

If an application contains information that is false or misleading, it will be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

## **14. Removal of Applications**

The Brain Foundation reserves the right to remove from further consideration in the selection process any applications that are ineligible or which are clearly of a standard that will not gain support in the competitive national grant awards. Exclusion of ineligible applications may take place at any time during the selection process.

## **15. Further Information**

If you require any further information about the Brain Foundation's Research Grants please contact Mr Gerald Edmunds, CEO on 02 9437 5967.