

# Request for Proposals

October 2016



## Breast Cancer Register

*A joint research initiative funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand and The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation.*

### Overview

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation (NZBCF) have formed a partnership to fund research that leverages the NZBCF's investment in breast cancer registers. It is anticipated that the registers would support a broad range of research, including epidemiology, health services and clinical research.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the HRC and NZBCF ('the funding partners') are seeking research that utilises data from the NZBCF-funded breast cancer patient registers, with the aim of further improving delivery of care for better outcomes of the disease in New Zealand.

**Note:** the previous four breast cancer registers are being consolidated into a single national register with the support of the Ministry of Health. This process is in its final stages and the national register will be in place in time for the commencement of the research projects funded through this initiative.

This initiative is managed through the HRC's Partnership Programme, through which the HRC forms strategic partnerships with funders and stakeholders.

The total budget for this research initiative is **\$400,000** and the funding available per proposal is up to a maximum of **\$200,000** over **24 months** (exclusive of GST).

The HRC's strong focus on peer review and contestability will ensure successful applicants deliver the highest quality of evidence.

It is anticipated that projects will begin as soon as practicable, with funding available for an immediate start (from April 2017). Research proposals should realistically be able to be completed within a 24-month timeframe.

## Application procedure

All forms and guidelines are available via the HRC website ([www.hrc.govt.nz](http://www.hrc.govt.nz)). The process below is outlined in more detail in the ***Application Guidelines for the Breast Cancer Register 2017 RFP***. These guidelines provide full details on the application process for this RFP.

### STEP 1: REGISTRATION

Applicants are required to submit a Registration via HRC Gateway (the HRC's online application system) by **1:00pm, Thursday 3 November 2016**. This web-based form signals the intent of the applicant to submit a full application.

Once submitted, the Registration is forwarded (via HRC Gateway) to the applicant's host Research Office. The Research Office will need to approve the Registration and forward it to the HRC. For organisations without research offices, the application will be forwarded directly (via HRC Gateway) to the HRC.

Please note that first named investigators and all other named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account, to be able to be included in an application.

### STEP 2: FULL APPLICATION

Applicants are then required to complete a full application using the JV217-Register form, JV217-BC-Budget and the New Zealand Standard CV template, and submit via HRC Gateway by **1:00pm, Thursday 1 December 2016**.

Once submitted, the full application is forwarded (via HRC Gateway) to the applicant's host Research Office. The Research Office will need to approve the full application and forward it to the HRC. For organisations without research offices, the application will be forwarded directly (via HRC Gateway) to the HRC.

A complete PDF of the full application is created by the HRC Gateway after the deadline for submission, at which time it can be printed in hard copy and sent to the HRC to arrive by **5:00pm, Thursday 8 December 2016**. Refer to the ***Application Guidelines for the Breast Cancer Register 2017 RFP*** for details of this process.

Applicants must meet the three deadlines indicated above for their proposal to be eligible.

## ASSESSMENT

### Step 1: Peer review

The scientific integrity of full applications will be assessed through an external peer review process which is managed by the HRC. This involves comprehensive peer review of all applications undertaken by independent national and international experts.

### Step 2: Applicant rebuttal

Applicants are given an opportunity to view the peer review reports for their application and provide a rebuttal to the comments made. This is not an opportunity to rewrite major sections of a proposal, but rather the opportunity to respond to specific reviewer comments, to answer questions raised by the reviewer, or to clarify an issue so that your proposal may be viewed as equitably as possible by the Assessing Committee.

### Step 3: Assessment

An independent Assessing Committee will then assess full applications (full proposal, peer review reports and applicant rebuttal) using criteria outlined in the ***Application***

**Guidelines for the Breast Cancer Register 2017 RFP.** Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with these criteria.

The Assessing Committee will make recommendations for funding, to be considered and approved the HRC, the BCC and NZBCF. Applicants will be informed of final funding decisions in **March 2017**.

### Key Dates Summary

Action	Date
Registration due (via HRC Gateway)	<b>1pm, 3 November 2016</b>
Full application due (via HRC Gateway)	<b>1pm, 1 December 2016</b>
Full application hard-copies due	<b>5pm, 8 December 2016</b>
External peer review (managed by the HRC)	<b>December 2016/January 2017</b>
Applicant rebuttal opens	<b>10am, 8 February 2017</b>
Applicant rebuttal opens	<b>1pm, 15 February 2017</b>
Applicants notified of outcome	<b>March 2017</b>

### Background

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the world – one in nine women in New Zealand will develop breast cancer during their lifetime and breast cancer accounts for more than 600 deaths each year.

The incidence of breast cancer increases as women age and is highest in women aged 50 to 54. While women over 50 are most at risk, around 11% of breast cancers occur in women between the age of 25 and 44.<sup>1</sup> Māori and Pacific women are at a greater risk of dying of breast cancer, with Māori women 40% more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer and 60% more likely to die from the disease when compared to non-Māori women.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2000, the NZBCF has provided funding for the development and on-going management of four New Zealand regional Breast Cancer Patient Registers: Auckland, Waikato, Christchurch and Wellington. These breast cancer registers enable a greater understanding of the nature of breast cancer and its treatment in New Zealand women. They record detailed information about diagnosis, treatment and outcomes of patients with breast cancer within New Zealand. For example, the information on how well patients do on different treatments and what treatments are most successful. The registers provide information to assist researchers and clinicians to find ways to further improve delivery of care for better outcomes of the disease in New Zealand.

The four registers are being consolidated into a national register with the support of the Ministry of Health. This process is in its final stages and the national register will be in place in time for the commencement of research projects funded through this initiative.

The NZBCF is a not-for-profit charitable trust that aims to reduce the number of New Zealanders developing and dying of breast cancer and to improve the quality of life of those with the disease. It does this through raising awareness of lifesaving benefits of early detection, providing grants for research into better treatments, and funding specific initiatives to support women with the disease. It has funded the collection of vital data for better understanding of the disease in New Zealand through the breast cancer registers.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health. 2014. *Cancer: New registrations and deaths 2011*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

The NZBCF have previously funded six research pilot studies to utilise data from the breast cancer registers, as well as two research projects through the 2016 version of this Breast Cancer Register partnership.

## Research Project Requirements

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of this RFP are to:

- Fund research that will utilise data from the national New Zealand breast cancer register, with the aim of further improving delivery of care for better outcomes of the disease in New Zealand.
- Promote and engender a culture of scientific excellence, relevance, innovation and technological advancement in the utilisation of breast cancer registers for breast cancer research.
- Encourage meaningful multidisciplinary engagement and partnership (including involving other researchers whose research may overlap with breast cancer research).
- Identify, attract and develop the best people to conduct high quality research that encompasses the scope of this RFP.

### SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Research undertaken in response to this RFP should utilise data from the national breast cancer patient register.<sup>2</sup> Data obtained from the register should seek to:

1. Serve as a basis for improvement in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with breast cancer.
2. Create regional and national benchmarks.
3. Evaluate local patterns of incidence, recurrence, care and outcomes and enable comparison with those nationally and internationally.
4. Facilitate and direct further research.
5. Provide data that will assist health care providers and planners.
6. Provide links between clinical outcome and genomic profiles to identify more effective predictive and prognostic tests, and to more effectively stratify patients for targeted therapies.

Note: applications are not required to meet all of the above requirements.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS

The research proposal needs to provide information on:

- How the research project represents excellent science, is properly scoped and clearly achievable within the specified timeframe.
- How the proposed research will deliver a positive outcome for women with breast cancer in New Zealand.

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<sup>2</sup> A list of the data fields available through the current breast cancer registers is available in a separate document (available on request from the HRC – see contact details in the General Notes section).

- The innovative approach(es) employed by the research team to address the scope and objectives of this RFP
- The potential to change practice or allocation of healthcare resources.
- The processes for data management and safety monitoring including the use of an independent data safety monitoring committee (if required).
- The collaborative nature of research team with expertise and skills that clearly match the proposed study.
- The consideration of health equity issues and the specific health needs of Māori and Pacific peoples within the context of the research topic.

It is anticipated that the development of the methodology, establishment of the research team and calculation of the research budget will be reflective of the scope of the proposed research project.

## BUDGET

The total budget for this research initiative is \$400,000 and the funding per proposal is up to a maximum of **\$200,000** over two years (exclusive of GST). Research contracts for this partnership initiative will be tailored specifically to meet the needs of the funding partners and allow for review of the research at key milestones or annually.

This funding comprises 50 per cent contribution from government funds and 50 per cent contribution from a non-government organisation.

**Applicants should note that overhead costs can only be claimed for the share of the total funding pool that is derived from government funds (i.e. no overhead costs can be claimed for the share of the funds provided by non-government organisations).** The application budget form for this initiative has been configured to automatically provide the correct total research costs once the appropriate overhead rate for the host institution has been entered in the spreadsheet.

Please carefully consider the start date, as applicants will be held to what they have proposed. Applicants should also take into account the timeframe for obtaining ethical approval (if appropriate) and should ensure that this doesn't delay the start of the research project.

Applicants should note that if competing proposals are equal in terms of their scientific value, the funding partners will consider best value for money offered by each proposal.

## PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Actual deliverables will be confirmed with a selected provider; however, deliverables must include the following elements:

- A final deliverable report detailing results, key findings and recommendations of the complete programme of research. The report will also be required to include an outline of any planned implementation activities, i.e., a plan outlining how any new knowledge resulting from the research will be translated to facilitate clinical practice change in New Zealand (where relevant), including the processes or steps that will support uptake of the research findings.

The research provider may also be required to provide verbal presentations to the funding partners on research progress and/or findings.

In addition to research deliverables, **six-monthly** progress reports will also be required for the project. These reports detail progress of the project and highlight any risks to its

progress. The research provider(s) will complete and submit their progress reports via the HRC's online reporting system.

An **HRC end of contract** report is also required upon completion of the research activity.

## ENGAGEMENT OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Research will include strategies for identifying and engaging other academic personnel working in breast cancer, register/database research or other related areas to support knowledge translation and exchange. Research teams should also provide clear details of how their proposed research outcomes will address the strategic aims of the funding partners and how research progress and findings will be communicated in a meaningful way to these organisations (and their respective stakeholders).

## RESEARCH TEAM

Applicants responding to this RFP will have experience in undertaking health research, a strong academic record and a diverse range of skills that enables them to effectively work with research stakeholders.

It is expected that the composition of research teams developing applications in response to this RFP will reflect the focus of the initiative and that teams will work within an appropriate governance structure. In particular, the research team should have a proven track record and demonstrated experience of undertaking breast cancer research, as well as knowledge of the delivery of care for women with breast cancer in New Zealand. The research team should also be able to access the appropriate data via the national breast cancer register and have the requisite skills and expertise around data management and safety.

The funding partners are strongly supportive of collaborative approaches to this research initiative. This should include cross-sectoral collaboration in the composition of the research team, to include expertise from a range of backgrounds, disciplines and research institutions.

The research team may comprise individuals from a single institution or multiple institutions/agencies across New Zealand. Any such partnerships should be clearly articulated in the final application.

The funding partners also recognise the importance of developing New Zealand's capacity to undertake research in this area. While this is not a specific objective of this RFP, if applicable applicants should demonstrate how their project will contribute to workforce development.

## DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Dissemination of the research findings nationally will be an important component of the research project. Applications should incorporate the most appropriate methods for communication of research results to a broad range of stakeholders (including the funding partners).

The research providers will be expected to ensure that all information is tailored to the needs of the intended audience, including the funding partners, so that research findings can be of maximum utility. This includes identifying opportunities for knowledge transfer, the potential for implementation into clinical practice (where relevant), and the processes or steps that will support uptake of the research findings.

It is also expected that the quality of the research will be reflected through publication in international, peer-reviewed journals.

## General Notes

### DECISION ADVICE

No legal obligations will arise between the funding partners and applicants for this Request for Proposals until such time as the HRC enters into a contract with the successful applicant.

### PRIVACY PROVISIONS

In the event that an application is successful, the HRC reserves the right to release applicants' names, details of the host institution/company, contact details (work phone, fax or email), contract title and funding awarded for public interest purposes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Health Research Council of New Zealand Act 1990.

### HRC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

This RFP is a component of the HRC's Partnership Programme, through which the HRC forms strategic partnerships with funders and stakeholders to target resources towards developing the evidence-base in key areas of need and strengthen the links between policy and practice. This collaborative approach to research ensures that stakeholders obtain the answers to pressing questions, but split the cost with multiple interested parties. The HRC's processes ensure that the track record of the research team, the scientific merit and the design and methods of the proposal will deliver the highest quality of evidence. Only limited funds are available to launch these co-operative research initiatives and the opportunities are strictly prioritised.

### MAILING ADDRESS

The application should be sent to the Health Research Council's office as shown below:

<i>Mailing Address:</i> Health Research Council of New Zealand PO Box 5541, Wellesley Street AUCKLAND <i>Attn: Luke Garland</i>	<i>Physical/Courier Address:</i> Health Research Council of New Zealand Level 3, 110 Stanley Street AUCKLAND <i>Attn: Luke Garland</i>
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### ENQUIRIES

All enquiries related to this Request for Proposals should be directed to Luke Garland, Project Manager, Research Partnerships (09 303 5214 or [lgarland@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:lgarland@hrc.govt.nz)).