

Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize - Application Guidelines 2019

Please note – this document updated 31st July 2019

Closing date: Friday 30 August 2019, 6:00 pm AEST

Late or incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the application form.

1. **Introduction**

The Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize aims to reward an outstanding mid-career researcher with a demonstrated background of excellence in neuroscience research. The Prize will be a grant of up to \$250,000 for an innovative and collaborative two-year project to advance the understanding of [classical forms of MND](#) with a clear potential for effective treatments for MND.

The Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize acknowledges the generosity of John and Betty Laidlaw who have contributed the funds for the Prize.

Betty Laidlaw has been living in Melbourne with primary lateral sclerosis for over 30 years.

2. **Objectives of the Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize**

- 2.1. To enable an exceptional mid-career scientist to become established as a leader in the field of MND research.
- 2.2. To initiate a scientific research project which provides new insight into the mechanisms involved in classical forms of MND.
- 2.3. To encourage a collaborative approach. While the applicant must be the Principal Investigator and have the lead role in directing the project, participation of other mid-career researchers from multiple institutions in Australia or internationally will be considered favourably. More senior collaborators may be included on the grant however their inclusion will not be considered as favourably as for mid-career researchers. The project must be conducted predominantly in a recognised Australian Institution(s). Although international collaborators may be involved in the project, no funding will be provided for these participants.
- 2.4. To discover pathways that have potential to lead to effective treatments for MND.
- 2.5. To participate in the International Symposium on ALS/MND in Montreal, Canada on 9-11 December 2020 and in Basel, Switzerland, 8-10 December 2021.
- 2.6. The research focus should be directed towards classical MND. Research investigating other forms of MND should demonstrate a potential benefit to the classical forms of MND. Classical MND includes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) & bulbar palsies (progressive bulbar palsy and pseudobulbar palsy), progressive muscular atrophy (PMA) and primary lateral sclerosis (PLS).
- 2.7. The Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize is offered to a maximum value of \$250,000 for a two-year project.

3. Application

3.1. Key eligibility criteria

- 3.1.1. The applicant should be a mid-career scientist who has a track record in MND research or in areas of neuroscience related to MND.
- 3.1.2. A mid-career researcher is defined as a person with a PhD or equivalent research doctorate who, at 30 June 2019, has at least five years but no more than 12 years postdoctoral research experience from the date their doctoral thesis was passed.
- 3.1.3. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or have permanent resident status.
- 3.1.4. The applicant must be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.
- 3.1.5. If the applicant has previously been awarded a Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize and still meets all the eligibility criteria, the previous Prize winner can apply a second time with another novel project.

3.2. Application process

- 3.2.1. **Applications will only be accepted through [NHMRC administering institutions](#). Applications should be submitted by the institution research office.** Applications submitted directly by the applicant will not be accepted.
- 3.2.2. The applicant must be the Principal Investigator and will also have the lead role in directing the project.
- 3.2.3. The level of contribution and role of the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigators must be clearly defined in the application.
- 3.2.4. Applicants must use the relevant application form on the MNDRIA website.
- 3.2.5. If the **applicant** has received previous funding from MNDRIA **in the past five years**, reports on this previously funded work must be sent with the current application.
- 3.2.6. If the **applicant** is named as an investigator on other proposals for MNDRIA funding for 2020, list the project title and principal investigator for those other applications.
- 3.2.7. Researchers should not apply if they are unable to provide a financial acquittal for previously funded work before 30 June 2020.
- 3.2.8. All applications will be assessed by the [MNDRIA Research Committee](#) against the selection criteria as outlined in these guidelines. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applicants who fail to meet any one of the eligibility criteria will be deemed to be ineligible.
- 3.2.9. The MNDRIA Research Committee is responsible for assessing applications and making their recommendation for funding approval to the Board of MND Australia.

3.3. Applications close at 6:00pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019.

- 3.3.1. Proposals are to be sent to Dr Gethin Thomas, Executive Director Research by email to research@mndaustralia.org.au.
- 3.3.2. All sections of the application, including the cover sheet, must be saved and forwarded as a single PDF document.
- 3.3.3. Font must be Arial and at least 11 pt.

3.4. Incomplete or misleading information

- 3.4.1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that applications are complete and accurate. If an application is incomplete or inaccuracies are identified, MNDRIA will exclude it from further consideration.
- 3.4.2. If any application is found to have been intentionally completed (or failed to be completed) in such a way as to mislead MNDRIA, or is otherwise false or misleading in any material respect, the applicant will be disqualified from the grant.

4. **Proposal**

The complete proposal for a 2-year project should consist of the following components:

4.1. **Research Proposal (5 pages) incorporating;**

4.1.1. **Aims and hypotheses (maximum 1 page)**

4.1.1.1. The aims of the research must be clear to the MNDRIA Research Committee and relevant to the mechanisms involved in classical forms of MND.

4.1.1.2. State clearly which hypotheses are to be tested.

4.1.2. **Background**

4.1.3. **Preliminary data**

4.1.4. **Research Plan**

4.1.4.1. Provide a detailed outline of the 2-year project.

4.1.4.2. The contribution and role of the people doing the research must be clearly defined.

4.2. **Significance (1 page)**

Explain what is innovative about this project and how it will further understanding of MND.

4.3. **References (maximum 2 pages)**

4.4. **Curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages per investigator).**

4.4.1. The people who will be doing the research are identified by their role in the research plan and by a brief but adequate CV for each investigator. The CV should include at least:

4.4.1.1. Academic background

4.4.1.2. Present and past employment positions

4.4.1.3. Research grant support (past 5 years)

4.4.1.4. Selected publications included in the two-page CV should be restricted to the past five years. This list should not include publications 'in preparation' or 'submitted'.

4.5. **Budget and justification (1 page maximum)**

The budget must be directed to the aims of the project.

4.5.1. Budget items up to \$250,000 can include:

4.5.1.1. Salary for team members in Australia

4.5.1.2. Direct research costs (reagents and consumables)

4.5.1.3. Attendance of the applicant at the International Symposium on ALS/MND in Montreal, Canada, 9-11 December 2020 (max. \$4,000) and/or the International Symposium on ALS/MND in Basel, Switzerland, 8-10 December 2021 (max. \$4,000)

4.5.2. Budget items cannot include:

4.5.2.1. Attendance at meetings (other than 4.5.1.3 above)

4.5.2.2. Travel (other than 4.5.1.3 above)

4.5.2.3. Computers

4.5.2.4. Equipment (except small items included in 4.5.1.2 above)

4.5.2.5. Indirect or overhead costs.

4.5.3. Other proposed sources of funding to support the project should be disclosed.

4.6. **Name(s) of institution(s) where the work will be carried out**

4.6.1. State in which department and which institution this project will primarily be carried out.

4.7. **Completed cover sheet**

4.7.1. Applicants must complete all sections of the cover sheet as part of the application form.

5. Review process

- 5.1. Applications will be reviewed by a minimum of four independent reviewers as part of a competitive, peer review process.
- 5.2. Applications will be scored according to (i) track record of the applicant, (ii) strength of the research plan and (iii) its relevance to MND.
- 5.3. Funding decisions will be made by the MNDRIA Research Committee at a Grants Allocation Meeting in October 2019. The successful applicant will be notified after this meeting.
- 5.4. The decision of the Research Committee is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

6. Commencement of the Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize from 1 January 2020

- 6.1. The successful applicant must commence the Betty Laidlaw Prize no later than 30 June 2020 or the grant will lapse.

6.2. Payment and reporting

- 6.2.1. The grant will be paid in four equal amounts. The grant will commence with the first payment at the beginning of 2020 on signing a contract with MNDRIA. Subsequent 6-monthly payments will be made on receipt of satisfactory 6-monthly progress reports.
- 6.2.2. If the progress report is not concordant with the grant proposal, then no further funds will be forthcoming. If the grantee wishes to change the emphasis of the study, then that must be with the approval of the MNDRIA Research Committee.
- 6.2.3. A final report and financial acquittal must be submitted on completion of the project.
- 6.2.4. Lay reports may be included on MNDRIA's website and newsletters to members, patients, carers, the MND Associations and others who provide funds to MNDRIA.

6.3. Alterations to the Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize project

- 6.3.1. The Grant-holder must adhere to the approved project.
- 6.3.2. Any proposed alterations should be submitted in advance for approval by the MNDRIA Research Committee.
- 6.3.3. MNDRIA must be notified immediately if circumstances change during the tenure of the Prize, particularly if this affects the ability to undertake the project. MNDRIA retains the right to review the Prize in light of these changes and reserves the right to terminate the Prize should this be deemed appropriate.

6.4. Publications, presentations and acknowledgements

- 6.4.1. The successful applicant will be expected to publish their findings in an appropriate scientific journal.
- 6.4.2. Publications and presentations must acknowledge MNDRIA and the Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize.

7. Privacy of individuals / confidentiality

- 7.1. All personal information provided in the application and assessment details will be kept by MNDRIA and only be used for the purposes of administering this application, and if successful, the Prize.
- 7.2. Applicant's personal information will be disclosed to reviewers as noted above.
- 7.3. Some details of the successful application will be published on the MNDRIA website, including name, location, project title and a brief description of the project.
- 7.4. Information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential unless otherwise stated by MNDRIA.