Pitch for Health Innovation Grants
Grant Guidelines

APPLICANTS MUST READ THESE GRANT GUIDELINES BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

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About Pitch for Health

Pitch for Health is a component of the St Vincents Hospital Network Sydney (SVHNS) Discovery and Innovation Program, developed and funded by SVHNS and the SVHNS Curran Foundation, to grow innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurship across the SVHNS Sydney Health Innovation Precinct (SVSHIP). The grants program is now in its 3rd year.

In the past Pitch for Health has provided seed funding for innovative projects offering 'proof of concept' or 'proof of scale' for new or repurposed drugs, diagnostics, devices or digital devices. These criteria are all still valid, but this year Pitch for Health will expand its remit to include support for high-impact research and innovation that can be developed, tested, implemented or translated to improve healthcare. Projects may include discovery and translational research, new or repurposed drugs, diagnostics, devices, digital initiatives and also artificial intelligence, models of care, service improvements, operational solutions or other work with the potential to make a meaningful difference to patients, staff or the health system.

This round will be open to all staff across SVHNS and the SVSHIP Cornerstone Partners. Two grants of up to $125,000 each are available to support a key project for one year. Research and innovation will sit within the same program, with the potential impact of the work as the common basis of assessment. Applications will be considered in a way that is appropriate to their nature and maturity, rather than ranked according to whether they are research, clinical, operational, or digital in nature.

Pitch for Health is intended to help strong work move towards the next meaningful step in evidence, discovery, testing, translation, implementation, or scale. Research remains a core part of the program. A research appointment, research qualification or previous grant history is not a universal eligibility requirement, allowing clinical, nursing, allied health, operational, administrative, digital, technology, corporate and research staff to compete through the same prize.

For technology-based projects, Technology Readiness Level (TRL) may be used to describe maturity and progress. Depending on the type of project, a submission may be around TRL 3 for a therapeutic project, TRL 6 or 7 for a digital project, and TRL 4 for a diagnostic or device. TRL is not required for every project.

For research projects, impact may be scientific, translational, clinical, health-system or equity-focused and may include generating important new evidence, enabling a next translational step, supporting clinical evaluation or positioning a program for larger-scale funding. For models of care, service redesign and other non-technology projects, the Panel will consider what the work could achieve, how the funding would advance it and the pathway towards implementation or broader impact.

Examples of projects eligible for this scheme include:

a) Generation of a prototype of a medical device
b) Validation of diagnostic assays, platforms, algorithms, or other digital tools
c) Preliminary in vitro or in vivo proof of concept studies for novel or repurposed therapeutics
d) Synthesis of specific antibodies or other compounds for proof-of-concept studies
e) Optimisation and profiling of a novel therapeutic
f) Design and testing of a new model of care or a new way of delivering an existing service
g) Design, build and testing of artificial intelligence or digital solutions that improve healthcare delivery
h) Testing of a model of care, device or platform that improves access, quality, safety or delivery of care

Grant funds are provided by generous supporters through the SVHNS Curran Foundation.

About SVHNS Sydney Health Innovation Precinct, SVSHIP

SVHNS Sydney Health Innovation Precinct (SVSHIP) is Australia's oldest and most established collaborative partnership focusing on medical research and healthcare delivery. The SVSHIP Cornerstone Partners are co-located together in the heart of Sydney, on Gadigal and Bidjigal land, and include:

- SVHNS and SVHNS Centre for Applied Medical Research
- Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

Learn more at www.SVSHIP.org.au

SVSHIP Strategic focus areas

The Pitch for Health innovation Grants are open to compelling work in any area but there are three focus areas that the Precinct particularly wants to accelerate. Relevance to these focus areas is not a pre-requisite. The primary consideration remains the potential impact of the work. Strong proposals outside these focus areas remain eligible and competitive.

A. Precinct flagship research

Research is a central pillar of Pitch for Health. The SVHNS Sydney Health Innovation Precinct has shared flagship strengths in Heart Lung, Cancer and Immunology, underpinned by Equity in Health and Research. Applications that advance these strengths are particularly encouraged, including discovery, translational and clinical research that can generate important new knowledge, unlock a next translational step or strengthen the Precinct's national or international leadership.

B. Bringing Care Home

Bringing Care Home is about redesigning where care happens so that more people can receive safe, high-quality care in the place they most want to be home. Under the Better and Fairer 2030 Strategy, SVHNS is working towards delivering half of health and aged care in people's homes or through virtual and digital platforms by 2030. Pitch for Health is seeking work that can help make that ambition real.

- Prevent avoidable hospital presentations or admissions or support earlier discharge and recovery at home.
- Strengthen chronic condition management through remote monitoring, connected devices, virtual care or earlier intervention.
- Support ageing and residential aged care with models that reduce avoidable hospital transfers and improve continuity of care.
- Develop diagnostics, treatments, digital tools, logistics or service models that make complex care safe and practical outside hospital walls.
- Improve access for people who face geographic, mobility, social or other barriers to hospital-based care.

Strong proposals should show how the patient journey could change and how safety, clinical oversight, access and patient experience would be maintained or improved.

C. Artificial intelligence that can change healthcare delivery

We are looking for artificial intelligence work with the potential to materially change how healthcare is delivered, not only within SVHNS but across NSW and, where appropriate, nationally or internationally. Strong proposals should start with a real healthcare problem and demonstrate a credible path from local development or validation to broader use.

- Clinical decision support, risk prediction and early deterioration detection.
- Diagnostic, pathology, imaging and precision medicine tools.
- Triage, referral, access, patient navigation and demand forecasting.
- Patient-facing tools that improve communication, self-management or continuity of care.
- Workforce, scheduling, patient flow, rostering, resource allocation, documentation, coding or administrative automation.
- System-level solutions that can be tested locally and translated across multiple hospitals, services or jurisdictions.

A strong AI proposal should build or materially advance a usable solution, test it against a relevant healthcare workflow or dataset and describe how it could progress towards broader adoption. Applicants should engage the AI Stewardship Committee early so governance develops alongside the work.

Collaboration across SVHNS, Garvan Medical Research Institute and Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute is encouraged where it adds value but is not required. Research outside the flagship themes remains eligible where the potential impact is strong.

Pitch for Health Innovation Grant Details

Pitch for Health Innovation grants are open to research and innovation projects from any eligible staff member or team. The common test is impact: what difference could the work make, what would this funding unlock and is there a credible pathway to that impact?

What we are looking for

Applications may come from any discipline and may address any area of healthcare, research, service delivery or health system improvement. Research and innovation are deliberately brought together under one prize. The same high-level principles will apply to all proposals, but the Panel will assess them in a way that is appropriate to their nature and maturity. A discovery research project is not expected to look like a service redesign project, and vice versa.

Strong applications should clearly describe the problem or opportunity, what is proposed, why the work matters, what the funding would enable and the potential impact if successful.

Impact may include important scientific discovery, stronger research translation, improved patient outcomes or experience, better access to care, safer or more effective care, improved staff experience, improved efficiency or value, new capability or a credible pathway to future clinical application, adoption or scale.

Projects may range from discovery, translational and clinical research through to clinical, operational, digital, artificial intelligence and model-of-care innovation. No particular project type or research discipline is required.

Application process

The application process follows the same staged approach as the previous round. Phase 1 is deliberately brief and functions as an Expression of Interest (EOI). Applicants are not expected to provide a full protocol, detailed implementation or evaluation plan, fully justified budget or complete governance package at this stage. Shortlisted applicants will be asked for the detailed business case in Phase 2.

- **Phase 1:** Applicants submit a short Expression of Interest (EOI), which will be reviewed by the Panel.
- **Phase 2:** Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full written application.
- **Pitch:** Shortlisted applicants from Phase 2 will be invited to pitch their projects at the Challenger Pitch for Health event in May
    - Pitch training and industry mentorship will be provided to all shortlisted applicants.

Key timelines

Phase 1 applications open	November 9 2026
Phase 1 applications close	December 7 2026
Successful Phase 1 applicants notified and invited to Phase 2	February 15 2027
Phase 2 applications open	February 15 2027
Phase 2 applications close	March 8 2027
Short-listed applicants notified to prepare for the pitch event	March 22 2027
Pitch workshops	April 2027
Challenger Pitch for Health event for short-listed applicants	May 2027
Successful grants funded	June 2027
Milestone reports	As set out in the funding agreement
Grant expiration date	Maximum 12 months after the grant award date
Final report due	Maximum 12 months after the grant commenced

How to apply

Phase 1 applications must be submitted via the online grants portal. You will need to set up an account.

Apply Here

Applicants successful in Phase 1 will be invited to provide a full submission and more information will be provided at that stage.

The application platform can only accept Word documents or PDFs.

Eligibility criteria, Phase 1

To be eligible for Phase 1:

- The project lead must be an employee of SVHNS or an SVSHIP Cornerstone Partner, being the Garvan Institute of Medical Research or the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. Staff from any professional discipline or role are eligible to lead or participate in an application.
- Research-led applications are explicitly eligible and encouraged. A research appointment, research qualification or previous grant experience is not a universal requirement for applicants from other disciplines.
- The funded work must define clear deliverables that can be achieved within a maximum 12-month funding period. For projects at an early stage, this may be completion of an essential step in the discovery, development, evidence or translation pipeline rather than completion of the overall project. No funding extensions can be granted.
- A representative of the application must be available to attend and present at the pitch event.

- The application must have appropriate local endorsement. Research-led projects should be endorsed by the relevant Institutional Research Head and Head of Department (HOD). Other projects should be endorsed by the relevant line manager, Head of Department or Service Director, in accordance with the endorsement requirements below.
- Applicants may include collaborators or mentors where useful. The Panel will consider whether the project has access to the capability required to deliver the work.

Eligible activities

Pitch for Health Innovation Grants may support activities including, but not limited to:

1. Discovery, translational or clinical research where the funding enables a defined step towards evidence, proof of concept, translation or impact.
2. Early-stage commercialisation, market assessments and partnership development
3. Proof of concept data collection
4. Optimisation and validation studies
5. Development of prototypes
6. Design, testing and evaluation of a new model of care or service
7. Software build, model development, data preparation, integration and validation for a digital or artificial intelligence tool
8. User testing, usability testing and implementation evaluation
9. Contracting specialists, for example software development
10. Staff time or backfill where it is directly required to deliver the project

Ineligible activities include:

1. Patent filing or similar costs associated directly with registering intellectual property rights
2. Research or other activity that is already fully funded, or where the application does not identify what the Innovation Prize would materially enable
3. Significant capital infrastructure
4. Business as usual service delivery, routine equipment replacement or recurrent operating costs
5. Undergraduate activities, postgraduate core training, fees, stipends and similar costs

Assessment criteria

Phase 1 applications will be assessed primarily on the potential impact of the work and whether the proposed next step is credible. The same high-level framework applies to research and innovation, but expectations will be proportionate to project type and maturity. Research quality, scientific rationale and translational potential will be considered where relevant; technical, operational and implementation readiness will be considered where relevant to other forms of innovation.

The Panel will consider:

1. **Unmet need and impact.** The problem or opportunity is clearly defined and the potential scientific, clinical, translational, patient, staff or health-system benefit is significant.
2. **Approach and feasibility.** The proposed activities are appropriate to the question or problem, and the stated deliverables can realistically be achieved within the funding period. For research, the scientific rationale and proposed methods should be credible at EOI stage; for other innovation, the technical or operational approach should be plausible.

3. **Capability and support.** The project can access the expertise, collaboration, sponsorship and organisational support required to progress the work. Relevant research, clinical, technical or implementation capability will be considered according to the project type.
4. **Pathway to impact.** The application explains what the funding would enable and the credible next steps towards impact. For research this may include new evidence, proof of concept, translation, clinical evaluation or leverage for further funding; for other innovation this may include testing, implementation, adoption or scale.
5. **Distinctiveness.** The work offers a meaningful scientific advance, new capability or improvement over the current approach.
6. **Finances.** The proposed budget is proportionate to the activities and potential impact.

Alignment with a strategic focus area may help demonstrate strategic relevance, but it is not required and will not outweigh the potential impact and quality of the work.

Application questions

Phase 1 - Expression of Interest

Contact Details

Outline Primary Institution, Team names, roles and organisational affiliations. Identify the project lead.

1. Project title

2. Project summary (maximum 300 words)
    - Provide a high-level summary of your project. Outline the idea or work, the unmet need, your key objectives, how you will meet them and the potential impact if the project succeeds. If relevant, briefly identify alignment with one of the three strategic focus areas.
3. Unmet need / opportunity for impact (maximum 200 words)
    - What specific clinical, service, operational, research or health system problem does your project address? Why does it matter? How might the work improve patient experience, staff experience, clinical practice, health outcomes, research translation, service delivery or health system value?
4. Indicative budget (maximum 100 words)
    - The maximum available budget is $125,000 for one year. If successful at the EOI (Phase 1) stage, you will need to provide a fully justified budget in Phase 2. Provide a brief overview of the estimated budget and major cost categories.
5. Key activities to meet objectives (maximum 200 words)
    - What will you do and how? What approaches or methods will you use to meet your objectives? Where relevant, what preliminary data, prior testing or local experience do you have?
6. Timeline and milestones (maximum 150 words)
    - The funded work must have a maximum duration of 12 months. List 2 to 4 key milestones or deliverables you aim to achieve, with projected timing. For early-stage projects, these may represent an essential step in the development, evidence or translation pipeline rather than completion of the overall project. Indicate any critical dependencies.

7. Potential impact, translation and/or distinctiveness (maximum 200 words)
    - What would this funding enable? What is the potential pathway to impact, translation, adoption or implementation? For research, this may include scientific advance, translational potential, future clinical application or leverage for further funding. Who are the likely end users or beneficiaries, and what makes the work distinctive or important?
8. Intellectual property and freedom to operate (maximum 100 words)
    - Do you hold or have access to relevant intellectual property, for example patents or know-how? Are there any potential barriers to implementation, translation or commercialisation? Answer not applicable where the project does not create or rely on intellectual property.
9. Collaborations and partnerships (maximum 100 words)
    - Briefly outline any existing or planned collaborations relevant to the project, including clinical, operational, research or industry partners. What will they contribute?

Applicants invited to Phase 2 will be asked for the detailed methodology or delivery plan, a fully justified budget, governance and approvals as applicable, risks and dependencies, evaluation approach and a more developed impact or translation plan. Full Phase 2 requirements will be provided with the invitation.

Review Panel

The Pitch for Health Review Panel, for both Phase 1 and Phase 2, includes SVSHIP and external experts in medical research, clinical service delivery, digital health, translation, intellectual property and commercialisation. The Panel is chaired by an independent, external expert.

Intellectual property

Intellectual property generated through an Innovation Prize project will be managed under the relevant policies of the project lead's primary institution.
We appreciate that submissions may contain sensitive or commercially valuable information. The Review Panel will be reminded of confidentiality requirements before applications are shared. Applicants progressing to the pitch stage should obtain appropriate intellectual property, legal or commercialisation advice before disclosing information that could affect future protection or commercialisation.

Local endorsement and institutional contacts

Local endorsement must be uploaded with the Phase 1 application. At EOI stage, applicants are not required to provide the full governance or ethics approvals that may ultimately be needed to undertake the work. These will be addressed in Phase 2 or during project commencement, as applicable:

1. **Research-led projects:** Institutional Research Head and Head of Department (HOD).
2. **All other projects:** line manager/Head of Department/Service Director,

Institutional contacts:

1. SVHNS: Director of Clinical Innovation SVHNS, **Dr Raj Ubeja** - Rajdeep.Ubeja@svha.org.au
2. St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research: **Jasime Katakos**, Chief Research Operations Officer - jasmine.katakos@svha.org.au, **Prof Clare Arnott**, Chief Research Officer - clare.arnott@svha.org.au
3. Garvan Institute of Medical Research: **Dr Jim Shih-Ping Su,** Head of Research Grants and Development**,** grants@garvan.org.au

4. Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute: grants@victorchang.edu.au

Support for applicants

If this is your first application of this kind, help is available. Applicants can request a short conversation before submitting to test whether an idea fits the program, discuss the indicative budget or be connected with relevant clinical, operational, research, evaluation, digital, commercialisation or implementation expertise. The purpose of this support is to reduce unnecessary barriers to participation and help strong ideas progress to a competitive Phase 2 application.

Contacts

If you have any further questions about the Pitch for Health Innovation Grants, please contact:

1. Gabrielle Harley – Finance and Special Grants Officer, St Vincents Curran Foundation
   gabrielle.harley@svha.org.au
   For grants portal assistance and application requirements

2. Steve King - Head of Innovation Delivery, St Vincent's Hospital
   Steve.King6@svha.org.au
   For advice on your project idea, project development and application content