

RESEARCH ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

The Research Endowment Fund (REF) is a new initiative, established as an annual competitive financial grant round to support medical research activity of high quality across the St. Vincent's Health (STV) campus.

The REF aims to raise the profile of clinical research by supporting projects that have a clinical application or potential clinical significance, and encouraging research collaboration amongst various campus groups. The priorities for allocation of research funds are based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Development of areas of research need;
- ✓ Seeding of pilot projects with the potential to form large grant applications;
- ✓ Encouragement of joint venture projects with University Departments and Institutes and collaborations between STV departments;
- ✓ Quality of the project and its value to the Hospital including its relevance to the development of clinical services;
- ✓ Provision of assistance to new members of staff to permit the transfer of research skills to the Hospital;
- ✓ New research initiatives that may be sustained with outside funding at a later stage;
- ✓ Projects partially funded by outside bodies; and
- ✓ Provision of assistance to support research staff/students who do not have access to other funding sources.

Members of the REF represent cross-campus Department Directors and significant stakeholders and include:

- (Chair) Prof Richard M. Fox – Director of Research STV
- Prof James D. Best – Head of School of Medicine, University of Melbourne
Department of Medicine, St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne
- Prof Wayne Morrison – Head of the University of Melbourne Department of Surgery and Director of the Bernard O'Brien Institute of Microsurgery
- Prof Thomas WH Kay – Director of St. Vincent's Institute
- Prof Peter Choong – Chief Medical Officer, Head of Orthopaedics
- Prof Anthony d'Apice – Director, Immunology Research Centre
- Prof David Castle – Chair of Psychiatry, Director Mental Health Services
- Prof Mark Cook – Director Health Service Development, Head of Neuroscience
- Prof Jon Currie – Director Addiction Medicine
- A/Prof Raymond Snyder - Director of Medical Oncology STV
- A/Prof Paul Desmond – Director Medical & Specialist Service, Head Gastroenterology
- A/Prof Michael Murphy – Director Surgical & Specialist Service, Head of Neurosurgery
- Trish O'Rourke – Chief of Nursing & Clinical Operations
- David Jones – Director Foundation
- Stephen Vale – Group Manager Allied Health & Community Programs (end 2007)
- (Secretary) Jacqueline Barry – Project Manager, Research Directorate
- (non-voting) Dr Andrea Lines – Executive Officer Research & Grants Unit

The REF funding allocation for projects commencing in 2008 was \$500,000. Funding allocation was spread over five categories encompassing:

- a) Allied Health Seed Funding
- b) PhD or MD Postgraduate Student Scholarships
- c) Top up Funding for NHMRC / other Postgraduate Scholarships
- d) Research Funding for Established Clinicians (part time)
- e) Research Assistants, Equipment, Reagents, Intra-Hospital Services

REF funding applications closed mid September 2007. This year's application round was highly competitive, with a record number of applications received for funding requests, in excess by 10 times of the actual funds available. A total of 24 applicants were nominated for funding by the REF Committee, out of a total of 91 applications received.

A full list of successful applicants awarded REF funding is available via this link here [REF Successful Applicants 2008](#).

Another round of REF funding will be available for projects commencing in 2009. Revised guidelines will be launched again in August 2008, with an application deadline scheduled for September. A public seminar on the REF guidelines, application process and advice to applicants will be held mid-year to assist with this process. REF committee meetings fit in with the allocation of grants on a calendar year basis.