2021 Research Grants Program – Funding Principles, Eligibility and Selection Criteria, and Frequently Asked Questions

Program overview

The Safer Children, Safer Communities Research Grants program has been created to encourage the development of new evidence-based approaches towards tackling the pervasive problem of child abuse, child sexual abuse and exploitation (including online sexual exploitation). Significant research and data gaps exist in relation to prevention and early intervention approaches for at-risk children and their families. Whilst child abuse and sexual abuse is pervasive in Australia, some communities and groups are more vulnerable.

These communities or groups may:
• be at higher risk of victimisation
• face greater barriers to access support
• have lower awareness of how to identify someone who may be at-risk
• need support or services due to existing higher levels of child sexual abuse.

Another critical gap in research knowledge relates to perpetrator motivations, including the growing proportion of young people engaging in unwanted or harmful sexual behaviours against children and young people. This is important towards developing holistic prevention and intervention programs, targeting adult perpetrators or those at risk of perpetrating, as well as youth exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.

We are offering seven Research Grants, valued at $150,000 each, over up to 2 years.

These grants offer a unique opportunity to support ground-breaking research and increase the understanding of a critically important issue.

Target areas

Research funded through this grant must focus on at least one of the following target areas:

1. **At-risk children and families**: Understanding risk factors for child abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation (including online) related victimisation within vulnerable communities and/or investigating the effectiveness and impact of prevention and early intervention approaches for at-risk children and families.
   At risk children/families include:
   • Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
   • Children with disabilities
   • Children living in poverty
   • Refugee/migrant/CALD children
   • Children in out of home care
   • LGBTIQA+ children

2. **Perpetrators or those at risk of perpetrating:** Investigating prevention and early intervention strategies with perpetrators or those at-risk of perpetrating including adult perpetrators and youth exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.

Note that research for either focus area may include examining situations and strategies that have taken place overseas, however the link and application to the Australian context must be clear in the proposal.

Funding principles

Evidence based and innovative approach	Practical applicability	Skills and expertise of researchers	Long term outcomes	Collaboration
We invest in research that adopts a sound evidence-based approach towards research design, analysis, and outcomes We also encourage innovative and creative research approaches towards better understanding CSA, CSE and OSEC	We fund research that results in actionable and practical outputs that can be applied towards program design, policy development and contribute towards broader public discourse including influencing policy reform/ outcomes in government, business and/or civil society	We support research projects with highly skilled principal investigators/researchers with relevant research/methodological experience and an interest in research relating to child rights, child abuse/exploitation	We pursue research that contributes towards lasting impact on children and families beyond the period of the grant	We encourage research projects that include collaboration between researchers, civil society, NGO stakeholders and other external partners in the design and execution of the research

Eligibility criteria

All applicants for the Research Grants must meet the following criteria:
1. Your organisation must be registered in Australia as a not-for-profit with funding allocated to the organisation and not an individual
2. The lead researcher can demonstrate relevant prior research/methodological experience (2 previous research outputs including journal articles, publications, thesis) and has an interest in research relating to child rights, child abuse/exploitation
3. Your research proposal is aligned with and seeking to create impact in one or more of our research priority areas
4. You agree to obtain ethics approval (or equivalent) for all research other than literature reviews
5. Your organisation has a child safeguarding or child protection policy in place (and associated procedures, including data privacy), or is willing to develop a policy
6. You must commence your research by December 2021
7. Your organisation is not applying for funding under any of the other 2021 Safer Children, Safer Communities grants

Exclusions

Research proposals that fall into any of the following categories will not be considered for funding:
- Research that requires retrospective funding
- Applications primarily seeking funding for the purchase of equipment or the conduct of, or participation in, seminars and conferences
- Auspicing is not permitted – the researchers/organisation applying must be the researcher/organisation responsible for delivering the project
- Research involving viewing, accessing, or storing child exploitation material

Multiple applications from the same institution are allowed; however, will be evaluated carefully to ensure diversity of recipients. Researchers may only be listed as the lead researcher on one application.

Methods/types of research

A range of methodological approaches maybe utilised for this research including (but not limited to):
- Literature reviews / systematic reviews
- Evaluation of effectiveness of existing programs/interventions
- Interview-based studies with practitioners / industry partners / other stakeholders
- Interview-based studies with offenders
- Quantitative analysis of existing data

Applicants are encouraged to put forward a range of innovative methodological approaches towards understanding the research priority areas.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed by a panel comprising experts from industry and academia. The panel may also seek additional expert opinion on proposals, as required.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Research alignment, feasibility, and quality (35% weighting)	- How well aligned is the research proposal to one or more of the prioritised research areas? - How strong is the evidence that this research will lead to real action and impact in our priority area? - Is the research design and methodology sound, and is the research proposal feasible? - Does the research build on existing research findings without duplicating what has been done previously? - Does the proposed research represent good value for money with funds utilised appropriately?
Alignment to our funding principles (35%)	Evidence based and innovative approach –Does the design and methodology follow evidence-based approaches, while incorporating innovation?

	• Practical applicability – Will the research produce actionable insights that contribute towards changing practice and/or policy outcomes? • Skills and expertise of researchers – Do the researchers/investigators have the core technical competency in the research priority areas? • Long-term impact – How will the research outcomes continue to have a lasting impact on children/families beyond the period of the grant? • Collaboration – How will the organisation share learnings and collaborate with other stakeholders to better safeguard, protect and care for children/families?
Impacted groups and research ethics/compliance (15%)	• Does the research focus on one or more stakeholder groups at-risk? • Is there a clear ethics policy included and/or have any necessary ethics reviews been completed or planned?
Organisational alignment (15%)	• Is the organisation delivering the research project well governed and financially sound? • Will the project be conducted in a supportive and high-quality research environment? • Does the organisation operate using appropriate policies and checks to safeguard children and other vulnerable people – for example by following the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations? • Is the organisation committed to measuring and reporting the research outcomes of the funding? • Is the organisation willing to openly share learnings and progress, and make information accessible to others?

Eligible organisations

We invite applications for the Research Grants from a range of non-profit organisations, including universities and other academic institutions, research institutes, civil society organisations and non-government organisations. Consortia are also welcome to apply, however one organisation (which is a not-for-profit) will need to submit the application as the main grantee, and this organisation will be the one to enter into the contract and receive the funds. Consortia may also include researchers or organisations based overseas, however the main organisation applying for the funding will need to hold an Australian ABN and be a registered not for profit to be eligible to apply.

Research output

Grantees must submit their final report within three months of completing the research. The grant outputs may be delivered by a variety of means, including but not limited to publications, policy papers/submissions, workshops, and conference presentations. During the application process, the researcher should outline what and how they intend to deliver at the end of the research, and how the project will deliver impact beyond academic research.

Outputs should be widely shared to ensure maximum accessibility to different audiences.

Throughout the period of the grant, progress reports will be required every six months, and meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Frequently Asked Questions

General questions

Does my organisation need to be a Westpac customer to apply?
No, all organisations that meet the eligibility criteria can apply for a grant.

My organisation received an Impact Grant in 2020. Can we apply for a Research Grant in 2021?
Yes, you may apply for a research grant.

Can my organisation submit applications for several of the 2021 Safer Children, Safer Communities grants?
Only one application per organisation will be considered so we ask that you decide which type of grant is best aligned and apply for one only. This includes our Impact grants (Seed and Scale) and our Strategic Partnerships programs. Organisations can only submit one seed or scale application for the impact grants, please determine which you are most suitable for (multiple applications will not be accepted).

The only exception is our Research grants, where the same organisation (eg; different lead researchers but submitting from the same university) may submit applications for multiple research projects, however they will be carefully evaluated to ensure diversity of recipients.

My research is focussed on communities overseas/ the researchers are based overseas. Am I eligible to apply for a Research Grant?
Yes, it is possible to apply as long as the research is closely aligned with one of the 2 priority areas. The research should deliver outputs that are useful in Australia. In addition, the organisation conducting the research needs to be registered in Australia as a not-for-profit and meet all other eligibility criteria.

What other funding opportunities does Westpac Group offer?
If your organisation is seeking funding for programs and initiatives not covered through the Research Grants program, you may wish to check your eligibility with other funding opportunities in the Safer Children, Safer Communities portfolio, or with Westpac Group's other philanthropic foundations.
- 2021 Safer Children, Safer Communities grants
- Westpac Scholars Trust
- Westpac Foundation
- St.George Foundation
- Bank of Melbourne Foundation
- BankSA Foundation

Application process

How does my organisation apply for a grant?
Your application must be submitted online through our grant portal to be considered eligible. Before submitting your application please ensure you have prepared and reviewed your answers and

supporting documents as applications cannot be amended once submitted. Applications close on Tuesday 15 June, **5pm AEST**.

What are the application questions?
Please refer to the Research Grants application form available on our website.

How do I know if Westpac has received my application?
Upon submitting your application, you will receive an automated email confirming that your application has been received.

Do you have deadlines for applications?
Yes. For 2021, our key dates are as below:
- Applications open: 17 May 2021
- Applications close: 15 June 2021, **5pm AEST**
- Notification of outcome: end of September 2021
- Latest commencement of date for research: 31 December 2021

Assessment of applications

On what basis will you select an organisation?
When assessing grant applications, we apply our selection criteria, outlined above.
Please note that the selection of an organisation is at Westpac's sole discretion.

Do you provide feedback if an application is unsuccessful?
Yes, a member of our team will contact you to offer feedback. Given we are a small team, this may take a several weeks after outcomes are announced.

Can we see some examples of the types of programs you have funded previously?
This is the first year of our Research Grants program, so there are no previous recipients. A summary of our 2020 Impact Grant recipients and their programs can be found here.

Grant acquittal, and reporting

Are there any obligations if a grant is awarded?
If successful, organisations will need to enter into a funding agreement with Westpac prior to the grant being paid.

Are grant recipients required to provide a grant acquittal and reporting?
Yes, all grant recipients will be required to provide an acquittal outlining how the grant funds were used along with regular progress reports throughout the period of the funding.

Help

Unable to find our emails?
Once you have accessed the SmartyGrants portal to commence the application, you will be receiving emails from Safer Children, Safer Communities regarding your application and logon details. If our emails are redirected to your SPAM or JUNK folder, please follow these instructions (for GMAIL/OUTLOOK) to ensure future emails are received by your inbox.

I am having technical problems with the Application Form, who can I contact?
Please email service@smartygrants.com.au for assistance.

I need more help with my application, who can I contact?

Please register to attend one of our three information sessions, where you will be able to ask questions about any of our 2021 funding opportunities. Outside of these sessions, we will respond to questions via email where possible.