



Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research (ACH4)

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

The Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research (ACH4) has funds available for 2026 to support virology and immunology translational research projects that clearly address the research priorities of the First National Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Research Strategy 2021-25; Fourth National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023–2030; Fifth National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2024–2030; Fifth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2018-2022; Sixth National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023–2030; and Ninth National HIV Strategy 2024–2030. In 2026 ACH4 will support translational research on HIV, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and HTLV-1 or co-infections with these viruses.

ACH4 is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) in applied research from qualified scientists to fund research projects aimed at: i) developing vaccine candidates for HIV, HBV subtypes, HCV or HTLV-1; ii) developing preventatives such as HIV microbicides and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP); iii) cure and treatment interventions for HIV, HBV, or HTLV-1, including immunotherapy; iv) novel diagnostics and prognostics for HIV, HBV, HCV, HTLV-1 or hepatitis B/C/HIV/HTLV-1 co-infection; v) molecular tools for tracking epidemics caused by these viruses; and vi) development of new tests for supporting vaccine and antiviral trials. Basic research is not eligible, and grants aimed at development of new direct-acting antivirals against HCV are also not eligible. Applications not supported include those not dealing primarily with HIV, HTLV-1, hepatitis B or hepatitis C itself – notably those focused primarily on complications of the disease, such as hepatocellular carcinoma or glomerulonephritis associated with hepatitis B or C infection; or such as leukaemia, lymphoma, cardiovascular disease, or opportunistic infections associated with HIV or HTLV-1 infection.

Research projects based on clinical data and specimens from patients with HIV, HCV and HBV stored by the Immunovirology Research Network (IVRN) are encouraged. These projects include samples from several HIV and HCV clinical trials and cohort studies, as well as HIV/HBV and HIV/HCV co-infection cohorts. A complete list of stored specimens is available [here](#) or on request from Joanne Reidy, phone: (02) 8627 3004 or email: joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au

The grants are intended to complement and translate basic research projects in the virology and immunology of HIV, HBV, HCV and HTLV-1 that are commonly funded by other granting bodies such as NHMRC. The ACH4 grants are not intended for the basic research itself. A few awards will be available for seed funding of applications that are viewed by the SAC to be exciting & innovative ideas that have the potential for longer-term translation.

Funding is available for 10 months from 1 December 2025, in line with the agreement with the Commonwealth Government (but with potential extension to 31 December 2026), for grants up to \$50,000.

Eligibility: applications are welcome from Australian investigators regardless of their university or research institutional affiliation except those designated as **CIA** on another grant from the Australian Government Department of Health G05055 Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Research Program as CIA. One application as CIA only, please see guidelines for more information. National collaborative groups are encouraged.



The format for the submission of progress reports from previous (ACH4) funding is available at ach4.org.au/apply/

Expressions of Interest close at 5:00 pm AEST on Tuesday 16 September 2025

Areas of Research: HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HTLV-1

The areas of research of highest priority for support in 2025 are listed below. Collaboration with national strategic funded bodies for HIV and hepatitis research are strongly encouraged.

In relation to HIV

- Development of *vaccine candidates* up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development
- Development of *assay systems* to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials
- Development of *preventatives* such as microbicides, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) regimens
- Development of *assay systems* to monitor effectiveness of microbicides, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) regimens
- Development of *cure interventions* up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development
- Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy
- Development of tests for antiviral drug resistance and toxicity
- Development of *assay systems* to measure appropriate immunological and virological outcomes in clinical trials of cure interventions
- Development of *diagnostics and prognostics* for the ART era, such as point-of-care tests
- Development of *molecular virology* tools for tracking the HIV epidemic

In relation to HCV

- Development of *vaccine candidates* up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development
- Development of *assay systems* to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials
- Development of *preventatives* such as disinfectants for cleansing of injecting apparatus
- Development of *assay systems* to monitor effectiveness of disinfectants for cleansing of injecting apparatus
- Development of *diagnostics and prognostics* for the direct-acting antiviral (DAA) era, such as point-of-care tests and drug resistance tests
- Development of *molecular virology* tools for tracking the HCV epidemic

In relation to HBV

- Development of *novel vaccine candidates* for therapeutic use or for non-responders to the existing vaccine up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development
- Development of *assay systems* to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials
- Development of *cure interventions* up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development,
- Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy
- Development of tests for antiviral drug resistance and toxicity
- Development of *assay systems* to measure appropriate immunological and virological outcomes in clinical trials of cure interventions
- Development of *diagnostics and prognostics* for the modern era, such as point-of-care tests
- Development of *molecular virology* tools for tracking the HBV epidemic

In relation to HTLV-1

- Development of *diagnostics and prognostics*
- Development of *molecular virology* tools for tracking the HTLV-1 epidemic
- Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy
- Development of novel preventive or therapeutic vaccines
- Development of *assay systems* to measure immunological and virological outcomes from vaccine and immunotherapeutic or antiviral trials

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FORMAT FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

One application as CIA only

Please follow the below Guidelines & Instructions:

Maximum of four (4) A4 pages Information exceeding page requirements WILL NOT be considered
Font: Calibri, 12 point
Margins: 2 cm
Save document as: PDF
Save your file as: ACH4_2026 APP_SURNAME (<i>example: ACH4_2026 APP_Smith</i>)
Please include CIA last name at the top right-hand corner of each page

Page 1

- Administering Institution, including Research Office contact details, (name, email and phone).
- Application Title.
- Confirmation of Australian residency/Visa status.
- Area of research (Vaccines, Antiviral Strategies or Diagnostics/Prognostics).
- **Details of all Chief Investigators** (names and titles, positions, institutional address, and contact details).
- **One application as CIA only.** Please list all other EOIs you are listed on as CI in which you are participating in (as a CI) in this current round. National collaborative groups are encouraged.
- Details of grant funding for all HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HTLV-1 in 2025 and 2026 (current and pending).

- Budget Justification

- Please clarify how the EOI funding increases the feasibility of a project and the likelihood of success, in no more than 2-3 sentences.
- Please select which item is most suitable for your EOI submission:
 - Is it being used to supplement existing funding?
 - Seed funding for a young investigator?
 - Leveraging existing funding?
 - Adding a new line of investigation?

- A short paragraph (**50-word limit**) describing the project in lay terms, with an emphasis on keeping the description at a high level without overstating possible significance & using plain language throughout.

Example:

The eradication ('cure') of 'dormant' HIV from the body is a priority for current HIV research. Here we aim to wake up HIV in dormant infected cells with interferon and then kill them with genetically engineered "CAR" T cells - to replace the natural immune cells suppressed by HIV.

- Details of ethics approval requirements. Please indicate whether Human and/or Animal ethics and/or OGTR/IBC licenses are required to undertake the research. If human and/or animal ethics approval is required and/or OGTR/IBC licenses for dealing with GMO's are required, please indicate whether these approvals/licenses have already been obtained. It should be noted that work cannot commence on any funded project until the appropriate approvals/licenses have been obtained and copies provided to ACH4.



Pages 2 and 3

Brief synopsis of proposed research project, comprising:

- Introduction (including background, hypotheses and specific aims);
- Research plan, including planned samples, if any, to be studied;
- Significance (with reference to translation into health care outcomes outlined in the ACH4 strategic plan and the relevant National Strategies and the timelines for those outcomes); and
- References (you should cite no more than 6 references).

Page 4 (½ page maximum)

- Discuss translation into health care outcomes according to the HIV, Hepatitis and Indigenous Health National Strategies.
- Paragraph on justification as CIA.

Expressions of interest will be evaluated by an expert panel of virologists, immunologists, and biologists, including clinician-scientists with expertise in translation of basic research into clinical practice and biotechnology. Projects will be graded, prioritised and a decision made on funding according to the First National Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Research Strategy 2021-25; Fourth National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023–2030; Fifth National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2024–2030; Fifth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2018-2022; Sixth National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023–2030; and Ninth National HIV Strategy 2024–2030 being met and available budget.

Additional points for consideration:

- Please ensure you include your budget justification as noted above. (The feasibility of the project funded by both types of funding will be taken into account by the Scientific Advisory Committee in ranking of grant applications).
- Applicants may wish to obtain advice from their Business Development Manager and particularly in relation to novel Intellectual property

**Expressions of interest are to be submitted via your Institute Director or Research Office via the
ACH4 website portal: ach4.org.au/apply/**

Joanne Reidy
Administration Officer, ACH4
The Westmead Institute for Medical Research
Phone: (02) 8627 3004

Expressions of Interest close at 5:00 pm AEST on Tuesday 16 September 2025

Executive of the Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research (ACH4)

Professor Anthony Cunningham AO (Director)
Professor Andrew Lloyd AM (and Chair, IVRN Steering Committee) Professor
Damian Purcell
A/Professor David Anderson
Professor Gilda Tachedjian
Dr Margaret Littlejohn
A/Professor Thomas Tu

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