

THE JUDITH JANE MASON & HAROLD STANNETT WILLIAMS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDICAL PROGRAM

ME/CFS RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Application dates for funding commencing in 2027:

Open: 10 August 2026

Close: 30 September 2026 (11.59 PM AEDT)

Apply via: <https://equitytrustees.smartygrants.com.au/Mason-Foundation-2027>

Enquiries to: charities@eqt.com.au

BACKGROUND

The Judith Jane Mason & Harold Stannett Williams Memorial Foundation was established in 2003 with a generous donation from Judith Jane Mason (née Williams). The Mason Foundation is named in honour of the benefactor and her father, Harold Stannett Williams, who was born in the last years of the 19th century. His daughter describes him as “a most intelligent, wonderful and charitable man”. The memory of his personal generosity is enhanced through this Foundation, benefiting others in perpetuity.

The Mason Foundation seeks to achieve enduring, positive impact in Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) by funding medical research principally into its causes, prevention and management. Throughout her lifetime, Judith suffered from ME/CFS, commenting “I don’t believe that many people understand how debilitating CFS is – in fact I believe some doctors even don’t believe in it”.

ME/CFS Grant Funding

The Mason Foundation has awarded research project funding for ME/CFS since 2005, distributing \$1-2 million annually.

The Foundation established the first Australian registry and biobank for ME/CFS ([The Australian ME/CFS and Long COVID Registry and Biobank](#)) with an initial grant of \$1,030,000 in 2019, with \$1,001,332 in additional funding awarded in July 2024 (over 5 years) to increase the capacity and diversity of samples available to the research community.

Since 2018, the Mason Foundation has funded 36 grants for ME/CFS research, totalling \$11.6 million.

THE MASON FOUNDATION ME/CFS NATIONAL MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL

Recommendations for funding ME/CFS research by the Trustees are made by an independent National Medical Advisory Panel comprising:

Prof Peter Schofield AO – Chair
A/Prof Lisa Devereux
Prof Stuart Tangye
Dr Prashanth Ramachandran
Dr Adrienne O'Neill (member with lived experience of ME/CFS)

RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATIONS

In this granting round, ME/CFS research grants will be awarded for a maximum of \$130,000 p.a. for up to three years.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact of their research in relation to each of the following areas:

- **Objective:** research projects that focus on ME/CFS
- **Scientific credibility:** the project includes a strong hypothesis, robust methodology and a clear research plan.
- **Research focus:** the project addresses priority areas of research for ME/CFS, including one or more of the following:
 - understanding the pathology of the illness
 - developing a diagnostic test for patients
 - improving how health professionals currently diagnose and manage ME/CFS
 - developing or pre-clinical testing of potential new treatments for ME/CFS
 - clinical trials of potential new treatments for ME/CFS
 - emerging research priorities for ME/CFS

We note that there is overlap between research regarding Long COVID and ME/CFS. While research projects in relation to Long COVID can seek funding through this program, the primary focus of the research must be ME/CFS.

- **Impact:** the project provides evidence that the research is likely to have a positive impact on people living with ME/CFS.
- **Translation:** the project identifies how the research will be translated into clinical practice, policy, public education or further research.
- **Capacity building:** the project has a capacity building element. Funds may be used for:
 - supporting early career researchers
 - attracting new clinical researchers to the field.
- **Collaboration:** the project involves meaningful collaboration between researchers within Australia
- **Use of the AusME Registry and Biobank:** For studies involving human samples or data, research grant applications that include either contributing to or accessing data and/or biospecimens from the [Australian ME/CFS and Long COVID Registry and Biobank](#) will be prioritised. Note that a letter of support from the AusME Registry and Biobank is not required for the application process, but please state whether your research project will rely on access to this resource.

USE OF STANDARDISED DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA

The Mason Foundation acknowledges the NHMRC ME/CFS Advisory Committee's advice to the NHMRC that there is currently no perfect diagnostic criteria, but agrees that the 2003 Canadian Consensus Criteria (CCC), the 2011 International Consensus Criteria (ICC), the Institute of Medicine (IOM), now the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), 2015 diagnostic criteria, and the Paediatric Primer (2017) for child and adolescent patient selection and collection of common data elements

(CDEs) are internationally the most commonly used criteria for research. **We require grant applicants to state which consensus criteria they will rely on in their proposals.**

ELIGIBILITY

Payment of the grant will be made to the institution nominated by the applicant. The Mason Foundation can only make grants to organisations with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Item 1 status.

First named chief investigators who have ongoing multi-year grants with future grant commitments from the Mason Foundation, i.e. grants with amounts still to be paid in this or future financial years or where there is a report due before the grant round has closed, are ineligible to apply

Decisions on funding take into account the following:

- whether the proposal has a clearly defined hypothesis, objectives and outcomes;
- the capacity to achieve proposed outcomes to a suitable quality with the available resources and in the specified timeframe.
- a realistic and clear budget for each year of the grant, and if relevant, other sources of funding that will enable the project to be successfully completed;
- access of, or contributions to data and/or biospecimens at the [Australian ME/CFS and Long COVID Registry and Biobank](#); and
- the quality of proposed research team and the strength of their track record.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

The Equity Trustees [website](#) for the Mason Foundation National Medical Program provides information on the opening and closing dates and the link to apply for a grant via SmartyGrants. Please note that the online application can only be accessed when the funding round is open.

To make an application you will need a SmartyGrants login. If you don't have a login, complete the Register section at SmartyGrants.

Notification Date:

Applicants can expect to know the outcome of their applications by December 2026.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH A GRANT IS AWARDED

Reporting

Successful grant recipients are required to submit a report at the conclusion of the grant, detailing the achievements and evaluating the success of the activities for which funding was given. For multi-year grants, an annual progress report must be submitted before subsequent grant instalments will be paid.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement of support from The Judith Jane Mason & Harold Stannett Williams Memorial Foundation as managed by Equity Trustees is expected in presentations and publications.

Transferring Grant Funding

Grant funding is provided to organisations and cannot be transferred to another organisation without prior approval from Equity Trustees.