

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021



FROM THE ACVA LEADERSHIP

Congratulations from the ACvA Operations Team

MRFF Frontiers Grant Successes

The cardiovascular research community has had tremendous success in the Frontier Grants announced in May this year, with three out of the ten stage one grants that were awarded going to cardiovascular research. This stage one success creates the exciting possibility of significant funding through stage two, with stage two grants awarded to date having received between \$20m-\$30m. The grants aim to support Australia's top researchers to pursue big ideas that can revolutionise health care and potentially create new industries.

This is such an exciting time in cardiovascular research with these large collaborative programs of work being awarded to our sector. The next twelve months provides the stage one winners with the opportunity to hone their collaborations and drive to successful outcomes, helping to address what remains the nation and the globe's biggest cause of death.

The ability of the CV research community to think big and work together is reflected in these grants and we can dream of tens of millions of dollars being allocated to the cardiovascular sector when stage two comes around. We wish you all success and are happy to support the next phase of work in any way we can.

- **The Artificial Heart Frontiers Program: \$999,570** - Over 23 million people suffer from heart failure around the globe, yet only six thousand a year receive a donor heart. Many patients turn to artificial hearts: large, noisy devices that too frequently fail, or confine the patient to hospital. Led by ACvA Board Director, Professor David Kaye, the Artificial Heart Frontiers Program will bring a new generation of artificial hearts to market. The innovative implants are small, patient-friendly and reliable - outlasting all existing alternatives. They are powerful enough for an adult, yet small enough for a child. They are quiet, portable, and respond to active lifestyles, allowing patients to return to their families and jobs. This technology will revolutionise the lives of patients with heart failure.
- **Disruptive Technologies for Precision Medicine in Coronary Artery Disease: \$896,606** - Coronary artery disease resulting from the build-up of plaque affects more than 1.2 million Australians; however traditional methods using CT imaging of the heart are cumbersome, time-consuming and may have limited accuracy. Led by one of the ACvA's most recent members, Professor Girish Dwivedi, this project uses artificial intelligence technology to help people suffering from, or at risk of, coronary artery disease, the single leading cause of death in Australia. It will allow for more accurate diagnosis and faster reporting across all aspects of healthcare, improving the quality and consistency of patient care. The UWA team of experts in cardiac imaging and artificial intelligence will use the grant to develop a tool to predict the risk of coronary heart disease from heart computed tomography (CT) scans. The tool could determine

if plaque build-up has narrowed the coronary arteries and would identify patients most at risk of adverse cardiovascular events, ultimately reducing the number of heart attacks and deaths.

- **Personalised Prevention of Coronary Artery Disease: \$997,562:** Prof. Gemma Figtree, collaborators and partners have recently been awarded almost \$1m over 12 months under the Medical Research Future Fund's Frontiers program. One Australian suffers a heart attack every 10 minutes. Until now, clinicians have been limited to modifiable risk factors, such as cholesterol and blood pressure levels, to predict heart attacks and guide prevention. But, up to 27% of patients with life-threatening attacks have no standard modifiable risk factors, and a proportion progress rapidly to recurrent events despite optimal management. Clearly there is more at play. Prof Figtree and her cross-disciplinary team of clinicians, researchers, healthcare and industry leaders are focussing efforts under Stage 1 of the grant across three cores to: 1) identify urgently needed biomarkers of early plaque; 2) establish evidence-based clinical pathways; 3) discover game-changing new drug treatments. Success in these focus areas promises to move the science and medicine forward, and to position the team to move from planning to implementation, with further support under Stage 2 of the Frontiers program.

MRFF Cardiovascular Health Grant Successes

The ACvA would also like to extend its congratulations to the recipients of the recent MRFF Cardiovascular Health Mission Grants, with \$20M in funding injected to support 16 projects across the country.

Prof Dominique Cadilhac
Dr Kathryn Hayward
Prof Carol Hodgson
Prof Shaun Jackson
Prof Anthony Keech
Prof Natasha Lannin
Prof Christopher Levi
A/Prof Blanca Gallego Luxan

Prof Alistair McEwan
Prof Stephen Nicholls
Dr Nathan Palpant
Prof Julie Redfern
Prof Kerry-Anne Rye
A/Prof Renee Turner
Dr Sarah Wallace

ACvA Board Communique

Earlier in May, the ACvA held a Strategy Day session with our leadership and key stakeholder groups.

The core objectives for the Strategy session were to:

- Assess ACvA's progress against milestones agreed in Strategy Day 2020
- Hear from key members and stakeholder groups their perspectives and priorities for ACvA
- Consider the ACvA's vision, priorities and future directions

The meeting was well received with lots of reflection and suggestions for the future. The Board released a Communique, which was circulated to the membership in June that summarised the key discussion items from the day and key focus areas for ACvA going forward.

To view the Board Communique, please head to our website [here](#).

ACVA EXCELLENCE IN CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH AWARDS



EXCELLENCE IN CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH AWARDS



The ACVA have launched their suite of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research Awards, recognising the importance of continuing research in cardiovascular diseases, including heart, blood vessel diseases and stroke. The new awards are national in scale and celebrate diversity and inclusivity across the research spectrum and are designed to raise the profile of cardiovascular research through the stellar awardees.

The three awards are:

- [Gamechanger award](#) - recognising innovations and ideas that have challenged the norm and in turn, transformed our way of doing or thinking about things for the better.
- [Translation award](#) - recognising the significant process commitment and expertise required to translate observations from the laboratory and clinic into interventions that improve the health of individuals and the community.
- [Mentor award](#) – recognising the individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership throughout their careers by going the extra mile and providing guidance and support to other researchers.

To apply, simply head over to the relevant award webpage (links above) and click on the link to the submission form.

Please put your thinking caps on, and let's get nominating!

Applications close 31 August 2021.

DON'T FORGET: RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership with the ACVA is now due. To renew your membership, please login to your [Member portal](#) and follow the prompts. If you experience any issues with your renewal process, please contact Meng Hsu (meng.hsu@ozheart.org) for assistance.



It is only \$50 for an individual membership and we look forward to having you on the team.

NATIONAL CARDIO-ONCOLOGY SERVICES SURVEY

As part of an ongoing study, investigators Dr Christopher Yu, Dr Faraz Pathan, Dr Aaron Sverdlov, Prof Leonard Kritharides, and Prof Kazuaki Negishi invite you to participate in a survey into the current status of cardio-oncology services in Australia. To date, there is no formal cardio-oncology framework for optimal cardio-oncology care in Australia. Furthermore, it is unclear what resources or expertise are available nationally for cardio-oncology patients. The aim is to investigate through a national survey, the current service provisions and desire for cardio-oncology services nationally amongst cardiologists, oncologists and haematologists.

A message from the study team

The decision to complete and submit this survey constitutes your implied consent. Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Only members of the research team, named above, will have access to the surveys and results. These will be held securely on the University of Sydney server. The information being collected is completely anonymous. The results of the survey will be presented in a journal or at a conference.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the researcher Christopher Yu (Christopher.yu@sydney.edu.au). This study has been approved by the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the study, or your rights as a study participant, you may contact: The NBMLHD HREC Ethics Executive Officer on Ph: (02) 4734 1998 or via Email: NBMLHD-Ethics@health.nsw.gov.au

The survey involves no more than 20 questions and will take 5-7 minutes to complete.

To access the survey please see the following link:

<https://redcap.sydney.edu.au/surveys/?s=KYN43HAKRA>

EOI: BASIC SCIENTISTS WANTED

The ACvA held a brainstorming session on 14 July 2021 to discuss and consider how the ACvA can further support the basic sciences. Two major themes resulted from the discussions: 1) the need to raise awareness on the importance of the basic sciences, and 2) the need to increase integration between the basic sciences and the translational pipeline.

Actions

- Develop an opinion piece on the contribution of basic science to significant health issues. The opinion piece will be directed towards the media, key influencers and funders. Four examples will be selected, and a writing group formed to draft the opinion piece.
- Review and consult on the ACvA's structure and programs to recommend how to optimise support for the basic sciences to the ACvA Board.

The groups will be supported by the ACvA operational team

How you can help

The ACvA is seeking:

1. Examples for the opinion piece that highlight the contribution and importance of the basic sciences in the development of medical innovations that have had a significant impact on patients and the society.

In your example, please provide a short summary detailing:

- What the basic science discovery was
- How it happened
- What was the impact of the translational outcome

Four examples will be selected with preference given to examples with a cardiovascular angle and an Australian connection and the proponents of the selected examples will be invited to be part of a writing group. The writing group will develop the opinion piece. The opinion piece will be published in a relevant journal and used to leverage subsequent interest from media networks (e.g., ABC, The Conversation), influencers, an inform an advocacy piece to government and funders.

Please send your examples with a short summary, as outlined above, to acva@ozheart.org.

Please send you examples by Friday 13 August 2021

2. Expressions of Interests for an Advisory Group – co-chaired by Prof Jamie Vandenberg and A/Prof Christina Bursill – to help consider how the ACvA can work to further support the basic sciences, through review and consultation on the current Flagships and governance structure, and the ACvA's strategic priorities and capacity building programs. The group will consider and recommend to the ACvA Board:
 - options related to the ACvA's structure and Flagships
 - current gaps in the ACvA's program of work
 - new ideas or areas for engagement or integration in the current suite of activities
 - appropriate nomenclature that embraces the definitions and understanding of what constitutes basic science.

It is envisaged this work will take approximately 3 months to complete.

Interested members should email acva@ozheart.org, briefly outlining their willingness to contribute to this work and key expertise they will bring to the "table" 100 words maximum.

Please send you EOI by Friday 13 August 2021



COME WORK WITH US!

The ACvA is looking for an enthusiastic and upbeat Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Officer for a part-time role to lead media and communications activities for our national initiatives.

Find out more on our [website](#).

ACVA ACTIVITIES

ACvA Commercialisation webinar

Continuing on with the ACvA webinar series, the ACvA hosted a webinar on 'Commercialisation 101' on 30 July 2021. Dr Tamsin Terry, Director of Commercialisation – Life sciences, UniQUEST, provided an excellent overview of the commercialisation process, including commercialisation pathways, intellectual property and licensing, patents, and successful and not so

successful war stories. There was keen interest from our panellist of four and the audience, who asked inquisitive and thought-provoking questions. The webinar was well-received and attracted positive feedback from all who attended.

This webinar is the first instalment of a two-part webinar series on Commercialisation, with the next webinar at the end of September focused on 'war stories/case studies' by researchers who have been successful in the commercialisation process, and lessons they've learnt throughout the journey.



Commercialisation 101 Register [HERE](#)

Friday 30 July 2021 12:30 – 1:30 pm AEST

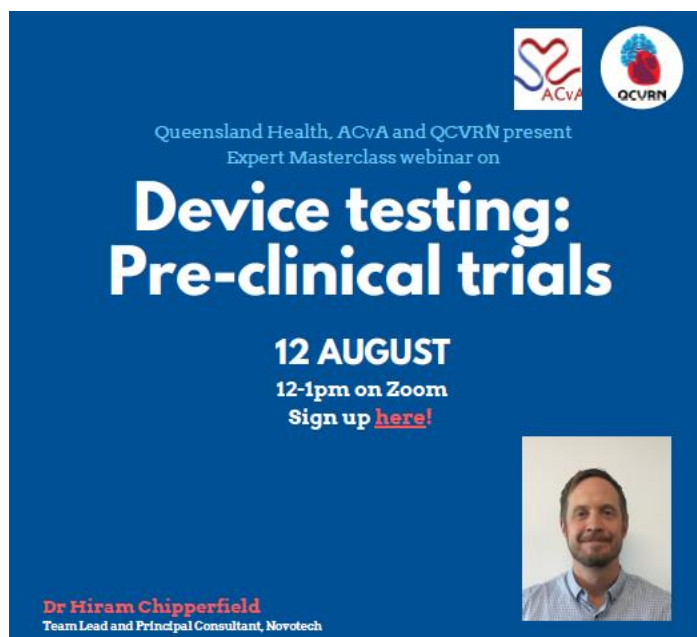
Dr Tamsin Terry, Director, Commercial Engagement – Life Sciences, UNIQUEST

Tamsin is Director, Commercial Engagement – Life Sciences at UniQuest with a particular focus in oncology and infectious disease. Tamsin has an extensive background in Australian and UK research commercialisation and medtech industries encompassing small molecule drug and biologic development and medical device (sensing and imaging and wound treatment technologies) with additional experience in vaccine development and gene expression-based diagnostic assays/biomarkers. Her expertise includes commercialising research, IP and funding strategies for medical devices and drugs, collaborative and outsourced research management, and interacting with both university and industry clinical, research and regulatory teams and regulatory authorities to progress research outcomes into clinical use. Prior to joining UniQuest, Tamsin was R&D Director for the Wound Management Innovation CRC, responsible for directing research and development strategy across the CRC's portfolio of innovative wound-focused research and had previous Research Director roles in small molecule and antibody therapeutics and expression-based diagnostics.

With Panelists:

- Prof Kerry-Anne Rye
- Prof Grant Drummond
- Dr Chengxue Helena
- Dr Nathan Palpant

ACvA-QCVRN-Queensland Health Expert Masterclass webinar series



Queensland Health, ACvA and QCVRN present
Expert Masterclass webinar on

Device testing: Pre-clinical trials

12 AUGUST
12-1pm on Zoom
Sign up [here!](#)

Dr Hiram Chipperfield
Team Lead and Principal Consultant, Novotech

The next webinar as part of the Expert Masterclass series is on 'Device testing: pre-clinical trials' on **12 August, 12 – 1pm AEST**, presented by Dr Hiram Chipperfield, Team Lead and Principal Consultant at Novotech.

Hiram Chipperfield is the Team Lead and Principal Consultant with the BioDesk team at Novotech. BioDesk provides expert consulting to therapeutic product companies, including medical device companies, with regard to development and realisation of their development plans. Hiram has over 12 years of regulatory affairs and product development experience. He has a scientific background with a PhD in Cell Biology followed by academic and commercial post-doctoral research. Prior to

joining Novotech, Hiram held roles in a regulatory affairs consulting firm and a global diagnostics company. With experience in products from diagnostics to cell therapies, he has managed projects ranging from preclinical development, first-in-human clinical trials, product registration, through to post-market reimbursement applications. Hiram is based in Brisbane, Australia.

Register for the session [here](#).

Flagship update

- Clinical Trials – A proposal for a Cardiovascular Clinical Trials Enabling Platform has been under development by the Clinical Trials Flagship and a brainstorming session will be held with ANZACT in August to develop the collaboration between the Flagship and ANZACT.
- Big data –The perspective piece by the Advisory Group was accepted and published in [Heart, Lung and Circulation](#). Prof Dominique Cadilhac has been appointed new co-Director of the Flagship and will be working closely with co-Director Prof Louisa Jorm.
- Bioengineering – The Advisory Group discussed the idea of holding a Pitchfest to showcase CV innovations and help bring in key investments, networks and provide education in this area.
- Drug Discovery - Expression of interest circulated for additional members, following the departure of Prof Justin Hamilton. The EOI closes on 6 August 2021. We would like to recognise and thank Justin for his contribution.
- Implementation and Policy – The Flagship welcomed the appointment of its co-Director, Professor Julie Redfern, who will work closely with existing Director, Professor Garry Jennings to support the strategic priorities of the Flagship.

Specialist working group update

- Cardio-oncology – A Cardio-oncology conference is in the planning stages and is proposed for early 2022. Please contact A/Professors Aaron Sverdllov (Aaron.Sverdllov@newcastle.edu.au) or Doan Ngo (Doan.Ngo@newcastle.edu.au) for further information about the group, conference and how you can get involved.
- Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) – The Working Group holds regular meetings to discuss research activities in the field, develop collaborations and create grant/funding opportunities for researchers in PAD across Australia. The group is looking at the challenges, opportunities, impacts and management of PAD, and are currently developing a perspective piece that raises awareness of these issues. Please contact Dr Belinda Parmenter (b.parmenter@unsw.edu.au) if you want further information on this group.
- Environmental Determinants of Cardiovascular Health – A green paper is being developed and a national summit is in the planning stages. Please contact Meng (meng.hsu@ozheart.org) for further information.

Policy and Implementation Prioritisation Roundtable

An official joint steering committee from ACvA, CSANZ and Heart Foundation has been established, with members consisting of Professors Garry Jennings, Julie Redfern, Tim Shaw, Christian Hamilton-Craig, Sally Inglis, Ralph Audehm, Ms Sophie Gohl, and Dr Catherine Shang. Two meetings have been held, and pre-survey questions are currently being finalised. The purpose of the Roundtable is to convene a whole of nation discussion in partnership with national CV peak bodies to identify and prioritise CV implementation and policy gaps. The outcomes of the Roundtable will form the foundations for a national roadmap and priorities for primary prevention, acute treatment and secondary prevention. It is being auspiced by Policy and Implementation Flagship Director, Professor Garry Jennings, who is currently the interim CEO of the Heart Foundation, following the departure of John Kelly from the role.

MTPConnect project



MTPConnect provided funding for the ACvA to undertake a mapping project to identify capabilities and industry needs and create a searchable online portal that can serve as a shopfront for industry and investment attraction into early phase CV device trials, pre-clinical studies and training. The project has been named [VentriClinical](#) and a website has been

developed. 16 Australian organisations have joined the network to create a 'shop front'. Marketing collateral is near-completion and business development efforts are underway. To register your organisation to the network, please complete the form [here](#). For further information, please contact Anthony Murray (Anthony.murray@ozheart.org).

Emerging Leaders Committee Update

- **CV Champions:** the last meeting of the first cohort will be in September. Feedback so far has been very positive. The plan is to organise a face-to-face event, if allowed, to celebrate achievements and put some of the learned skills into practice. This face-to-face event will be organised in hubs across Australia. In addition, the CV Champions program was recently featured in the [Australian Academy of Science newsletter](#).
- **Mentoring:** There are currently 32 matched pairs. The first year is coming to an end in October. Again, the feedback so far has been very positive. We are planning to host an online event as part of the program wrap-up.
- **Roundtable interviews:** The Roundtables were held to determine issues and solutions for early career researchers, which will in turn be used to inform development of ACvA initiatives going forward. All data has been collected and analysed and is currently being written up for potential publication and implementation, subject to approval by the Board.
- **Grant:** The ELC submitted an application to the 2021 Nature Research Awards for Inspiring Women in Science as a team. If successful, this will provide USD \$40,000 for 2021/2022 activities.

NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

2021 QCVRN Symposium



The Queensland Cardiovascular Research Network and its partners are proud to present the 2021 QCVRN Symposium on 22 October 2021.

Commencing at 9:30am, the symposium puts a spotlight on the amazing research being carried out in Queensland. Keynote speakers include A/Prof James Chong, Prof Wendy Brown and Dr Jason Agostino. The program also includes networking opportunities for early career researchers and PhD students. Registration is [FREE](#) and can be in-person or virtual.



A/Professor James Chong
Academic and Interventional Cardiologist
University of Sydney & Westmead Hospital



Professor Wendy Brown
Physical Activity and Health
University of Queensland



Dr. Jason Agostino
GP and Epidemiologist
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
Australian National University

Complete your [abstract submission form](#) and email to gcvrn@qcvrn.org. **Abstracts close 31 August 2021.**

NSW CVRN Ministerial Awards

Nominations are now open for the NSW CVRN Ministerial Awards. These two prestigious awards recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions to research in cardiovascular diseases, including diabetes, stroke and renal disease, by a Senior and Early-Mid Career Researcher based in NSW. Applications close **16 AUGUST** with Awards presented at the 2021 Showcase by Hon. Brad Hazzard. For more information and application forms see their [website](#).

NSW CVRN Pitch from the Heart

This 3-minute Research Pitch Competition is a new event open to Early Mid-Career Researchers to showcase their research to colleagues and peers in a 3-minute thesis style delivery. A review panel, including Senior and EMCR researchers, representatives from OHMR and a community member will determine the winners at a live event in September. Registrations open **2 AUGUST**. The winners will receive a monetary prize and have the opportunity to deliver their 3-minute pitch at the Showcase where they will receive their awards.

Save the date:

NSW CVRN Showcase and Awards Ceremony – Resilience, Recharge and Recovery: CVD in Rural and Remote NSW

When: 6 October 2021

The program will be hosted by the Minister for Health and Medical Research, The Hon. Brad Hazzard and the even will be MC'd by ABC journalist Tegan Taylor. . A full invitation and program will be circulated at the end of August.

NSW CVRN EMCR Networking Event

The newly formed [Rising Stars Sub-Committee](#) will be organising an EMCR networking event to be held in December – Watch your emails for more information.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

MRFF 2021 International Clinical Trial Collaborations Grant Opportunity

This grant opportunity will support Australian involvement in international collaborative investigator-initiated clinical trials.

The anticipated outcomes of the research are:

- increased Australian leadership of, or participation in, international collaborative investigator-initiated clinical trials
- high quality evidence to inform the uptake of effective health treatments, drugs and devices to improve health practice and outcomes for patients
- increased opportunities for patients to access novel treatments and therapies
- growth in the capacity of Australia's clinical trials workforce.

Applications for the second round OPEN **26 August 2021**

For more information, please see <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/find-funding/mrff-2021-international-clinical-trial-collaborations-ictc-grant-opportunity-go-id-go4722>

Stroke Foundation Seed Grants

The Stroke Foundation is offering up to three Seed Grants of up to \$70,000 over 18 months for early and early-mid career researchers for projects addressing at least one of the research priority areas of:

1. Health services and pathways of stroke management shown to have efficacy, using a translational design (i.e. implementation studies to translate evidence into acute and subacute practice).
2. Long-term community support beyond 6 months post-stroke (e.g. interventions to improve continuity of care, community health services, primary care, social isolation). One Seed Grant is allocated to this priority area in this funding round.
3. Long-term psychosocial recovery beyond 6 months post-stroke (i.e. interventions for recovery of cognition, communication, and emotional and social wellbeing).

Application close **31 August 2021**

For more information, please see <https://strokefoundation.org.au/en/What-we-do/Research/Research-grants/2022>

Stroke Foundation Lady Marigold Southey Aphasia Research Grant

The Stroke Foundation is offering one grant up to \$100,000 over two years for researchers in any career stage, addressing at least one of the research priority areas in aphasia:

1. Developing new behavioural and neurobiological methods for measuring, predicting and understanding aphasia recovery.
2. Optimising dose of aphasia treatment across the recovery continuum.
3. Use of technology and digital health to enable access to aphasia rehabilitation and community participation.
4. The development of accessible interventions to optimise mental health and well-being for people with aphasia and their carers.

Application close **20 August 2021**

For more information, please see <https://strokefoundation.org.au/en/What-we-do/Research/Research-grants/2022>

2021 MedTech Actuator Menzies Scholarships

Scholarships are available to high-potential scientists in MedTech, BioTech or HealthTech and researchers who may be undertaking their honours, masters, PhD or PostDoc – or perhaps have recently started working in industry.

From October to December, ten scholarship recipients will receive:

- A tailored learning experience and access to the MedTech Actuator knowledge hub;
- Unparalleled networking and leadership mentoring;
- Insights into the possibilities of a career that fuses science, research, and entrepreneurship;
- Access to exclusive industry events, and;
- A one-off, \$1,000 stipend.

Application close **31 August 2021**

For more information, please see <https://medtechactuator30066.ac-page.com/mtac-menzies-scholarships-2021>

SOLVE-CHD Postdoc Fellowship

The SOLVE-CHD Postdoc Fellowship is now open at Deakin University. The appointee will work with the support, guidance and supervision of the Director of Heart & Mind Research and SOLVE-CHD collaborators as part of a national initiative dedicated to the development and use of new technologies, better collection, and use of data and improving access to prevention for all Australians with heart disease. This is a multidisciplinary team effort and includes researchers and clinicians with allied health, nursing, cardiology, public health, health economics and psychology backgrounds.

Application close **13th August 2021**,

For more information, please see bit.ly/3hKII9k

Franklin Women Carer's Scholarship – Teresa Anderson Award

The Franklin Women Carer's Scholarship provides assistance to health and medical researchers who have primary caring responsibilities, by initially funding the costs of any additional care required while they present their research at an academic conference under the Franklin Women Carer's Travel Scholarship Scheme.

Application close **22nd August 2021**,

For more information, please see <https://franklinwomen.com.au/scholarship/>

2022 CSANZ Research Scholarships and Fellowships

The CSANZ Research Scholarships, UK Research Fellowships and e-Fellowships for International Meetings are now open. Applications are open for all current financial CSANZ members at the time of applying.

For more information, please see:

<https://www.csanz.edu.au/for-professionals/scholarships-and-prizes/>