**NATIONAL ASTHMA RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**PARTNERSHIP GRANT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Applicants for Asthma Australia Project Grants are assessed on the extent to which they address the four (4) criteria below. Please refer to Asthma Australia’s [National Asthma Research Program](https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AA-NARP_2020_Web.pdf) priority areas when assessing applications.

Applications will be assessed against the category descriptors on the following pages. While the category descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, **it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met.** The category descriptors are a guide to a ‘best fit’ outcomes. Peer reviewers will consistently refer to these category descriptors to ensure thorough equitable and transparent assessment of applications.

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| Assessment Criteria | Weight |
| Track record of the Chief Investigators, Partner Organisations and Partner Investigators, relative to opportunity | 20% |
| Scientific quality | 20% |
| Research impact and translation | 20% |
| Strength of the partnership | 20% |
| Consumer centred | 20% |

**TRACK RECORD (20%)**

This relates to the quality and capability of the team/investigator(s) to achieve and/or deliver the proposed project. It will be judged on the most recent five years, except where there is career disruption. While Asthma Australia has a specific grant stream targeted at early-mid career researchers (EMCRs), we still encourage research teams to include EMCRs as part of the Chief Investigator (CI) team for Partnership Grants. Assessors will take into account the contribution of EMCRs and their capability and/or capacity to undertake the proposed research under the guidance (mentoring) of experienced members of the research team.

Team quality and capability may include:

* Research outputs (publications, awards or honours in recognition of achievements, outcomes of previous research that demonstrate effects on health care practices or policy).
* Contribution to discipline or area (invitations to speak at international meetings, editorial appointments, specialist and high-level health policy committee appointments), and
* Other research related achievements (influence on clinical/health policy or practice, provision of influential advice to health authorities, or impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes).

This should be considered in relation to opportunity with regard to factors such as:

* Career disruption - pregnancy, major illness/injury or carer responsibilities;
* Clinical, administrative and teaching load;
* Available resources including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities;
* Building relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods and subsequent impact on track record and productivity;
* Relocation of an applicant and his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity;
* Typical performance (including publications) for the field in question.

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| **Description** | **Weight** |
| **Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:** |
| * has expertise that specifically targets the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth * has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is outstanding by international standards commensurate with their field of research * research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice * research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI * research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team * has senior members with outstanding national and international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application * may involve junior members who are very strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of very strong mentoring by other members of the team | Outstanding  (50–45) |
| * has expertise that is highly relevant to the proposed research both in terms of its depth and/or breadth * has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is excellent by international standards commensurate with their field of research * research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice * research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI * research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team * has senior members with excellent national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application * may involve junior members who are strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of strong mentoring. | Excellent  (44–37) |
| * raises only minor concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research * has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is well above by international standards commensurate with their field of research * research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice * research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI * research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team * members have very good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application * may involve junior members who are valuable contributors to the team quality & capability or will have the capacity to do so due to the availability of some mentoring | Very good  (36–29) |
| * raises some significant concerns regarding the depth and/or breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research * has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement that is average by international standards commensurate with their field of research * research achievement may include contributions to translational outcomes such as patents, commercial outputs, and public policy or implementation of change in practice * research quality as exemplified in the top 5 publications of each CI * research productivity as exemplified by total outputs for the team * members have good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application * may involve some junior members who would have the potential to add to the team with mentoring, but there is little or no evidence of a mentoring framework to support them | Good  (28–21) |
| * members have made contributions to the field of research but there are significant concerns regarding the depth and breadth of relevant expertise * has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice, that places them at an average level for their peers/cohort * members have established national reputations but do not yet have strong international profiles | Marginal  (20–13) |
| * is deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research * has published only a few works in relevant and other fields of research * members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields | Unsatisfactory  (12–6) |
| * is heavily underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program * is not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields * members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields | Poor  (5–0) |

**SCIENTIFIC QUALITY (20%)**

This includes the clarity of the hypothesis or research objectives, the study design and feasibility. It should take an expansive view of the definition of ‘research,’ including (as appropriate) non-classical methods of enquiry used to answer a given problem/issue. Consider the following questions:

* Clarity of the hypothesis or research objectives.
  + Has the method/framework/approach been partially tested?
  + What outcome is sought in the proposed study and what is the measure?
  + Is it well integrated and adequately developed?
* Is there a clear and appropriate research plan?
  + What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study and its design?
  + Have major problems been overlooked? Have alternative approaches been considered?
  + Is the plan well informed by knowledge of the literature?
  + Is the design appropriate for the aims of the research?
* Feasibility
  + Will the research plan successfully address the stated hypothesis or research objectives?
  + Are the goals concrete and achievable?
  + Is the investigating team appropriate? Does they have the right skills and expertise?

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| **Description** | **Weight** |
| **The proposal has a research plan that:** |
| * is well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed * has a near flawless study design * is highly feasible with all the required expertise, research tools and techniques established * would be highly competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally | Outstanding  (50–45) |
| * is clearly defined, coherent and well developed * has a strong study design * is feasible with all required tools, techniques and expertise established * is likely to be competitive with strong, similar research proposals internationally | Excellent  (44–37) |
| * is generally clear in its scientific plan and is logical * raises only very few minor concerns with respect to the study design * is feasible in all, or almost all areas - required techniques and tools either established or nearly established * may not be highly competitive with similar research proposals internationally | Very good  (36–29) |
| * is generally solid in its scientific plan, but may not always be clear in its intent and may lack some focus * raises several minor concerns regarding the study design * raises doubts about the feasibility in some areas * is not likely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally | Good  (28–21) |
| * is somewhat unclear in its scientific approach and goals * contains some major design flaws * raises major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion | Marginal  (20–13) |
| * is unclear in its scientific approach and goals * contains several major study design flaws * raises several major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion | Unsatisfactory  (12–6) |
| * contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible * is unlikely to be successfully completed | Poor  (5–0) |

**RESEARCH IMPACT AND TRANSLATION (20%)**

This relates to the potential knowledge gain about asthma nationally and internationally and the proposed impact on people with asthma. It includes the likely interest from other researchers, conference organisers, journals, community groups and policy makers. This should consider the translatable policy and practice implications of the research for people with asthma. This section also addresses focus on Asthma Australia priority area/s (or the priority area specified in the application information).

Asthma Australia is committed to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. Applications which specifically relate to the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People, must address the [NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/funding-rules-involving-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people), which is as follows;

* Community engagement - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.
* Benefit - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important public health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life.  The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
* Sustainability and transferability - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.
* Building capability - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

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| **Description** | **Weight** |
| **The planned research:** |
| * will result in a highly significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of great importance to human health * will result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues * will provide outcomes that represent outstanding value for money * will translate rapidly into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy * will almost certainly be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings * will almost certainly result in highly influential publications * has a strong focus on one or more of the Asthma Australia priority areas | Outstanding  (15–14) |
| * will result in a significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health * is likely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues * will provide outcomes that represent excellent value for money * is likely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy * will likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings * will likely result in influential publications * has a clear focus on the Asthma Australia priority areas | Excellent  (13–11) |
| * will advance knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health * may result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues * will provide outcomes that represent good value for money with very few concerns regarding feasibility may translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy * could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meetings * is likely to result in some very strong publications * has some focus on an Asthma Australia priority areas | Very good  (10–8) |
| * may incrementally advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of some importance to human health * is unlikely to result in fundamental outcomes in the science underpinning human health issues * will provide outcomes that represent some value for money with several minor concerns regarding feasibility is unlikely to translate into fundamental or commercialisable outcomes that will transform the practice of clinical medicine, public health or in health policy * is unlikely to be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international meetings * may result in some good but not excellent publications * has some focus on an Asthma Australia priority area | Good  (7–5) |
| * addresses an issue of some importance to human health. * may result in some publications * will provide outcomes that don’t provide good value for money * has some implications for an Asthma Australia priority area | Marginal (4–2) |
| * addresses an issue of some concern to human health * provides a program of research which will not significantly advance current knowledge in the field * will provide outcomes that don’t provide good value for money * has minor implications for an Asthma Australia priority area | Unsatisfactory  (1) |
| * does not address an issue of more than marginal concern to human health * will not advance current knowledge in the field * will provide outcomes that don’t provide good value for money * has no implications for an Asthma Australia priority area | Poor (0) |

**STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP (20%)**

This section acknowledges that for meaningful impact research should consider the broader context, at a national and internal level. It should consider if there is collaboration between primary healthcare and other healthcare providers; what collaborative processes are in place to support the translation of research evidence into practice; is and does the project display cross-disciplinary research and/or multiple site approaches.

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| **Description** | **Weight** |
| **The proposed partnership** |  |
| * demonstrates a **strong** relationship between researchers and Partner Organisation(s) already exists or will be developed * demonstrates **existing** shared governance and decision-making capability * contributes to a high degree of team integration and cohesiveness * Shows **high probability** for excellent collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to people with asthma * Is **clearly evidence** from the conceptual stages of the proposal to the final application, as the partners are highly integrated into the proposal * Is shown by shared policy/practice goals and **significant** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Illustrates capacity building, networking and infrastructure building activities that will extend beyond the life of the project | Outstanding  (10) |
| * demonstrates a relationship between researchers and Partner Organisation(s) already exists or will be developed * demonstrates shared governance and decision-making capability * Shows the project plan was developed by a collaborative process between researchers and partners * Is shown by shared policy/practice goals and **appropriate** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Shows **high probability** for excellent collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to people with asthma * Illustrates how the systems established will contribute to a high probability of being sustainable | Excellent  (9–8) |
| * Demonstrates some relationship between researchers and Partner Organisation(s) already exists or will be developed * Demonstrates **potential** shared governance and decision-making capability * Evident in the final application, as the partners are involved in some key areas of the proposal, showing **some** co-development * Shows good team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences * Shows **some evidence** of shared policy/practice goals with an **appropriate** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Shows **high probability** for excellent collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to people with asthma | Very good  (7–6) |
| * Demonstrates the **potential** of a relationship between researchers and Partner Organisation(s) **will exist** * Demonstrates s**ome** shared governance and decision-making capability * Shows **some** team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences * Evident in the final application, as the partners are involved in some key areas of the proposal, showing **some** co-development * Shows **limited** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Shows **probability** for **some** collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to people with asthma * **may become** sustainable if further resource commitments are found to embed the outcomes of the research for the long term | Good  (5–4) |
| * Shows **minimal** team integration and cohesiveness in terms of skills and experiences * Shows **limited** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Shows **minimal** collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to people with asthma * Shows **limited prospects** for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges * Is most likely unsuitable to achieve the goals of this project | Marginal  (3–2) |
| * Is **weak** in terms of complementary of skills and experiences, and how it would contribute to the success of the project * Shows **very limited** prospects for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges * Shows **minimal** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Is most likely unsuitable to achieve the goals of this project * Shows minimal collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health | Unsatisfactory  (1) |
| * Does not show complementarity of skills and experiences, and how it would contribute to the success of the project * Does not show prospects for promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchanges * Will not provide capacity building/career development opportunities * Shows **limited** cash and in-kind resource contributions * Will not achieve the goals of this project * Shows no collaborative gains in terms of skills and benefits to health | Poor  (0) |

**CONSUMER CENTRED (20%)**

Asthma Australia is committed to being a consumer centred organisation, that meets the diverse needs of people with asthma and carers. This section prioritises research which is informed by consumers, driven by consumers, involving consumers. Refer to Figure 1 below for clarity on effective and meaningful consumer roles in research. For more information about consumer engagement at Asthma Australia, refer to Asthma Australia’s [Consumer Engagement Strategy.](https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Consumer-Engagement-Strategy.pdf)

Figure 1. Consumer roles in Asthma Australia’s National Research Program

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| **Partner** | Valued for significant knowledge |
| **Expert** | Being recognised for expertise |
| **Advisor** | Giving experiential advice to influence decisions |
| **Advocate** | Representing the broad views and experiences of people affected by asthma |
| **Personal engagement** | Providing a personal perspective though story-telling, surveys, focus groups and discussions |

Adapted from: National Framework for Consumer Involvement in Cancer Control

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| **Description** | **Weight** |
| **The planned research:** |
| * has very high and meaningful consumer engagement throughout all aspects of the project * engages a very large number of consumers in several roles (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in very high awareness and understanding of asthma in the community | Outstanding  (15–14) |
| * has high and meaningful consumer engagement and engages consumers meaningfully throughout most aspects of the project * engages a large number of consumers in different roles (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in high awareness and understanding of asthma in the community | Excellent  (13–11) |
| * has strong and relevant consumer engagement throughout many aspects of the project * engages some consumers in at least 2 different roles (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in clear awareness and understanding of asthma in the community | Very good  (10–8) |
| * has good consumer engagement throughout some aspects of the project * engages consumers who may have different roles (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in raised awareness and understanding of asthma in the community | Good  (7–5) |
| * has consumer engagement throughout an aspect of the project * engages consumers in a role (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in slightly raised awareness or understanding of asthma in the community | Marginal  (4–2) |
| * has consumer engagement throughout an aspect of the project that is not meaningful or relevant * engages consumers without a clear role (see Figure 1) in the project * will result in the same awareness or understanding of asthma that currently exists in the community | Unsatisfactory  (1) |
| * has no consumer engagement * will result in misinformation or a decline in the awareness or understanding of asthma in the community | Poor (0) |