

2025 Deborah Lehmann Research Award in Paediatric Infectious Diseases

Infectious diseases are the number one killer of young children worldwide and a main reason for childhood hospitalisations. The mission of The Kids Research Institute Australia's Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines & Infectious Diseases (WCVID) is to reduce the burden of infectious diseases, enabling families to thrive.

The WCVID has established the Deborah Lehmann Research Award in Paediatric Infectious Diseases (DLRA) to acknowledge the significant contribution that Emeritus Clin A/Prof Deborah Lehmann AO has made to paediatric infectious disease research, particularly towards reducing childhood morbidity and mortality rates in Australia and the Pacific Region and capacity building of many young researchers across the infectious diseases field.

Award description

The DLRA is a funding mechanism to support the training and development of early- to mid-career researchers (EMCR) or higher degree by research (HDR) students (Master of Research (MRes), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or professional doctorate) or who are either nationals from the Pacific Region (listed under 'Eligibility' on page 2) working in or outside their home countries OR who are First Nations of Australia and/or Aotearoa New Zealand, or from one of the main Pacific ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Up to AU\$30,000.00 will be awarded each round. The successful applicant(s) must expend the award within 3 years of receipt.

Applicants must discuss their application with their research supervisors and a WCVID supervisor / collaborator to develop their project. Details of WCVID teams can be found on our website:

<https://infectiousdiseases.thekids.org.au/our-research/>

What it covers

The DLRA can be used to support direct research costs, training costs, salary support, or top-up scholarships for HDR students. Equipment costs may not contribute more than \$10,000 of the total budget.

Eligibility

Successful applications must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be an EMCR (up to 10 FTE years post-PhD or equivalent, relative to opportunity and including career disruptions), or a HDR student (MRes, MPhil, PhD, or professional doctorate).
 - This award will support the training and development of an EMCR or HDR student who is:
 - a national from the Pacific Region working in or outside their home country (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Timor Leste, Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Indonesia)
OR
 - a First Nations of Australia and/or Aotearoa New Zealand, or from one of the main Pacific ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - Have a proposed research project in line with the objectives of the WCVID:
 1. **Childhood Infections: reducing the burden of childhood infections**
 - Reduce vaccine preventable diseases, preventing hospitalisation and morbidity
 - Develop, trial, and evaluate infection prevention and treatment strategies
 - Enhance sepsis recognition and treatment to improve childhood outcomes
 2. **Aboriginal Health: ensuring equity and reducing health disadvantage**
 - Prevent ear, skin, and lung disease, improving short and long-term outcomes
 - Prevent rheumatic heart disease, saving lives and closing the gap
 - Ensure all research occurs in partnership with community and is guided by a strong Aboriginal voice
 3. **Global Public Health: promoting health through research and partnerships**
 - Develop novel approaches to reduce emerging threats including antimicrobial resistance and vaccine hesitancy
 - Prevent the health harms of COVID-19 and emerging pathogens
 - Have a letter of support from a WCVID supervisor/collaborator*
- *Contact: WCVID@thekids.org.au if you are unsure of an appropriate supervisor/collaborator

Conditions of award

- Provide an update via an in-person or online meeting along with your WCVID supervisor/collaborator and supervisor (if not WCVID) outlining your research progress within 12 months of receiving the award.
- For projects over 12 months in duration, provide an annual update via an in-person or online meeting.
- Funds must be expended within 3 years of receipt of award.
- At the conclusion, provide of a final written report.
- Presentation of applicant's research achievements to the WCVID in-person or online within 12 months of completion.
- Any presentations, publications, etc. arising from this award must acknowledge the WCVID.

Selection process

Applications will be reviewed by an expert review panel.

The DLRA will be granted on a competitive basis to candidates where it is judged that the award will contribute significantly to building research capacity and collaboration opportunities with or within the WCVID.

Selection will be based on the applicant's academic merit and research experience relative to opportunity, as well as the research proposal, research vision, and fit with the WCVID's objectives (listed under 'Eligibility' on page 2).

Application process

Applicants must complete the DLRA application form.

Application form must be accompanied by the following:

- A letter of support from a supervisor/collaborator from within the WCVID stating they have discussed the project with you, believe it to be feasible, and support your application for the DLRA.
- A letter of support from the proposed supervisor (if not within the WCVID) stating that they have discussed and developed the project with you, believe it to be feasible, and support your application for the DLRA.
- 2-page curriculum vitae (CV)

Submit applications to WCVID@thekids.org.au by 1 August 2025, 12PM AWST (Perth time).

Late applications will not be accepted.

Contact

For more information about the DLRA, contact Deborah Lehmann, Chris Blyth, or Sarah Brazier on WCVID@thekids.org.au