

The National Centre for Clinical Research  
on Emerging Drugs

**NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Scholarship Program**

**Information and application process**

*September 2020*

**NCCRED**

National Centre for Clinical  
Research on Emerging Drugs

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# 1. Executive Summary

NCCRED is establishing a multidisciplinary mentoring and training program, the NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Research Scholarship. The Scholarship program intends to provide a clinician with mentoring to pursue a research project through salary buy-back and research project funds. Scholarships are open to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health professionals in the alcohol and other drugs sector. Applications from clinicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and health workers currently employed in the health and AOD sector are encouraged. Applicants will need to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) (see page 15), outlining the background and aims, need for the research, and planned measurable outcomes for a research project that will receive seed funding. Scholars will be selected through a competitive application process in which EOIs for Scholarship applications will be overseen by the NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group (WG). In addition to the clinical research project funding, the scholarship program aims to engage clinicians in research through funding clinicians at 0.5FTE for 12-months (or equivalent) to undertake clinical research.

## 2. Introduction and Background of NCCRED

The National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs (NCCRED) was established as a national entity to support clinical treatment and build clinical research capacity within the Australian alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services sector with an emphasis on responses to users of methamphetamine and emerging drugs of concern.

The Centre is funded to a consortium: St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA); The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA, Flinders University); The National Drug Research Institute (NDRI, Curtin University); and The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC, The University of New South Wales).

NCCRED has a Board led by an independent chair, and nominees from the four consortium members: NDARC; NCETA; NDRI; SVHA; and external members who have experience of:

- Australian alcohol and other drugs non-government organisation clinical service delivery
- Australian alcohol and other drugs clinical research network
- Australian alcohol and other drug consumer organisation and/or person with relevant lived experience
- Australian public sector alcohol and other drug clinical service delivery

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug clinician and/or researcher

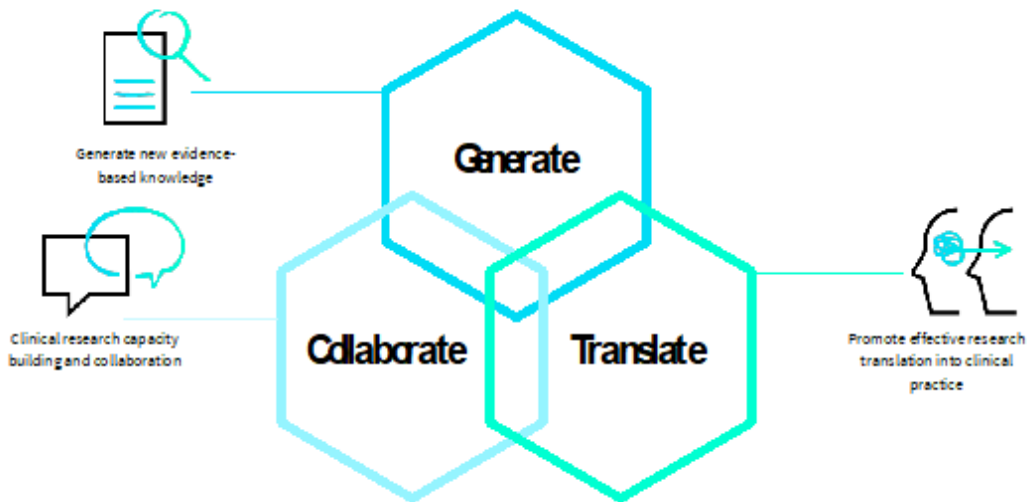
A representative of the Australian Government Department of Health is invited to attend meetings of the Board. The Board meets at least four times annually. An executive committee of the Board consists of the independent chair and the Consortium Partner Organisations. NCCRED is funded by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health as part of the Government's National Ice Action Strategy.

NCCRED aims to collaborate to build capacity and scope for new clinical research into emerging drugs, generate new evidence, and rapidly translate these findings into best clinical practice. NCCRED facilitates and enhances a national network of best clinical research and practice, responsive to the complex health challenges associated with changing patterns of substance use and harm.

To achieve this, NCCRED implements three strategic actions (**Figure 1**)

- **Collaborate**
  - Engage with key stakeholders to build adaptive clinical networks that allow for a rapid, flexible and collaborative response to emerging substances that have prevalent, persistent and harmful health and community impacts
- **Generate**
  - Through collaborative clinical research, seed funding, scholarships and mentorships, to develop effective interventions directed towards identified research priorities
- **Translate**
  - By means of strong clinical networks, implement and disseminate these evidence-based interventions / methodologies to develop and equip the health and medical research workforce to address prevalent, persistent and harmful health and community impacts of emerging drugs

Figure 1 - NCCRED Strategic actions



### 3. The Scholarship Program

The NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Research Scholarship program (**Figure 2**) has been developed in partnership with NCCRED staff, the WG, the NCCRED Methamphetamine and Emerging Drugs Clinical Research Network Working Group, and NCCRED's Board of Management; with the aim to build capacity across the drug and alcohol sector. The scholarship has two distinct and complementary components: (1) Clinical Research Project Funding (see 3.1); and (2) Salary buy-back (see 3.2) (**Figure 2**).

#### 3.1. Clinical Research Project

Applicants will apply with a clinical research proposal, detailing their scholarship project - which will receive non-renewable funding of \$5,000–\$100,000. The NCCRED Scholarship program is seeking proposals for projects that:

- Enable clinical research to be embedded within ongoing clinical practice across multiple settings
- Develop evidence-based treatments and treatment models in response to prevalent, persistent and harmful emerging substances
- Monitor and evaluate innovative new treatment interventions

Projects must include engagement with people with lived experience and applications will ideally create networks or build partnerships (e.g. academic, clinical, consumer) to maximize reach and opportunities.

Research priorities for this funding round were developed following the NCCRED research priority setting study ([nccred.org.au/generate/clinical-research-projects](https://nccred.org.au/generate/clinical-research-projects)). These are:

*For methamphetamine clinical research:*

1. Overcoming barriers to intervention uptake (e.g. at time of crisis in emergency departments or primary health care)
2. Pilot pharmacotherapy trials for adults seeking treatment
3. Effective communication strategies to consumers on available treatments and the evidence-based options.

*For emerging drugs of concern clinical research:*

1. Fixed-site community located drug checking / pill testing (connected to an early warning system)
2. Feasibility of social media and other creative opportunities to alert consumers and reduce harm
3. GHB withdrawal management (ranked equally for third highest scoring priority)
4. Early warning system/shared information system – pooling and sharing of information impact on reducing harm (ranked equally for third highest scoring priority)

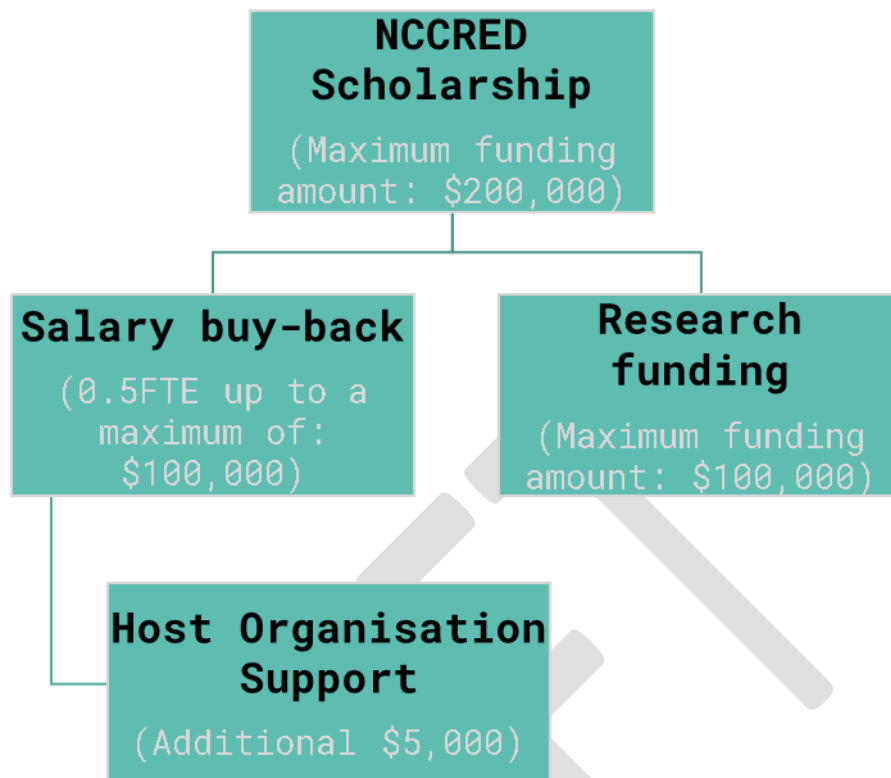
Projects should aim to answer clinical questions, build research capacity, and produce translational research results. The project should produce fundable research that has the capacity to attract further funding (as required).

### **3.2. Salary Buy-Back**

To facilitate the conduct of the applicants clinical research, NCCRED will contribute to the Research Scholar's salary to the equivalent of 0.5 full-time (FTE) to a maximum of \$100,000.00, replacing half of the candidate's salary for the 1-year scholarship term. That is, the Scholarship represents a 0.5 FTE commitment for 12 months. This will be awarded to the candidate via their employing organisation as a "buy-back" of their time. The candidate will be required to negotiate / make arrangements with their primary employment institution / organisation to release them for the 0.5 FTE that they will be undertaking the scholarship. Evidence of this organisation-level support will need to be demonstrated in the application, in the form of a letter of support from the applicant's supervisor. The candidate and host organisation will negotiate how this is structured. In addition, the host organisation will receive \$5,000 of funding for the Research Scholar's placement to compensate the organisation for administrative costs associated with the Scholarship.



Figure 2 - NCCRED Scholarship program



### 3.3. Mentorships

The candidate will be partnered with a senior clinician-researcher at a participating external clinical site (the “Mentor”). Mentors will be chosen in collaboration with the Scholar and NCCRED depending on the project topic and location. The candidate may choose to undertake research at their place of employment, however locations and projects must be agreed to by The NCCRED Director and The NCCRED Chair.

### 3.4. Outcomes

The scholarship program and associated research will need to be completed by 30 June 2022. The outcomes for the Research Scholar on completion of the 1-year term may include:

- Writing a literature review on the chosen topic / project focus
- Conducting clinical research (as defined in the chosen and agreed-upon project)
- Drafted a first-author manuscript based on the project’s results
- Presented at the NCCRED National Symposium
- Attendance at the APSAD or equivalent conference
- Participated in the active learning network / journal club activities at the clinical site

It is anticipated that the NCCRED Scholarship program will provide Scholars with the practical skills required for undertaking clinical research (from concept to publication). This will translate into the Scholar returning to their home organisation as a more confident consumer of research and ready to operationally facilitate their own research or participate as a site for other clinical research studies.

## 4. Scholars

Scholars can be clinicians of any multidisciplinary background (e.g. Nursing, Allied Health, Medical), and scholarships will be open to practising Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander clinicians in the Alcohol and Other Drugs sector. Candidates should meet the below selection criteria:

### 4.1. Selection Criteria

1. Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
2. Current AHPRA registration or qualified as a multi-disciplinary clinician.
3. Clinician providing services in the area of Alcohol and Other Drugs (can include inpatient, outpatient or non-governmental services, etc.)
4. Not currently completing a fellowship or scholarship program with another organisation.
5. Must be currently employed in a clinical setting.

### 4.2. Targeted Scholarship Rounds

NCCRED are offering two concurrent targeted scholarship rounds. In addition to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' Scholarship, which is only open to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, a second clinical research scholarship program is being implemented that targets Nursing and Allied Health Professionals. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are welcomed and encouraged to also apply for the [Nursing and Allied Health Professionals scholarships](#).

## 5. Funding

Funding for the Scholarships program is sourced from the Commonwealth Department of Health, as an initiative of the National Ice Action Strategy (2015). Funds will be transferred from UNSW to the host institution and must be used for achieving the objectives outlined by the applicants in the funding application.

Successful applicants and their host organisation will be required to sign a funding agreement, and must agree to regular reporting on the funded project.

Applicants selected for a Scholarship will not enter into any agreement between UNSW (as contracting entity for the Centre) until a formal written Agreement (in accordance with the annexed Terms and Conditions) is executed by the host organisation on behalf of the successful applicant and UNSW.

The maximum funding amount available for one application is \$200,000.00. This is inclusive of the Scholar's salary buy-back (to a maximum of \$100,00) and project budget (to a maximum of \$100,000). In addition, the host organisation will receive \$5,000 of funding for the Research Scholar's placement to compensate the organisation for administrative costs associated with the Scholarship. Applicants can not transfer from one funding stream to another in order to fund the other. Neither the project budget or salary buy-back can exceed \$100,000.00 (As illustrated in Figure 2).

## **6. Expressions of Interest / Applications**

Applications for the NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship program will be conducted in a two stage process (**Figure 3**).

Stage 1: Applicants will need to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) using the form in this document. Submitted EOI forms will be reviewed by the WG.

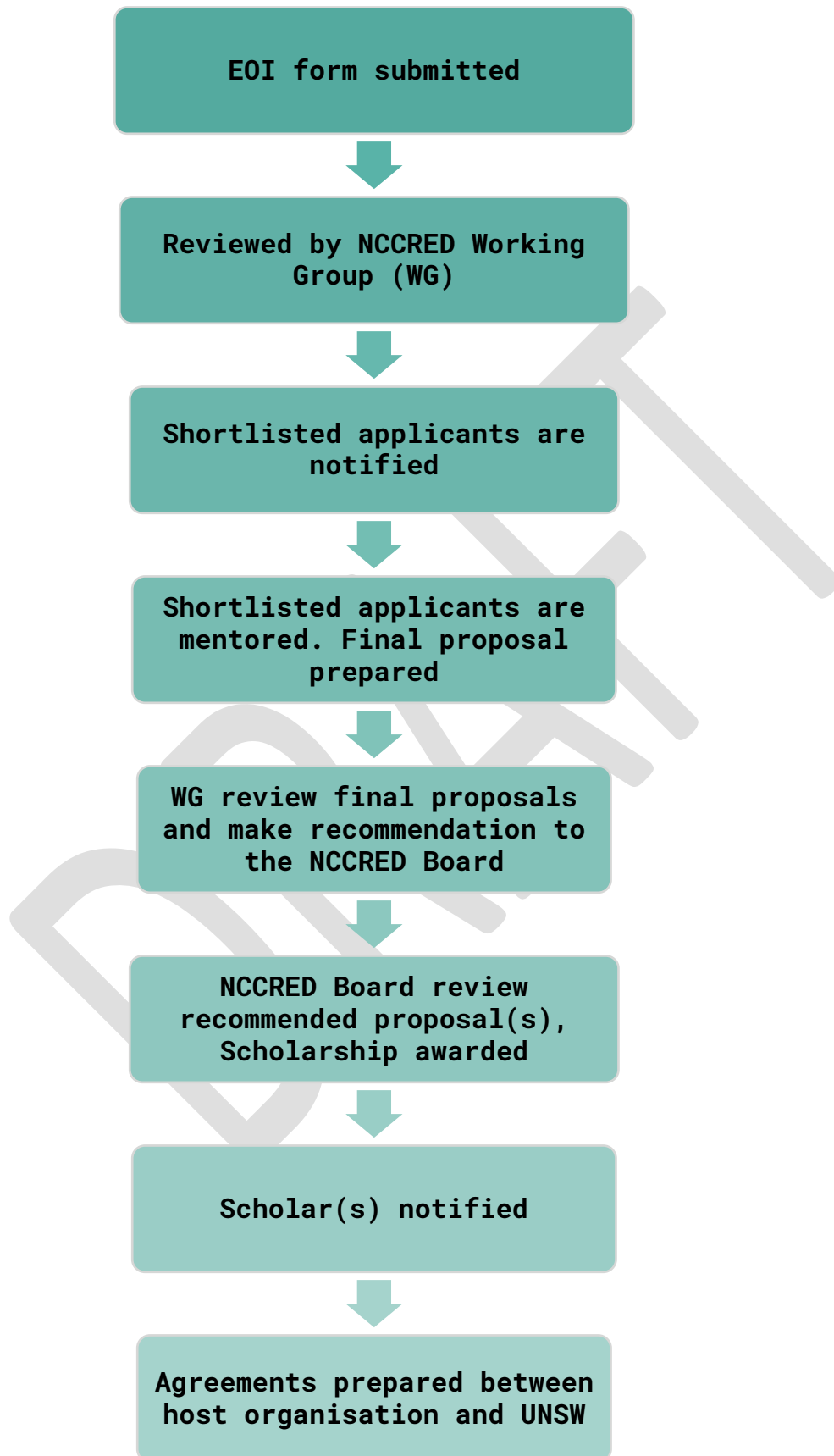
Stage 2: Applicants with successful EOI's will be partnered with a mentor from the WG to work up their application to meet the criteria as outlined in 6.2.

### **6.1. Expressions of Interest**

Applicants must submit a completed Expression of Interest form (beginning on page 15 of this document), providing all requested information, and adhering to the guidelines and word limits indicated. Following review by the WG, successful EOIs will be notified and those applicants invited to apply will be provided mentorship to work up a full application and proposal.

Research proposals outlined in the NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Research Scholarship Expression of Interest Form should be substantive, and where possible, cross-disciplinary initiatives. They should enable research collaborations with early career researchers or research-inexperienced sites. Expressions of Interest for the 2020 scholarship round will be reviewed by the WG. The review process is independent of NCCRED staff and the NCCRED Board.

Figure 3 - NCCRED Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship program process



## **6.2. Applications**

Following the WG's recommendations, mentorship will be provided to develop a full application, answering to the criteria as outlined below. Upon successful candidacy, funding will be awarded by the NCCRED Board. Only information included in the application will be used to select projects for funding.

Specific assessment criteria for applications are (1 through 4):

1. The proposed project
  - the project is novel and innovative – seeks to answer a contemporary and clinically relevant question
  - has the potential to attract research funding from other sources at the conclusion of the seed funding period (as required)
2. Clear research proposal with logical aims
  - research question is clearly stated
  - if there is an intervention, this is explicitly stated
  - participant eligibility (and controls if applicable) defined
  - methods to measure outcomes or test hypothesis are appropriate
  - has merit, value and impact
3. Project budget
  - a study budget is included
  - realistic funding has been requested (including for dissemination of results)
  - budget and deadlines are achievable
  - measurable milestones
4. Research team
  - builds research capacity, for example: establishes a project in a research-inexperienced site; and/or involves a junior/inexperienced researcher, early or mid-career researcher and/or multi-disciplinary researcher in substantial roles; enables clinician researchers; develops meaningful partnerships
  - develops research foundations in an organisation or site
  - involves consumer input (e.g. in study design, partnership, etc.)
  - creates networks and builds partnerships (e.g. academic, clinical, consumer)

## **6.3. Successful Applicant/s**

The successful applicant/s will undergo a 1-week FTE induction program. The induction content will be delivered by NCCRED staff, and academic and clinical staff at the partnering consortium organisations. The induction curriculum will include:

- ICH-GCP
- The Australian Research setting
- HREC applications and oversight
- Public institution governance application and oversight
- Research Methodology
- Basic statistics to read and understand research
- EndNote referencing software
- Research databases and library tools

## 7. Application Timeline for Scholarship

Key dates	Process / step
2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2020	EOIs open
6 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	EOIs close
13 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	WG review of EOIs
14 November 2020	Applicant's notified if EOI was successful, and invited to work-up a full application. Applicant's assigned a mentor.
14 December 2020	Application due
15 December 2020	NCCRED Board of Directors meet out of session to review Working Group recommendations for appointment
21 December 2020	Acceptance notification
15 January 2021	Deadline for acceptance
February 2021	Scholarship begins

## 8. Contact

Submit completed EOIs by email to [florence.bascombe@nccred.org.au](mailto:florence.bascombe@nccred.org.au) by no later than 2359hrs (11:59 pm) on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

To discuss the application, or for further information, please contact:

Florence Bascombe

Knowledge Translation Lead / Secretariat for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group

National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs

Florence.bascombe@nccred.org.au

## National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Research Scholarship Expression of Interest

*To ensure a clear and efficient review process, applicants are encouraged to use Arial / Calibri font, 11-point or above. Please note: the application form has been developed in Microsoft Office 2013 (for Windows), and fidelity of the formatting cannot be guaranteed in other versions – please contact the NCCRED team if you have any concerns.*

<b>Scholarship Selection Criteria</b>	
Current AHPRA registration or qualified as a multi-disciplinary clinician	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> If yes please outline below <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Clinician providing services in the area of Alcohol and Other Drugs  <i>can include inpatient, outpatient or non-governmental services, etc.</i>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> If yes please outline below <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Currently completing a fellowship or scholarship program with another organisation	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> If yes please outline below <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Currently employed in a clinical setting	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> If yes please outline below

	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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DRAFT



## Clinical and Research Experience

Please provide a brief description of your clinical experience (*1000 characters/approx. 200 words max*)

Please describe any prior research experience you have had. Please note applications will be accepted from those with no prior experience. (*1000 characters/approx. 200 words max*).

## Project Lead – Chief Investigator (if not the applicant [Scholar])

Applicant Title and Full Name:

Employing Organisation (i.e. to be named sponsor on funding agreement):

Other affiliations of project lead

Phone

E-mail

Postal address

## Project Title

## Project Description & Context

The Project Description, Perceived Need and Planned Outcomes should provide enough information to support the development of your application by the working group.

### Project Description

Describe the background and the research question, the problem addressed by the project and this proposal. *(1000 characters/approx. 200 words max)*

### Perceived Need

Describe why this research is a priority and who is the target population? *(1000 characters/approx. 200 words max)*.

### Planned Outcomes

Quantify and/or qualify the planned outcome(s) that this project will contribute to achieving. In the big picture, how will your results translate into improved clinical outcomes? *(1000 characters/approx. 200 words max)*.

**Personal Statement**

What do you seek to gain from the NCCRED Clinical Research Scholarship (max 400 words)

**Preference for buy-back period**

(i.e. 6 months FTE, PTE equivalent over xx months, preferred days of the week, etc.)  
Please note: the scholarship program and associated research will need to be completed by 30 June 2022. Any part-time arrangements must consider this and adhere to this timeline.