

## FUNDING GUIDELINE

# Children’s Cancer CoLab & Maddie Riewoldt’s Vision Fellowship

| Items               | Details  |
|---------------------|--|
| Funding Round       | FY26   |
| Type of Opportunity | Open funding call  |
| Contact             | <a href="mailto:programs@cccolab.org.au">programs@cccolab.org.au</a> |
| Opening Date        | September 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2025                                     |
| Closing Date        | October 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2025                                      |
| Grant Amount        | \$85,000 - \$125,000 per year  |
| Grant Term          | Two (2) years  |
| Number of grants    | One (1) fellowship will be awarded for this funding round            |

### 1 Overview of the CoLab-MRV Fellowship Opportunity

Children’s Cancer CoLab (CoLab) and Maddie Riewoldt’s Vision (MRV) are committed to fostering emerging talent among clinician-researchers by supporting their career advancement and, in doing so, attracting and retaining the brightest minds to advance understanding and care at the intersection of Bone Marrow Failure Syndromes (BMFS) and paediatric oncology.

For this inaugural co-badged fellowship valued at \$85k - \$125k per year, governance will be consistent with best practice for fellowship awards, allocated through a transparent, merit-based process, and distributed via a competitive funding round.

### 2 Objectives of the CoLab-MRV Fellowship Opportunity

This fellowship is designed to address one of the most critical challenges in BMFS and paediatric oncology research today: the shortage of talent. This shortage stems from persistent underfunding, limited resources, and a lack of targeted incentives, which are factors recognised as major barriers to scientific and clinical progress. As a result, too few emerging professionals have the opportunity to build sustainable research careers or develop the expertise required to lead the breakthroughs of tomorrow.

To help overcome these challenges, the CoLab-MRV fellowship opportunity provides a flexible model for clinicians seeking to develop their research capabilities. The program aims to give clinicians the foundational support, mentorship, and protected time needed to consolidate research skills and establish themselves as leaders in their fields.

### 3 Fellowship Opportunity for the 2025-26 Funding Round

The CoLab-MRV Fellowship is designed to support clinician-researchers who are committed to advancing research and clinical care at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology. This exceptional opportunity aims to foster the next generation of clinical leaders who will transform outcomes for children and families facing these challenging conditions.

#### 3.1 Fellowship Structure

- Duration: Two (2) years
- Protected Research Time: The funding provided by this fellowship is to ensure protected research time for the fellow. It is the responsibility of the applicant and the administering institution to determine and justify the appropriate Full Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation for the fellow’s research

role, based on the needs of the proposed project and institutional policy. The fellow is expected to dedicate at least 0.4 FTE to research activities.

- **Clinical appointment:** The fellow must maintain a minimum of 0.2 FTE clinical appointment to ensure ongoing clinical engagement alongside the research activities. It is expected that the clinical appointment will be supported by the clinical employer (hospital).

### 3.2 Funding and Appointments

- **Financial Support:** The fellowship provides between \$85,000 and \$125,000 per year for two years. The specific level of support is intended to align with the fellow's proposed research commitment, experience, and professional background. Applicants are encouraged to work with their administering institution's clinical and research departments to ensure the funding is consistent with their current salary scale and planned research time. Salary on-costs are not included.
- **Clinical Engagement:** A minimum clinical appointment of 0.2 FTE must be maintained throughout the fellowship, supported independently by the clinical employer (hospital).

### 3.3 Flexibility and Collaboration

- **Research Location:** Successful applicants have the option to conduct their research at an institution different from their administering institution in Victoria. This can be within Victoria, elsewhere in Australia, or internationally, allowing fellows to gain specialised expertise or hands-on experience and to bring back new skills and innovations to the Victorian research community.
- **Fellowship Completion:** If the research is undertaken outside of Victoria or Australia, the final period of the fellowship at the nominated Victorian administering institution must be a minimum of six months in duration, ensuring strong connection and knowledge transfer back to the local research community.
- **Fellowship Commencement Deferment Option:** Fellows may defer the start of the fellowship for up to six months to align with their clinical appointments. Requests for deferral beyond six months may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### 3.4 Research Project Requirements

Fellows are required to design and deliver a research project that addresses one or more of the priority research areas identified within the program guidelines. Research proposals should demonstrate clear potential for impact and relevance to the program's objectives. Through this program, we seek to empower the next generation of clinician-researchers who will drive advances at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology, ensuring ongoing progress and improved outcomes for children and families affected by these challenging conditions.

### 3.5 Research Priority Areas

Proposed research should aim to advance understanding and care at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology by exploring shared biological pathways, disease mechanisms, and/or clinical outcomes, promoting insights where these areas overlap. Research may address, but is not limited to, the following broad areas:

- **Disease Progression, Cancer Predisposition and Inherited Syndromes:**
  - Pathways of progression to malignancy: Examination of the mechanisms and incidence of progression from BMFS and aplastic anaemia (AA) to myeloid or lymphoid malignancies, and investigation into risk factors and biomarkers that enable early detection of malignant transformation.
  - Inherited cancer and immune dysregulation predisposition: Identification and characterisation predisposing genetic syndromes, including but not limited to Fanconi anaemia, severe congenital neutropenia, telomeropathies, and other inherited and immune dysregulation syndromes (e.g. inborn errors of immunity (IEI) and primary immune deficiencies (PID)) that increase susceptibility to marrow failure and/or cancer.
  - Registry and data utilisation: Expansion and utilisation of clinical registries to study epidemiology, cancer predisposition, and outcomes, including comparative analyses of

paediatric bone marrow transplant (BMT) and BMFS / AA patients nationally and internationally.

- **Genomic Research and Precision Medicine Approaches:**
  - Genetic and genomic screening: Advancement of comprehensive genetic and genomic protocols for diagnosis, risk stratification, and familial screening, and characterisation of novel or under-recognised disease-causing variants.
  - Inherited telomeropathies: Inclusion of telomeropathies in hereditary BMFS and cancer predisposition research, recognising their increasing clinical significance.
  - Pharmacogenomic and/or genetics profiling: Evaluation of pharmacogenomic and/or genetic markers to personalise treatments and minimise toxicity for paediatric BMFS / AA patients, including those undergoing transplantation, to optimise transplant outcomes and assess predisposition to cancer and treatment complications (e.g. thrombotic microangiopathy).
  - Data-driven personalisation: Expansion and utilisation of existing real-world and registry data to refine protocols for patient-specific care, focusing on prediction, prevention, or early intervention in high-risk groups, comparing BMT outcomes for paediatric AA and BMFS patients in Australia and overseas.
  - Risk stratification and early detection: Development of biomarkers for progression, minimal residual disease, and early disease detection, especially genetic or immunological indicators relevant to BMFS / cancer evolution
- **Novel and Emerging Therapeutic Approaches:**
  - Targeted therapies: Investigation of new pharmacologic agents, including transforming growth factor- $\beta$  inhibitors in Fanconi anaemia and other syndrome-specific targeted approaches.
  - Gene therapy: Study of innovative gene therapy approaches (as a distinct or integrated research area), including vector development, delivery, and efficacy for inherited BMFS and related childhood cancer syndromes.
  - Immunotherapies: Exploration of immunotherapy development and treatment response in the context of BMFS, including unique characteristics of the paediatric immune response and risks in patients with underlying immune dysregulation.
- **Survivorship, Long-Term Monitoring and Psychosocial Outcomes:**
  - Monitoring and late effects: Assessment of the long-term effects of chemotherapy, including clonal haematopoiesis, secondary malignancy risks, cardiovascular and endocrine sequelae, and the role of ongoing surveillance.
  - Psychosocial, family, and community impact: Evaluation of psychosocial outcomes, quality of life, and family-centred care/support models, with emphasis on optimal genetic counselling and care transition strategies for survivors.
- **Health Service, Implementation Science and Technology Integration:**
  - Care coordination and transition: Development and evaluation of models for transitioning paediatric BMFS / AA patients to adult care, including navigation and support services.
  - Technology-enhanced care: Investigation into the use of digital health, remote monitoring, and telehealth to enable timely, patient-centred care.

## 4 Preparing Your Application

This document serves as the funding guideline for this funding opportunity, detailing the objectives, eligibility considerations, and evaluation criteria relevant to the CoLab-MRV Fellowship opportunity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review this funding guideline in preparation of their application to ensure a thorough understanding of process and requirement.

Applicants will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel with relevant subject matter expertise to BMFS and/or paediatric oncology research and care, based on the pre-defined evaluation criteria.

### 4.1 Applicant Eligibility Considerations

- Multiple applications from each Consortium Partner (as the administering institution) will be accepted for each funding round.

- Applicants must be employed, or have an official academic or research appointment, with a Consortium Partner institution (Member B) at the time of application and for the duration of the fellowship if successful.
  - Secondment or honorary appointments may be accepted, provided they are recognised by the Consortium Partner institution and allow the applicant to undertake the proposed fellowship activities.
- Applicants must be Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, or holders of a valid Australian visa entitling them to reside and work in Australia for the entire funding period.
- Applicants from all speciality groups are eligible\* and must be qualified clinical health professionals where they directly interface with patients, have a major interest in research.
  - \*Applicants with allied health, nursing and medical specialisations beyond medical oncology and haematology, are *eligible to apply*.
- Applicants who are medical doctors must have completed their clinical specialty training and be eligible for independent practice in their specialty prior to the commencement of the fellowship.
- Applicants must be eligible for full registration with the relevant Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or, for non-registered professions, be eligible for membership in the relevant professional association.
- Applicants are expected to have a paid clinical appointment (part-time or sessional; minimum 0.2 FTE) during the proposed tenure of the fellowship.
  - Applicant must obtain a letter of support from the head of clinical department or unit, confirming support for protected research time and integration of research with clinical duties.
- Applicants must nominate at least one supervisor / advisor from their administering institution who will actively support their development and progress throughout the fellowship.
  - To promote interdisciplinary growth, applicants, particularly those who have less research experience, are encouraged to establish collaborative links with researchers from another institution.
- Applicants must establish a formal mentorship with a senior academic from an institution other than their administering institution.
  - The mentor should have a strong track record in a relevant research area, as well as demonstrated experience in mentoring or supervising junior staff or students.
- Fellows may not transfer their award to any other institution. However, transfer between Consortium Partners is permitted if both Consortium Partners agree to the arrangement.
- Fellows must not concurrently hold another fellowship or grant that provides overlapping salary support and/or research costs.
  - However, if a fellow is awarded another fellowship or grant providing salary support during the final year of the CoLab-MRV Fellowship, they may relinquish the remaining fellowship or request in writing to reallocate the remaining funding to support other personnel or research activities that will enhance their research outputs and career development. Any changes in funding status must be promptly reported to CoLab and MRV in writing for review and approval.
- Periods of substantial leave, such as long service leave or sabbatical leave, will not be supported by the fellowship.
- Parental leave of up to 12 months is permitted during the fellowship, with salary for this period supported by the administering institution.
- Applicants currently appointed at Academic Level C (Senior Lecturer or equivalent) or above are not eligible to apply.

#### **Requirements for Applicants Undertaking the Fellowship at a *Host Institution* outside of Victoria**

- If the applicant intends to undertake any part of their research activities at a site located outside of Victoria, they must nominate a host institution that is distinct from their administering institution.
  - A *host institution* refers to the organisation at which the applicant proposes to conduct specific research activities, but which does not hold responsibility for the overall administration of the grant.

- Applicants that choose to undertake part of their research activities at a *host institution* are required to return to the administering institution in Victoria at least six months prior to the conclusion of the fellowship opportunity.
- If an applicant is unable to return to the administering institution for the last phase of the fellowship (minimum of six months):
  - They will forfeit fellowship funding for the remaining funding.
  - In exceptional circumstances, they may opt to lapse their fellowship and request an extension of their time at the host institution outside Victoria for up to twelve months, subject to written approval from CoLab and MRV. During this extension, the applicant will be responsible for securing their own funding.
- A letter of support must be provided from the administering institution confirming:
  - Their commitment to maintain the applicant's affiliation for the full duration of the fellowship.
  - Their intention to support the fellow's reintegration (i.e. employment) at the institution during the final phase of the fellowship that is to be undertaken in Victoria.
- A letter of support from the *host institution* confirming:
  - Endorsement from the host laboratory head or supervisor, affirming their support for the fellow to undertake the proposed research project.
  - Confirmation from the relevant head of clinical department for protected research time and salary support for the fellow's clinical appointment (minimum 0.2 FTE).

## 4.2 Eligible & ineligible costs considerations

The fellowship provides funding of \$85,000 to \$125,000 per annum, with the level of FTE research appointment to be determined based on the applicant's experience and appointment at the Administering Institution or host institution. Support is available for a maximum duration of two years.

- Salary support will cover dedicated research time for the fellow at the host institution, at a level appropriate to the applicant's experience and appointment.
- Salary support for the minimum 0.2 FTE clinical time is not eligible for funding and is expected to be provided by the clinical employer (hospital) or host clinical employer.
- Research cost for the proposed research project is not eligible for funding and is expected to be provided by the administering or host institution.
- Salary on-cost, such as employer superannuation contributions, workers' compensation, leave loading and other employment expense, are not eligible.
- Indirect / overhead cost such as infrastructure, utilities and administration costs is not eligible.
- Cost arising from receipt of the fellowship, such as Continuing Medical Education are not eligible.

## 4.3 Application outlines

Please refer to the table below for an overview of the information required in your application. All applications must be submitted through the designated [grant portal](https://cccolab.grantplatform.com) (<https://cccolab.grantplatform.com>). Ensure you review each section carefully and provide all requested details in your submission.

| Application Sections                             | General information Required   |
|--|--|
| <b>Applicant details &amp; eligibility check</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information</li> <li>• Education &amp; employment details</li> <li>• Eligibility confirmation</li> <li>• Nomination of administering institution (i.e. the Victorian institution responsible for managing the fellowship award and is where the fellow is expected to conduct the proposed research activities)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Research track record</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant CV / resume (<i>Max. 2 pages</i>)</li> <li>• Career Disruption Statement (<i>If relevant max. 200 words</i>)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Career disruption includes maternity / paternity leave, illness and carer responsibilities.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Career summary that is relative to opportunity (<i>Max. 750 words</i>)</li> </ul> |

| Application Sections  | General information Required   |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants and awards (<i>insert information in table</i>)</li> <li>Achievements in research that are relevant to the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology research – including conference abstracts and publications (<i>Max. 250 words</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Consumer engagement &amp; plain language summary</b><br><br><i>This is provided to the Consumer Reviewers for their evaluation</i><br><br><i>Max. 1 page – refer to guidance in grant portal for formatting requirements</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the proposed research project written in plain language for general public understanding, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The unmet need at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology (The Challenge)</li> <li>Proposed research question, objectives and methodologies (The Research)</li> <li>The significant and potential impact of the proposed research and how it would address the unmet need (The Impact)</li> <li>Describe the plan for consumer or community involvement in the proposed project, outline how you will address ethical considerations, including cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, privacy, consent, and respect for all research participants, by ensuring relevant populations are appropriately engaged or consulted.</li> <li>Explain how you will implement your findings, share results with the community and support translation into practice or policy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Research proposal</b><br><br><i>Max. 5 pages – refer to guidance in grant portal for formatting requirements</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project title</li> <li>Project Summary</li> <li>Research proposal (document upload max. 5 pages), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background and rationale – strategic alignment to challenges at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology</li> <li>Hypothesis and aims</li> <li>Detailed description of the proposed research and methodology</li> <li>Key milestones, deliverables and timeline</li> <li>Expected outcomes and potential impact on the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology</li> <li>Identification of potential risks or barriers and proposed contingency plan</li> <li>Plan(s) for community involvement through the project</li> <li>Plan(s) for research knowledge translation / implementation</li> </ul> </li> <li>Requested Salary support (table)</li> <li>Justification for the nominated FTE for research time (<i>Max. 250 words</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Research environment &amp; support</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure &amp; Resources (<i>Max. 200 words</i>)</li> <li>Collaborations (<i>Max. 200 words</i>)</li> <li>Integration of research project with clinical duties (<i>Max. 200 words</i>)</li> <li>Plan(s) for professional development activities (<i>Max. 200 words</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Supervision</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisor(s) / Advisor(s) information – including a description of relevant expertise with letter of support (see below)</li> <li>Mentor information – with letter of confirmation (see below)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Application certification</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmation from applicant</li> <li>Confirmation from nominated supervisors / advisors</li> <li>Confirmation from nominated mentor</li> <li>Confirmation from head of department</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Other supporting documentation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of support from relevant head of clinical department confirming support for protected research time and contribution to the salary support for the clinical time (minimum 0.2 FTE).</li> <li>For fellowships to be undertaken outside of Victoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of support from the host institution confirming its commitment to accommodate the applicant's research activities</li> <li>Letter of support from relevant head of the clinical department at the clinical institution (hospital) where the fellow will be undertaking their clinical appointment (outside their standard institutions in Victoria), for protected research time and salary support for clinical duties (at least 0.2 FTE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |



| Application Sections | General information Required   |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of support from the affiliated Consortium Partner institution confirming the institution's commitment to maintain the applicant's affiliation for the duration of the fellowship as well as supporting the fellow's reintegration, including employment arrangement, during the final phase of the fellowship that is to be undertaken in Victoria.</li> </ul> |

#### 4.4 Application evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel with relevant subject matter expertise to the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology research and care, as well as representatives, with lived experience, based on the pre-defined evaluation criteria outlined in the table below.

| Evaluation Criteria                            | Sub-Criteria   | Weighting |
|--|--|-----------|
| <b>Consumer Reviews</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address an important, unmet need at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology, including impacts on patients and survivors</li> <li>Relevance to patients, survivors, families or carers</li> <li>Anticipated benefits that are meaningful to patients and their support network</li> <li>Consumer engagement in design and development of research</li> <li>Accessibility and inclusivity of research outputs and outcomes</li> <li>Realistic pathways for applying research findings into practice and potential for real-world adoption</li> </ul>  | 10%       |
| <b>Applicant Capability &amp; Track Record</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality and significance of key research outputs (e.g. peer-reviewed publications, grants, patents and conference presentations) adjusted for career disruptions.</li> <li>Quantity of outputs relative to career stage (adjusted for career disruption)</li> <li>Leadership roles in previous projects or research teams</li> <li>Building or contributing to research networks and partnerships</li> <li>Professional development activities that demonstrate a commitment to advancing expertise relevant to the fellowship</li> <li>Alignment of skills and experience with the proposed research program.</li> <li>Clear articulation of how the fellowship will build on the applicant's track record to achieve future career goals.</li> <li>Potential to grow as a research leader and contribute strategically to the host institution or broader field.</li> </ul> | 40%       |
| <b>Research Quality &amp; Innovation</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicability and relevance to research at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology</li> <li>Well-defined and focused research objectives with clearly articulated research questions that address key gaps in clinical knowledge or practice</li> <li>Robust study design and research methodologies, including appropriate data collection and analysis and attention to ethic conducts / regulatory compliances</li> <li>Introduction of new or unique concepts, approaches or methodologies</li> <li>Realistic project design, access to facilities, and alignment with applicant's expertise / clinical responsibility</li> <li>Evidence of consumer engagement in the research development</li> </ul>   | 15%       |
| <b>Research Impact &amp; Benefit</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for research outcomes to address critical gaps in the field and improve patient care, safety or quality of life.</li> <li>Potential for research outcomes to be scaled, adapted, or replicated in other settings or populations.</li> <li>Clear pathway for translating research findings into clinical setting or healthcare policy</li> <li>Contribution to developing clinical, research, or translational expertise within the host institution or broader healthcare system.</li> <li>Scope for sustained impact beyond the fellowship period</li> </ul>   | 15%       |

| Evaluation Criteria                            | Sub-Criteria   | Weighting |
|--|--|-----------|
| <b>Feasibility &amp; Institutional Support</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to necessary facilities, equipment, and technology required for the research, including adequate staffing (e.g. research assistants, technicians, or other relevant personnel)</li> <li>Identification of potential risks or barriers and proposed contingency plan, including strategies for ethical, regulatory, or practical challenges that might arise.</li> <li>Commitment from host institution with formal letter of support confirming endorsement and commitment to the agreed-upon protected research time and clinical appointment support.</li> <li>Confirmation of experienced supervisor or mentors relevant to the proposed research area.</li> <li>(if required) Plans or structures to facilitate continued collaboration, reintegration, or further career opportunities following completion of the fellowship.</li> </ul> | 20%       |

## 5 How to Apply

### 5.1 Application process

Applicants are invited to submit a complete application via the [grant portal](https://cccolab.grantplatform.com) (<https://cccolab.grantplatform.com>) by the specified application deadline.

Upon receipt, all applications will be reviewed and assessed by a designated panel comprised of experts at the intersection of BMFS and paediatric oncology, including members of the Scientific Advisory Committees from CoLab and MRV. Applications will be evaluated according to the defined criteria, with each panel member scoring applications individually prior to panel discussions. Final funding recommendations will be determined through consensus during the review meeting.

Please refer to Section 4.4 for detailed evaluation criteria and their respective weighting at each stage.

### 5.2 Application timeline

| Event / Action   | Date   |
|--|--|
| Application submission period (6 weeks)  | September 8 <sup>th</sup> to October 17 <sup>th</sup>  |
| <b>Application submission closes</b>   | <b>October 17<sup>th</sup></b>   |
| Application review by Scientific Advisor Committee members                                     | October to November  |
| Applicants notified of application review outcomes & commencement of grant agreement execution | Mid December   |
| Anticipated fellowship commencement  | From February 2026 – <i>Deferrals request will be considered on case-by-case basis for alignment with clinical fellowship calendars.</i> |

### 5.3 Application submission

Applications must be prepared in accordance with the structure outlined in Section 4.3, and submitted electronically using the [grant portal](https://cccolab.grantplatform.com) (<https://cccolab.grantplatform.com>), an online grant management system.

Applicants who are not yet registered must do so before they commence their application.

Applications must be submitted by the closing date of the funding call. Late submission will not be considered. Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation of receipt. Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain a copy of their application for their own records.



#### 5.4 Contact information

For any questions or further information, please contact our team at [programs@cccolab.org.au](mailto:programs@cccolab.org.au).