

**2023-2024
Funding Program
Guidelines**

**Quality & Service
Improvement**

Table of Contents

1	Background	3
1.1	The VICIS Priorities.....	3
1.2	GRICS Funding Program Overview	4
2	GRICS Funding Program Objectives	5
3	About GRICS Funding	5
4	GRICS Funding Program Key Selection Criteria	5
4.1	GRICS Funding: Exclusion Criteria	6
5	GRICS Funding Program: Application & Assessment Process	7
5.1	Applicant Key Dates.....	8
5.2	How are grants evaluated?.....	9
6	Conditions of Funding & Reporting Requirements	9
6.1	Funds Release Schedule	10
6.2	Payment & Reporting Schedule	11
7	For more information about the GRICS Funding Program	11
	Appendix A- Grant Assessment Criteria	12

1 Background

The Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (VICS) are Victoria's cancer services improvement network. They build relationships between healthcare providers and other cancer care stakeholders to develop, implement and evaluate initiatives that improve the way Victoria's health services provide care and support to people affected by cancer.

The VICS activity supports the broad achievement of three of the five goals stated in the Victorian cancer plan 2020-2024, namely that:

- Victorians know their risk and have cancers detected earlier;
- Victorians with cancer have timely access to optimal treatment; and
- Victorians with cancer and their families live well

1.1 The VICS Priorities

Three general areas of focus have been identified for the VICS:

Improve equity of access to high quality cancer care	Support the effective implementation of the Optimal Care Pathways (OCPs)	Improve well-being and support for all Victorians affected by cancer
Improving the adoption of care closer to home	Supporting the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Optimal Care Pathway	Facilitating high quality supportive care
Addressing the needs of the older person in routine cancer care	Implementing the Victorian Tumour Summit recommendations through state-wide and local service improvement activity	Facilitating high quality survivorship care
		Facilitating timely referral to palliative care and Advance Care Planning

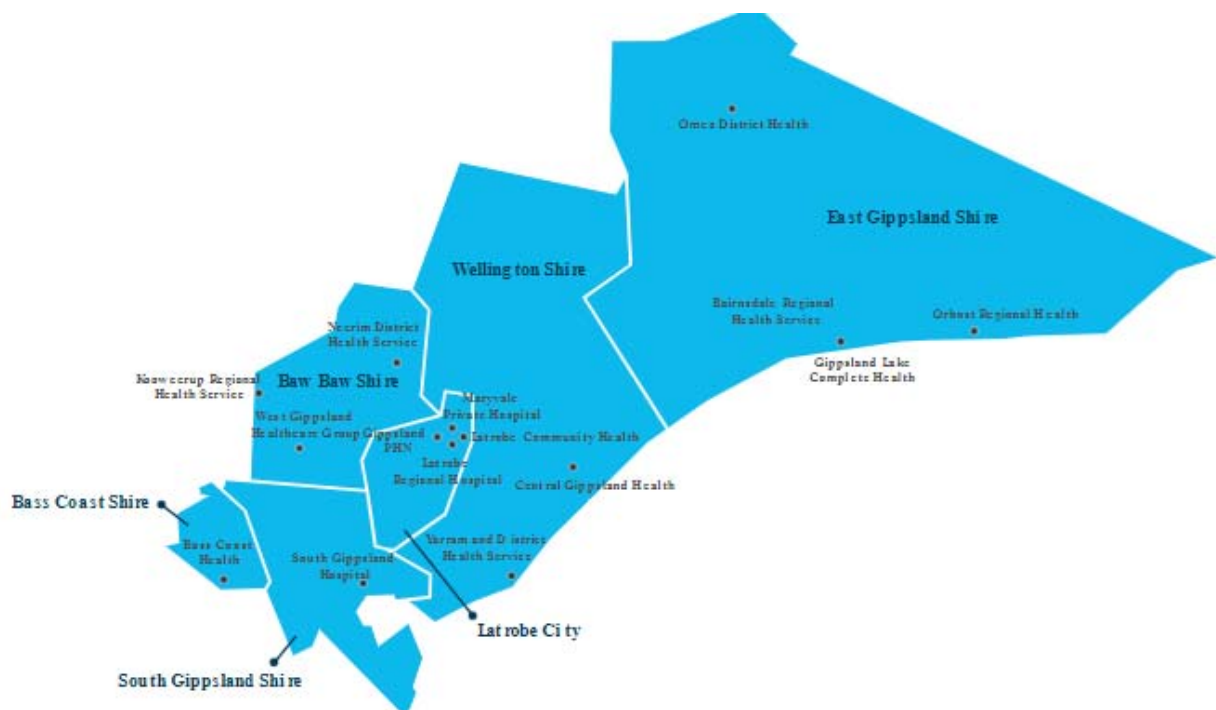
1.2 GRICS Funding Program Overview

The Gippsland Regional Integrated Cancer Service (GRICS) is one of the nine Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) funded by the Department of Health. GRICS provides a network to improve the quality and continuity of patient care and ensures that appropriate links exist between health services to optimise patient pathways for persons affected by cancer. GRICS is pivotal in ensuring strong coordination and planning of cancer service improvement activity across the Gippsland region.

Our member health services include Bairnsdale Regional Health Service, Bass Coast Health, Central Gippsland Health, Gippsland Lakes Complete Health, Gippsland PHN, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, Latrobe Community Health Service, Latrobe Regional Health, Maryvale Private Hospital, Neerim District Health, Omeo District Health, Orbost Regional Health, South Gippsland Hospital, West Gippsland Health Service, Yarram and District Health Service. Across these hospitals and community health services a range of acute medical, surgical, radiation oncology, day chemotherapy, imaging, pathology, palliative care, psycho-oncology, supportive care and allied health services are provided..

The **GRICS Funding Program** is open to organisations providing specialist and generalist cancer services to residents of the GRICS catchment as defined in *Figure 1* below. This funding targets time-limited **quality/service improvement projects** that cannot be funded within existing resources.

Figure 1



2 GRICS Funding Program Objectives

The GRICS Funding Program 2023/24 aims to provide health services with funding to:

- a) Develop time-limited initiatives that cannot be funded within existing service resources
- b) Support innovative projects designed to have a positive impact on the quality of patient care and experience
- c) Encourage effective partnerships and collaboration between health providers and consumers to improve coordination, accessibility and quality of care provided to better support all people affected by cancer
- d) Support either an individual health service or multiple health services (with a lead health service clearly designated) to implement coordinated care projects
- e) Support projects that align with the [Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024](#) and address one or more of the Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (VICS) priorities as outlined in Item 1.1

3 About GRICS Funding

The program round 202/24 will provide up to \$600,000 in funding for approved health service quality improvement projects in the GRICS catchment. Individual applicants can apply for funds up to **\$125,000**.

Projects considered for funding will require Executive Sponsor approval to demonstrate a commitment to ongoing sustainability of the work funded by the grant money from GRICS. Projects must be completed by **31 December 2024**, and subsequently reported on.

Any organisation intending to apply for a GRICS service improvement grant must first arrange an Expression of Interest (EOI) meeting with the GRICS Program Manager and Clinical Director. This process will ensure that organisations with a similar project idea can be connected and provides an opportunity for project refinement prior to the application process.

There is no limit to the number EOI's per health service, however applicants must ensure EOIs align with local priorities, and are supported by Executive Management.

The final funding allocation per applicant will be determined by the overall pool of applications in a given round.

4 GRICS Funding Program Key Selection Criteria

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a) All projects must demonstrate an organisational commitment to implement a sustainable change in service provision;
- b) Projects put forward should ideally be new initiatives, however projects that aim to implement a service improvement initiative piloted elsewhere, that has been proven successful, will be considered
- c) Projects may involve multiple sites and tumour streams;
- d) Projects must fit with the organisational objectives for the relevant clinical area;

- e) Projects must align with the goals of GRICS and VICS Priorities as outlined in Item 1.1
- f) Projects must identify the benefit to the patient/consumer and where possible should be designed with consumer input.
- g) Projects should reference the relevant local health service/organisation priorities and/or [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#)
- h) Health services seeking funding to collect evidence specifically for a business case, need to demonstrate how the project will support the redesign of a model of care or assist in the development of a new model of care at the site, ongoing. The application must receive explicit support from the organisation(s) executive.
- i) Projects must be completed within 18 months at a maximum

While Australia's cancer survival rates are among the best in the world, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience disparities in cancer outcomes. GRICS encourages projects that are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer and those from other vulnerable communities that aim to reduce the disparities and improve outcomes and experiences for these groups.

4.1 GRICS Funding: Exclusion Criteria

- a) Projects that **do not** follow the formal submission process including use of grant templates
- b) Projects that fail to directly address the selection criteria and do not address the objectives, above
- c) Funding of recurrent positions or initiatives that fail to identify sustainability
- d) Funding of administrative staff positions to provide data entry or data manager roles
- e) Equipment purchases for service delivery (requests for equipment funding to support service change may be considered)
- f) Corporate overhead costs

In addition to the above criteria applications will not be considered if they:

1. Are of a duration that exceeds 18 months
2. Are not submitted by an eligible organisation.

Eligible organisations support people affected by cancer (including carers) in the Gippsland region of Victoria (refer Figure 1), have an ABN or are Incorporated, and include:

- a. *Public or not for profit health services;*
- b. *Community or Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services;*
- c. *Non-profit organisations or peak bodies.*

5 GRICS Funding Program: Application & Assessment Process

The GRICS Quality and Improvement Funding Program application consists of the following steps:

1. Submission of an initial expression of interest, EOI to the GRICS team.
2. A 30-45 min online meeting to discuss your grant proposal EOI with the GRICS team.
3. Full grant applications lodged using the Grant Application Form, if deemed appropriate.
4. Candidate grant applications reviewed by the GRICS Grants Selection Committee
5. Projects selected for funding, GRICS Grants Selection Committee recommendations presented to GRICS Governance
6. Grant approval notification to applicants
7. Funds payment transfer as outlined in grants application
8. Grant reporting by recipients (refer to grant application form)

Please note, **all applicants who submit an EOI will be invited to an online meeting** with the GRICS team to elaborate on their proposal and discuss their readiness to undertake the proposed piece of work, at the commencement of the grant round process. This online meeting will also provide applicants with an opportunity to ask questions.

Applicants will then submit a full grant application outlining their project plan.

All applications will be reviewed by the GRICS Grants Selection Committee (*please refer to the membership list below*), with weighted scores allocated against the key selection criteria.

A final decision confirming funding allocations will be formally presented to the GRICS Governance group and communicated to all applicants.

- *GRICS Program Manager*
- *GRICS Clinical Director*
- *GRICS Chair*
- *Up to two Consumer representatives*
- *Executive Officer – Gippsland Health Service Partnership*

**GRICS Grants Selection Committee Membership*

5.1 Applicant Key Dates

Activity	Date	Important Detail
Initial EOI open	9 May 2023	All health services must submit an application using the 2023/24, GRICS Funding Program, Expression of Interest (EOI) template.
Expressions of Interest Close	5pm EST 30 June 2023	A separate application must be completed for every project. By email to grics@lrh.com.au with ' 2023-2024 GRICS Funding Program Expression of Interest (EOI) ' in the email header
Online Interviews with GRICS held	3 – 10 July 2023	*Candidates will be contacted directly by the GRICS Team to arrange a timeslot.
Final Grant Applications due	5pm EST 21 July 2023	All applicants must submit an application using the 2023-2024 GRICS Funding Program, Grant Application Form By email to grics@lrh.com.au with ' 2023-2024 GRICS Funding Program, Grant Application Form ' in the email header. A separate application must be completed for every project.
Grant Selection Committee Meeting	26 July 2023	
Funding Recommendations presented to GRICS Governance	August 7 2023	
Final notification to successful grant applicants	Mid-August 2023	Project applicants will be advised of the final recommendations regarding funding outcomes via email. The list of successful projects will be published on the GRICS Website .
1st round of Payments available to grant seekers	From September 2023	

5.2 How are grants evaluated?

The following criteria will be considered when prioritising projects for funding:

1. Extent to which project addresses one or more of the VICS Priority Areas listed in *Item 1.1*
2. Weight/extent of expected benefits from project to the GRICS catchment
3. Extent to which the project will implement a sustainable change in service provision, which can be specifically measured at commencement, and completion
4. Value for money in terms of benefit and also value of the in-kind and direct support contribution provided by the applicant
5. Extent to which a committed project team and sponsor with appropriate skill sets to implement the project has been identified
6. Ability to comply with the requirements for funding.

Refer to Appendix A for more detail.

6 Conditions of Funding & Reporting Requirements

In order to secure funding, the applicant must be prepared to sign a Service Level Agreement with Monash Health as the host agency.

The applicant acknowledges the following:

1. The project will be conducted in accordance with the application and the conditions stipulated in ***Item 3 About GRICS Funding***
2. Any deviation in the project from the original submission **must be discussed** with, and agreed to by the GRICS Program Manager and GRICS Governance, and appropriately documented via a *Project Amendment Request Form*
3. **A three-month update and six-monthly project progress updates** will be provided by the Project Lead to GRICS and reported through to GRICS Governance. Updates will include a brief synopsis of work completed in the previous months, highlight any achieved objectives, identify risks both new and mitigated, and identify key project deliverables met as appropriate (template to be provided by GRICS)
4. **A Final Report** (including evaluation outcomes and expenditure report) will be submitted to the GRICS Program Manager at the completion of the project (templates to be provided by GRICS)
5. GRICS may share project reports, including de-identified data (in line with appropriate privacy legislation)
6. Information on the project will be made available on the GRICS website to enable information sharing for the benefit of cancer patients and carers.

Funding will be allocated to successful applicants on the basis that:

- The project has been approved for funding by GRICS Governance with any conditions specified by the review panel having been met in the project plan documents
- The project will be conducted in accordance with the methodology, timelines and allocated budget stated within the final agreed project plan and the conditions stipulated in the **GRICS 2023/24 Funding Program Guidelines for Quality and Service Improvement**.
- Ethics applications (where necessary) are submitted by the Project Lead in line with local health service requirements
- Project Leads be available to participate in GRICS funded projects *Communities of Practice*
- Any failure to supply project Progress and Final Reports will compromise progress payments for the project
- Information on the project, including any tools/resources developed, will be made available to the GRICS Governance to enable promotion of the GRICS Funding Program and information sharing with other organisations, as appropriate, and in line with appropriate privacy legislation.
- **GRICS is to be acknowledged as the funding body in any published documents, or during any presentation of the project outcomes or associated results of process improvements.** Failure to acknowledge GRICS may affect future funding applications.

6.1 Funds Release Schedule

The funds release schedule will be in accordance with Monash Health policy and negotiated with the successful applicants. Applicants will need to provide a valid tax invoice for payment upon the completion of payment milestones to the satisfaction of GRICS.

6.2 Payment & Reporting Schedule

Activity	Date (AEST)
Funding commencement	The project commencement date identified in the Grant Application Form, will be taken as the official start date for the project. Once the project has been approved and an invoice has been received, funds will be dispersed in regular intervals, linked to the project reporting schedule.
Receipt of Progress Report(s)	Progress reports are due at 3 months, 6 months and at completion of the project. For longer projects, reports will be due at 3,6,12 and 18 months for the final report.
Receipt of Final Report & Financial Acquittal	Within one month <u>post</u> projection completion.

7 For more information about the GRICS Funding Program

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Appendix A- Grant Assessment Criteria

No.	Criteria	Approximate Weighting
1	Demonstration of need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the application demonstrates comprehensive problem identification at the health service. Uses data to support application 	10%
2	Alignment with VICS Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application aligns with one or more of the VICS Priorities 	10%
3	Capacity to undertake the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of applicant's satisfactory completion of previous projects and compliance with project requirements (track record). Appropriately qualified staff and infrastructure available for the proposed timeframes. 	10%
4	Project Methodology and Outcome Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates how the project will be delivered within the project timelines and within the allocated resources Identifies how the outcomes of the project will be measured and describes what successful implementation looks like 	25%
5	Impact/Benefit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates how the project will improve patient experience of care Articulates how the health service will benefit from the project 	25%
6	Capacity to sustain the project beyond implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates a strategy for the sustainability of the project beyond the planned timeframe (note: in most cases a business case is not an acceptable strategy for demonstrating sustainability) 	20%
Total		100%