

# 2024-2025 SMICS Funding Program

## Guidelines

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1	The VICS Priorities.....	3
1.2	SMICS Funding Program Overview .....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>SMICS Funding Program Objectives</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SMICS Funding Categories</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>SMICS Funding Program Key Selection Criteria</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.1	SMICS Funding: Exclusion Criteria .....	6
<b>5</b>	<b>SMICS Funding Program: Application &amp; Assessment Process</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.	Submission of an initial expression of interest, EOI to the SMICS team.....	7
5.1	Applicant Key Dates.....	8
5.2	How are applications evaluated? .....	9
<b>6</b>	<b>Conditions of Funding &amp; Reporting Requirements</b> .....	<b>9</b>
6.1	Funds Release Schedule .....	10
6.2	Payment & Reporting Schedule.....	10
<b>7</b>	<b>For more information about the SMICS Funding Program</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	<b>Appendix A- Assessment Criteria</b> .....	<b>11</b>

# 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

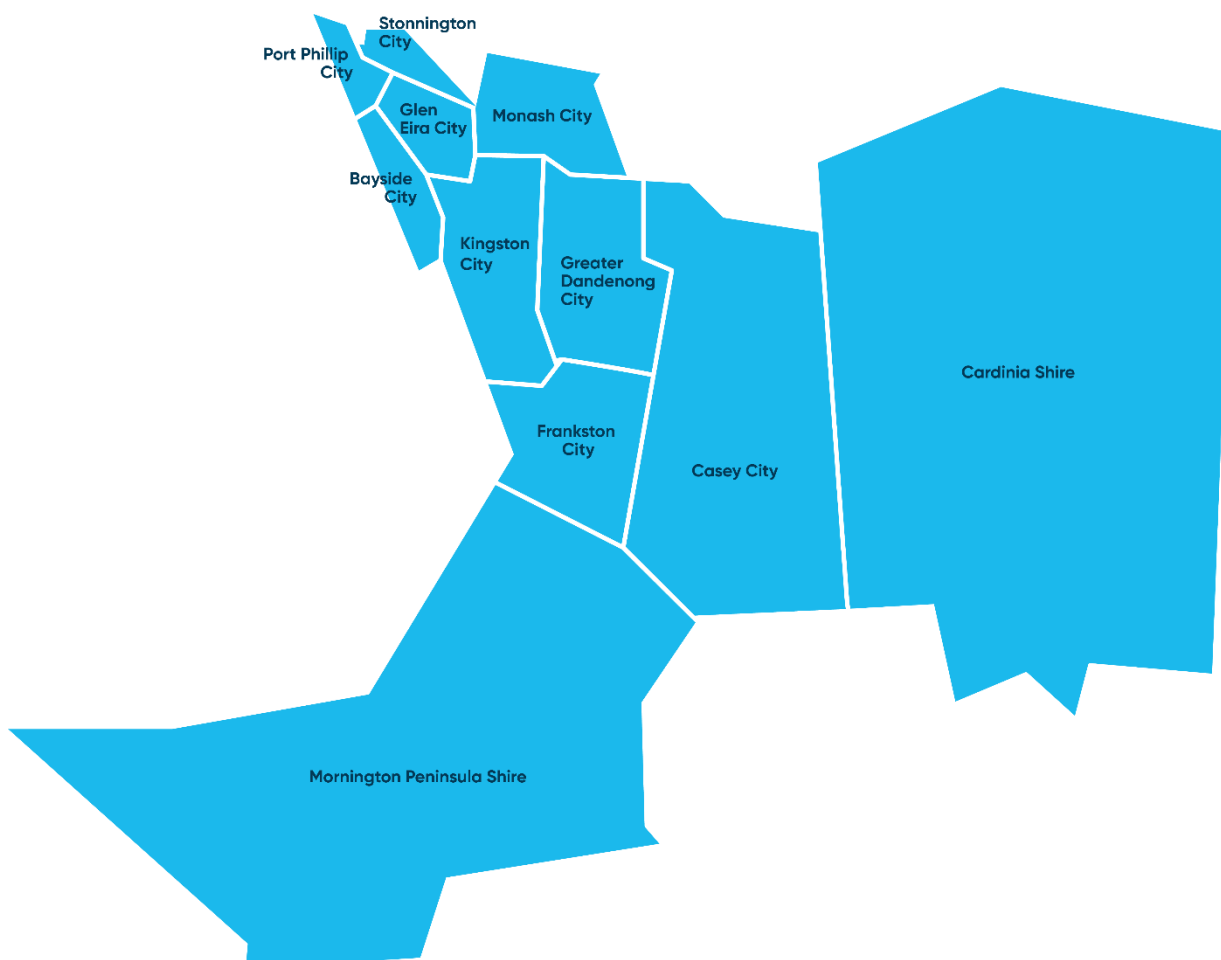
## 1.2 SMICS Funding Program Overview

The Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (SMICS) is one of the nine Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) funded by the Department of Health. SMICS 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. SMICS is pivotal in ensuring strong coordination and planning across the southern Melbourne region.

Our member health services include Alfred Health, Cabrini Health, Monash Health and Peninsula Health, delivering over 71,200 episodes of acute cancer care per annum, including medical, surgical, radiation oncology, day chemotherapy, imaging, pathology, palliative care, psycho-oncology, supportive care and allied health services.

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

**Figure 1**



## 2 SMICS Funding Program Objectives

The SMICS Funding Program 2024-2025 aims to provide health services with funding to:

- a) time-limited initiatives that cannot be funded within existing hospital 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)
- e) 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 SMICS Funding Categories

SMICS will provide up to \$500,000 in funding for approved health service quality improvement projects in the SMICS catchment. Applications will be considered in three categories:

Category	Description	Amount per project
Systems Focus	Initiatives which address known variations or inequities in cancer care to enable systemic change/improvement across the SMICS catchment. Projects must be in collaboration with at least one other health service or organisation.	\$200,000
New Innovation	Implementation of <b>sustainable</b> innovative initiatives for people who receive cancer care within the SMICS catchment	\$125,000
Scale and/or Spread	Scale and/or spread of projects which have demonstrated successful <b>sustainable</b> outcomes	\$50,000

Projects considered for funding will require Executive Sponsor approval to demonstrate a commitment to ongoing sustainability of the work funded by the SMICS 2024-2025 Funding Program.

**Projects must be completed by 31 December 2025**, and subsequently reported on.

There is no limit to the number of Expressions of Interest (EOIs) 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 SMICS 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 SMICS and VICS Priorities as outlined in Item 1.1
- f) projects should reference the relevant local health service/organisation priorities and/or [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#)
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

SMICS encourages projects that are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer that aim to reduce the disparity and improve outcomes and experiences for this group.

### 4.1 SMICS 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 non-sustainable initiatives
- 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 southern Melbourne region of Victoria (refer Figure 1), have an ABN or are Incorporated, and include:*

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

## **5 SMICS Funding Program: Application & Assessment Process**

**The SMICS 2024-2025 Funding Program application consists of the following steps:**

1. Submission of an initial expression of interest, EOI to the SMICS team.
2. A 30 minute online meeting to discuss your grant proposal EOI with the SMICS team.
3. Final applications lodged using the Application Form, if deemed appropriate.
4. Project applications reviewed by the SMICS Funding Program Assessment Panel
5. Projects selected for funding will be presented to SMICS Governance Committee for endorsement
6. Approval notification to applicants
7. Funds payment transfer as outlined in *SMICS Funding Program 2024-2025 Guidelines*

Please note, **all applicants who submit an EOI will be invited to an online meeting on Friday 12 April 2024** with the SMICS team to elaborate on their proposal and discuss their readiness to undertake the proposed piece of work. **A representative of the Project team must be available on this date.**

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 SMICS Funding Program Assessment Panel (*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 SMICS Governance group and communicated to all applicants.

- *SMICS Program Manager*
- *SMICS Quality Manager*
- *SMICS Clinical Director(s)*
- *Up to two Consumer representatives*
- *Executive Director, South East Metro Health Services Partnership*

## 5.1 Applicant Key Dates

Activity	Date	Important Detail
Initial EOI open	Friday 8 March 2024	All health services must submit an application using the <b>2024-2025, SMICS Funding Program, Expression of Interest (EOI) template</b> .
Expressions of Interest Close	5pm EST Friday 5 April 2024	A separate application must be completed for every project.  By email to <a href="mailto:SMICS.Quality@monashhealth.org">SMICS.Quality@monashhealth.org</a> with ' <b>2024-2025 SMICS Funding Program Expression of Interest (EOI)</b> ' in the email header
Online Interviews with SMICS held	Friday 12 April 2024	Candidates will be contacted directly by the SMICS Team to arrange a timeslot.
Final Grant Applications due	5pm EST Friday 26 April 2024	All health services must submit an application using the <b>2024-2025 SMICS Funding Program Application Form</b>  By email to <a href="mailto:SMICS.Quality@monashhealth.org">SMICS.Quality@monashhealth.org</a> with ' <b>2024-2025 SMICS Funding Program Application Form</b> ' in the email header.  A separate application must be completed for every project.
Assessment Panel Meeting	Thursday 2 May 2024	
Funding recommendations presented to SMICS Governance	Thursday 16 May 2024	
Final notification to successful applicants	By Friday 24 May 2024	Project applicants will be advised of the final recommendations regarding funding outcomes via email. The list of successful projects will be published on the <a href="#">SMICS website</a> .
Start up Payments available to successful applicants	1 July 2024	



## 5.2 How are applications 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 SMICS 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 these Guidelines
2. Any deviation in the project from the original submission **must be discussed** with, and agreed to by the SMICS Program Manager and SMICS Governance, and appropriately documented via a *Project Amendment Request Form*
3. **Regular project progress updates** will be provided by the Project Lead to SMICS and reported through to SMICS 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 SMICS)
4. **A Final Report** (including evaluation outcomes and expenditure report) will be submitted to the SMICS Quality Manager at the completion of the project (templates to be provided by SMICS)
5. SMICS 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 SMICS 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 SMICS 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 SMICS **2024-2025 Funding Program Guidelines**
- Ethics applications (where necessary) are submitted by the Project Lead in line with local health service requirements
- Project Leads be available to participate in SMICS 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 SMICS Governance to enable promotion of the SMICS Funding Program and information sharing with other organisations, as appropriate, and in line with appropriate privacy legislation.
- **SMICS 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 SMICS 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 SMICS.

### 6.2 Payment & Reporting Schedule

Activity	Date (AEST)
Funding commencement	The project commencement date identified in the 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 regular intervals and will be outlined as part of the Service Level Agreement (template provided by SMICS)
Receipt of Final Report & Financial Acquittal	Within one month <u>post</u> projection completion.

## 7 For more information about the SMICS Funding Program

### Contact:

Nell Sproule  
 Quality Manager  
 Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service  
 Email: SMICS.Quality@monashhealth.org

## Appendix A- Assessment Criteria

No.	Criteria	Approximate Weighting
1	<b>Demonstration of need</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that the application demonstrates comprehensive problem identification at the health service.</li> <li>Uses data to support application</li> </ul>	10%
2	<b>Alignment with VICS Priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application aligns with one or more of the VICS Priorities</li> </ul>	10%
3	<b>Capacity to undertake the project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of applicant's satisfactory completion of previous projects and compliance with project requirements (track record).</li> <li>Appropriately qualified staff and infrastructure available for the proposed timeframes.</li> </ul>	10%
4	<b>Project Methodology and Outcome Measurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates how the project will be delivered within the project timelines and within the allocated resources</li> <li>Identifies how the outcomes of the project will be measured and describes what successful implementation looks like</li> </ul>	25%
5	<b>Impact/Benefit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulates how the project will improve patient experience of care</li> <li>Articulates how the health service will benefit from the project</li> </ul>	25%
6	<b>Capacity to sustain the project beyond implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul>	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>