

the Challenge

Guidelines and Conditions

Stages 1 and 2

Expressions of Interest Open

1 February 2023

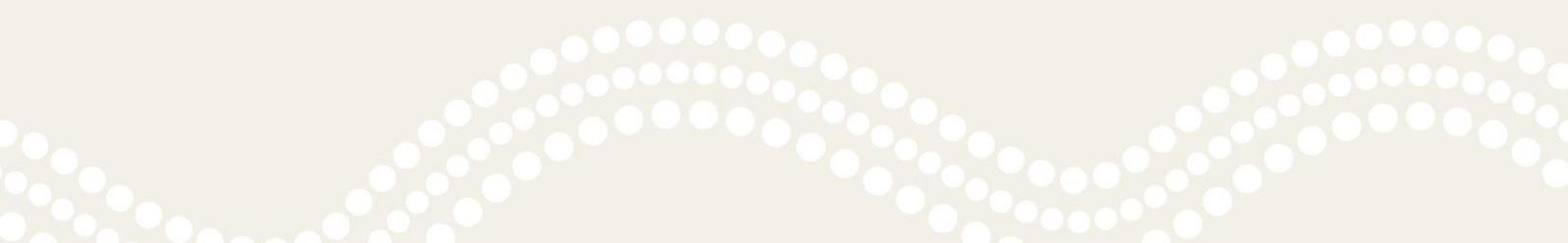
Expressions of Interest Close

31 March 2023

Proof of Concept Commences

July 2023

Reimagining regional and remote health care



1. Introduction

The Western Australian State Government has issued a global callout (**The Challenge**), for a world leading medical research and innovation solution to a defined and pressing problem in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. **The Challenge** is to develop and propose a solution that uses technology, supported by research, to improve health outcomes for people living in regional and remote Western Australia. The solution should consider the delivery of general, specialist and critical healthcare, as well as early intervention assessment and the management of chronic conditions on-country. Preference will be given to solutions that are designed to have the greatest impact, are culturally secure, scalable and integrate into the existing health system. Solutions must demonstrate a commitment to partnership and collaboration and contribute to Closing the Gap targets 1 (everyone enjoys long and healthy lives), 2 (children are born healthy and strong) and 4 (children thrive in their early years).

The winner will demonstrate proof of concept against an outcomes-based framework and have the ability to integrate solutions into existing models of healthcare delivery in the Pilbara.

These Guidelines and Conditions relate only to the Expression of Interest and Proof of Concept stage. Further advice pertaining to the winning solution will be provided separately.

On average, Australians living in rural and remote areas have shorter lives, higher levels of disease and injury, and limited access to health services in comparison to people living in metropolitan areas. The cause of poorer health outcomes in rural and remote areas is multifaceted, but a lack of access to health services is a recognised determinative factor. It is hoped **The Challenge** will help recruit staff and put clinical continuities into practice that will address the short fall of services in rural and remote regions of Western Australia.

Despite significant and sustained investment in Aboriginal healthcare, health outcomes in Aboriginal communities remain poor. Some of the key illnesses affecting Aboriginal communities include trachoma, rheumatic heart disease, respiratory diseases, mental health problems, chronic kidney disease and other infectious diseases.

Attracting and retaining clinical staff in the State's regions, which includes some very remote areas is a major challenge for the Western Australian health system. As a result, clinical continuity often falls short in many regions across Western Australia and is especially problematic in remote Aboriginal communities, some of which are the most remote communities on the planet.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) has a strong network of public hospitals, health services and nursing posts located across rural and remote Western Australia. From nursing posts and outreach services, to child health clinics and bustling regional health campuses, the services span across an area of more than 2.5 million square kilometres, from Kalumburu in the Kimberley to Albany in the Great Southern.

According to the latest available Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data (2017), the population of WACHS's catchment area is 531,510 people. Almost 11 per cent of these people (57,716) identify as Aboriginal.

This Challenge is open to local, national and international applicants, and is administered by the Western Australian Department of Health (the Department).

2. Purpose

The Challenge is to develop and propose a solution that uses technology, supported by research to improve health outcomes for people living in regional and remote Western Australia. The solution should consider the delivery of general, specialist and critical healthcare, as well as early intervention assessment and the management of chronic conditions on-country.

The Challenge calls for real change – transformative, disruptive and innovative. We are looking for new solutions that leverage new technology or which translate digital solutions from other fields to advance health care. Solutions that deploy digital health to its full potential, to ensure all Western Australians can access the health services they need and deserve.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how they will build, launch and trial the technology in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Once the solution has proven effective, the goal is for the solution to be adopted and rolled out into the broader health care ecosystem, delivering improved and enduring health outcomes in remote and regional communities.

The solution will be evaluated against six criteria, as outlined in Section 6 below. Consideration will be given to sustainable business models, with cross sector partnerships encouraged.

3. Challenge Format

The Challenge is based on a progressive series of assessment and selection stages, supported by a Proof of Concept stage for short-listed finalists. The Challenge will culminate in the awarding of one prize to a single winning solution.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Applications are encouraged from industry, private sector, public sector agencies, universities, research institutes or collaborations from across the globe. The Expression of Interest requires applicants to define the problem or unmet need, provide an outline of the proposed solution and how it will be implemented in the Proof of Concept stage, identify key dependencies and describe the solution's benefits and potential risks. The Expression of Interest will comprise a written submission and a 90 second video pitch, submitted via the secure online portal. Of the eligible applications, the judging panels will select a shortlist of finalists who will be invited to progress to the Proof of Concept stage and awarded a grant of \$100,000. The Expressions of Interest period will open on 1 February 2023 and will close on 31 March 2023.

Stage 2: Proof of Concept

Short-listed finalists will be partnered with organisations in the Pilbara region of Western Australia to prove their concept on the ground within a 12-month period from August 2023 to July 2024. This stage will culminate in a final submission to be provided to the judging panel, outlining the success of the proof of concept and demonstrable early-stage impact. The submission will also describe the longer-term implementation plan including a fully costed financial model. Shortlisted finalists will be asked to deliver two presentations during this stage. The first presentation will be delivered in August 2023 at the commencement of the Proof of Concept Stage. The second presentation will be delivered in July 2024 at the conclusion of the Proof of Concept stage and will form part of the final judging process.



The Proof of Concept stage will vary for each applicant depending on the concept's level of maturity. Therefore, there are no standard milestones or requirements for what should be delivered over the 12-month period, however this plan will be reviewed and approved by the Department of Health prior to the commencement of the Proof of Concept stage.

The Department of Health and its partners will be available to support all short-listed finalists in the Proof of Concept stage including seeking relevant approvals, facilitating partnerships and documenting and promoting the proof of concept journey.

Stage 3: Winner Announced

Following the conclusion of the Proof of Concept stage, one final winner will be determined by the judging panel and announced by the Minister for Medical Research in October 2024. The winning solution will receive a significant prize pool to enable further investment in the development of their solution in Western Australia. As part of this investment, the Department of Health will seek to access the rights to use the solution in an ongoing manner across the WA health system with the IP rights remaining with the winning solution.

These Guidelines and Conditions pertain only to the Expression of Interest and Proof of Concept Stages.

4. Eligibility

An application must be made through a legally constituted entity (the Responsible Entity), that may be based in WA, Australia or internationally.

An Australian Responsible Entity must have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN). A Responsible Entity not based in Australia must provide evidence that it is a legally constituted entity in the corresponding country.

The Responsible Entity must name a Challenge Lead for the period of the proposed activity, who will be responsible for all aspects of the application process, and the subsequent conduct of activity if short-listed to participate in the Proof of Concept stage. It is expected all short-listed finalists will implement their proof of concept from Western Australia as much as practically possible.

Applications must be complete, include requested certifications, and be submitted by the closing date/time as per Section 5 Application Instructions.

The Department reserves the right to make final decisions on the eligibility of applicants.

5. Application Instructions

Stage 1: Expression of Interest applicants will be required to:

- Complete the Stage 1 Expression of Interest Form
 - The Application Form can be accessed via the Challenge website.
 - All requested certifications must be provided in the Application Form at the time of submission.
 - Electronic signatures are acceptable. The onus is on the Challenge Lead to ensure approval to use an electronic signature has been obtained.
 - All attachments are to be submitted as Adobe Acrobat PDF or Microsoft Word files, not exceeding 2MBs including evidence that the Responsible Entity is a legally constituted entity in the corresponding country (if applicable) and CVs.
- Prepare a 'pitch' video which must not be longer than 90 seconds. The video must be in AVI, MOV, MP4, MPG or WMV format and not exceeding 100MB in size.
- Submit the Application Form and the video via the Challenge website:
www.thechallenge.health.wa.gov.au

Stage 2: Shortlisted finalists chosen to progress to the Proof of Concept stage will be required to commence implementation of their solution on the ground in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. There will be no formal application required at this stage, however the Department of Health will work closely with all shortlisted finalists to approve, then oversee activities within this Proof of Concept stage.

The Department reserves the right to modify terms and conditions that apply to Stage 2.

6. Selection Process

Expert panels

Assessment of all applications will be undertaken by two expert panels designated by the Department.

Expert Panel 1 (the Challenge) will be comprised, as appropriate, of one or more of each of the following:

- rural/remote health and medical experts
- innovation/entrepreneurship experts
- research experts
- technology experts
- consumer representatives
- regional partners.

Expert Panel 2 (Partners) will be comprised, as appropriate, of representatives from regional healthcare and technology organisations currently working in or representing the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Assessment process

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

All Expressions of Interest will undergo a three-stage assessment to determine the finalists who will progress to Stage 2. The assessment process will include:

- Eligibility Assessment – conducted by the Department to ensure all applicants meet the eligibility criteria. Only eligible Expressions of Interest will be sent for review by Expert Panel 1.
- Expert Panel 1 (the Challenge) – All eligible Expressions of Interest and associated ‘pitch’ videos will be assessed by Expert Panel 1 who will assess the application against the following criteria:
 - The Problem: What is the relevance and scale of the problem to Western Australia.
 - The Solution: How will the solution address the health problem? How will the solution be implemented during the Proof of Concept stage, and have risks been identified and mitigated?
 - Innovation: How innovative is the solution in its use of new or existing technology to solve the unmet health need? Are there other solutions available and if so, how does this solution differ?
 - Feasibility: How feasible is the solution for remote WA? Does it have the ability to be scaled up across other diverse areas of WA in the future?
 - Sustainability: Do the applicants have the capacity to implement this solution now and over time? How will the solution be financially sustainable into the future?
 - Impact: What is the scale and significance of the health and wellbeing impacts of this solution for rural and remote Western Australians? How many people will the solution reach? How will the solution contribute to Closing the Gap outcomes 1, 2 and 4? What impact will the solution have on job creation and economic diversification benefits for Western Australia?
- Expert Panel 2 (Partners) - The top applications identified by Expert Panel 1 will proceed for review by Expert Panel 2 (Partners). This panel will comprise local health and technology partners from the Pilbara region of Western Australia who will determine the feasibility of the application for the Pilbara and identify potential implementation partners on the ground to ensure all shortlisted finalists have the best chance of success during the Proof of Concept Stage.

Stage 2: Proof of Concept

Short-listed finalists participating in the Proof of Concept Stage will be required to submit a final report for assessment by Expert Panel 1 (the Challenge). This final assessment will include:

- Eligibility Assessment.
- Presentation – to be delivered by all shortlisted applicants in July 2024.
- Expert Panel 1 (the Challenge) review – The final report and presentation will be reviewed by Expert Panel 1 against the same criteria used in Stage 1. The result of these assessments will be collated by the Department and used to determine the final winner.

Stage 3: Winner Announced

Following the judging of the Proof of Concept stage, one final winner will be determined by the judging panel and announced by the Minister for Medical Research in October 2024. The winning solution will receive an AUD \$5 million dollar prize to enable further investment in the development of their solution in Western Australia. As part of this investment, the Department of Health will seek to access the rights to use the solution in an ongoing manner across the WA health system with the IP rights remaining with the winning solution

The Department reserves the right to request, at its discretion, further information from applicants if an expert panel deems applications to be of potential benefit to WA but require further clarification before an assessment can be made.

Selection of recipients

Based on expert panel assessments, the Department will determine and approve the awarding of grants in accordance with the Department financial and procurement delegation authorities.

7. Funding Conditions

The Department of Health will provide a one-off payment of AUD \$100,000 to the shortlisted finalists in the Proof of Concept Stage and a AUD \$5 million dollar prize to the final winner. This document only describes the funding conditions relating to the shortlisted finalists in the Proof of Concept Stage.

Payment instalments

Applicants shortlisted for the Proof of Concept Stage will be awarded \$100,000 to support their activities designed to prove their concept in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The funding will be paid in one instalment. All relevant research ethics and governance approvals, where required, must be obtained prior to any proof of concept activities commencing. The Department of Health will assist short-listed Proof of Concept finalists to obtain these approvals as required.

The final winning solution will be awarded AUD \$5 million.

Funding limitations

Funding will only be made available for the scope of work described in the application, or with any modifications approved by the Department. The Department is not obliged to underwrite any recurrent or capital costs beyond the funding awarded through this Challenge.

Seeking alternative funding sources

Applicants are permitted, and encouraged, to seek additional sources of funding for the duration of the Challenge, providing the funded activity complements, but does not duplicate the activity for which the Challenge funding was awarded.

Partial payment or suspension of funds

The Department reserves the right to:

- Provide funding instalments in parts based on milestone achievement to date and risk assessment of future milestones.
- Suspend payment of funding instalments or part instalments where activity feasibility has become uncertain.

Termination of funds

Funds shall revert to, or be recoverable by, the Department in instances where:

- the activity is terminated by the Department as a result of insufficient progress being made at the time of progress reports or any interim progress report, a request for variation is not approved or it has been otherwise determined by either the recipient or the Department that the project is no longer viable
- the recipient is successful in obtaining funding for the activity from another source
- funds are used for purposes other than those for which they were awarded
- the Challenge proposal does not result in the majority of funding for implementation being expended in WA
- funds are not fully spent at the conclusion of the activity.

Funding is offered subject to budget availability, which could be varied in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

8. Contractual Arrangements

Grant Funding Agreement

Grants to entities external to the WA public health system are offered in accordance with the Department Grant Funding Agreement (and its Terms and Conditions) which is a legal agreement between the Department and the Responsible Entity. Within the WA public health system, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be entered into.

Where research is a component of the activity, this must be conducted in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#), and must have any required ethics and governance approvals.

The Department reserves the right to withdraw an offer of award to a Responsible Entity if the Grant Funding Agreement and/or Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions, or MOU, cannot be agreed.

Insurance

Responsible Entities will be required to demonstrate appropriate levels of insurance as a condition of the Grant Funding Agreement.

Note that recipients who require site governance approval will also be required to demonstrate appropriate levels of insurance during this process, which may vary depending on the site.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property (IP) that arises out of the activity will vest in the Responsible Entity. However, consideration will be given to the provisions of the [Western Australian Government Intellectual Property Policy 2015](#), that IP rights should be allocated to optimise the economic, social or environmental benefits for WA from the use, commercialisation and disposal of the IP.

Any questions regarding IP matters should, in the first instance, be directed to the Department of Health (TheChallenge@health.wa.gov.au).

Requests for variation

Approval for variations to a Grant Funding Agreement or MOU, such as activity timing and duration, Responsible Entity, or Challenge Lead, will be at the discretion of the Department. Note, if variations are not approved this could result in termination of an activity with associated funding reverting to, or being recoverable by, the Department.

9. Reporting

The shortlisted Proof of Concept finalists will be required to submit a final report at the end of the 12-month Proof of Concept stage which will be used by the Judging panel to determine the final winning solution.

The reports referred to above will be completed on template forms provided by the Department.

The Department reserves the right to request additional Progress Activity Reports at any point during a Stage.

10. Acknowledgements

The WA Minister for Medical Research and/or the Department will publicly announce, at their discretion, any significant milestone in **The Challenge** process.

Recipient Responsible Entities, and other participating entities, must withhold announcement/media coverage related to activities supported by this Program until authorised by the Department, and must have these activities approved by the Department.

Acknowledgment of the Department of Health and its keystone partners should be made as opportunities arise in publications, conference presentations, public discussion, press statements etc, as appropriate. The preferred citation is: *"This work has been supported by the Western Australian Department of Health, through the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund and keystone partners RIO Tinto and BHP"*.

11. Complaints

Applicants who feel that their interests have been adversely affected by a decision made by the Department and/or expert panels may lodge a complaint. Complaints can only be considered when they refer to the administrative process and not to the actual outcome of a particular decision. Complaints must be submitted in writing to:

Deputy Director General

Department of Health

PO Box 8172

Perth Business Centre WA 6849

Australia

12. Confidentiality

Summaries provided on applications or reports may be used for publicity purposes by the Department upon agreement with the Responsible Entity.

Other information provided in applications and reports will be maintained confidentially by the Department and expert panels.

All other information exchanged between the Responsible Entity/Challenge Lead and the Department, expert panels during the course of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 activities will be maintained confidentially unless otherwise agreed to by all parties.

If requests are received by the Department to make public any aspect of **The Challenge**, the authorisation of the Responsible Entity will be sought.

Applicants are advised that the Department is subject to the Western Australian *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*. This can potentially provide a right of access to records held by State Government agencies.

13. Evaluation

The Department will undertake an evaluation of **The Challenge**, which will include unsuccessful applications. All parties included in the application are required to contribute to the evaluation.



Reimagining regional and remote health care