



## Seed Funding Guideline – 2023

### Introduction

Wildfire is an intrinsic part of the Australian landscape and has shaped our natural environment for thousands of years. However, the number, size and intensity of wildfires is changing, which presents many complex environmental, social, and economic challenges.

The [Wildfire Futures Hallmark Research Initiative](#) (WF HRI) is located at the University of Melbourne and was established in 2022 to address these challenges by bringing diverse knowledge and disciplines together to create new ways of living with fire.

This seed funding scheme underpins the overarching aim of the WF HRI to support high-quality interdisciplinary research that collaboratively generates new understandings of wildfire futures including communication of those understandings with diverse audiences.

### Research areas of interest

In this funding round, we aim to support innovative interdisciplinary research relevant to how we understand and live with future wildfires including potential impacts on a broad range of values. Research topics should **encompass more than one research discipline** and could include, but not be limited to:

- Future fire behaviour including interactions with changing climate
- Future fire impacts (immediate and beyond) on a broad range of values (e.g., cultural, health, built environment, natural environment, institutions, economy) including combined impacts with changing climate
- Human relationships with fire including how we might live with future fires
- Responses to future fire events and fire regimes including future-orientated solutions (e.g., society, management, technology, governance) to fire challenges.

### Seed funding details

The WF HRI is making available funding to support **three to four projects** that address and explore interdisciplinary topics relevant to wildfire futures. The winning proposals will each receive once-off seed funds from the WF HRI of **up to \$20,000**.

We allow flexibility in how the funds are used. This includes costs associated with:

- hosting workshops or forums or events (including facilitation, capacity development, relationship building, and catering);
- employing research staff to undertake the project or casual staff to provide support;
- field research;
- travel costs (for collaboration); and
- equipment (with specific justification).

Funds cannot be used for substantial teaching relief, retainer fees for consultants, or extensive overseas travel. The proponent must ensure costings are in line with University policy and procedures - See 'Conditions of Grant' for more information.



## Project selection criteria

Projects will be selected on individual merit and to enable a complementary mix of projects overall. Project merit will be assessed based on the project team and context, and on the project quality and feasibility.

Selection criteria relating to the project team and context include:

- Team includes multiple academic fields.
- Team includes more than one career stage.
- Coordinating Investigator holds an academic position (ongoing, fixed term, or casual) at the University of Melbourne for the duration of the project (if the Coordinating Investigator leaves the University, this responsibility must be transferred to another team member).
- Coordinating Investigator an Early Career or Mid-Career Researcher.
- Projects are encouraged to include external organisations (e.g., industry, government, non-government, community groups, Indigenous communities).
- Project represents new research or a new collaboration rather than supporting existing research.
- Proposed use of funds is consistent with the project objectives and the above seed funding details.

Selection criteria relating to project quality and feasibility include:

- Interdisciplinarity – the research is sufficiently interdisciplinary in its approach to understanding and living with future wildfires.
- Innovation – the project demonstrates innovation in at least one of the following: methodology and design; area of focus; conceptual approach and analysis; potential impact and engagement.
- Likely to generate new long- or short-term research activities and/or shows potential for future funding by granting bodies.
- The proposed timeframe and budget are realistic and achievable.

## Submission and application process

The application process has two stages:

- A. Proposing teams complete the application form and submit to the WF HRI Convenor by the key dates below. All sections of the application form must be completed.
- B. Applications will be shortlisted, and the Selection Committee of the Wildfire Futures HRI will decide and notify the successful candidates.

Successful projects will provide brief reporting on the progress and completion of their project, and contribute to the Wildfire Futures HRI 2023/24 seminar series.

Applications should be submitted via email to the Convenor of the Wildfire Futures Hallmark Research Initiative: **Tom Fairman** - [thomas.fairman@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:thomas.fairman@unimelb.edu.au)

## Key Dates

Submissions close: COB 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Decisions made and notification of applicants: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Research completed: 31 December 2024



## What are Hallmark Research Initiatives?

[Hallmark Research Initiatives](#) are research initiatives supported by the University of Melbourne that address significant local and global challenge that cannot be solved by one discipline alone. The initiatives encourage the maturing of interdisciplinary research communities through research projects, workshops, fellowships, and events. The goals of the HRI program are to:

- increase cross-disciplinary and intra-institutional academic collaboration
- increase collaborative research with external partners
- facilitate highly-competitive applications involving researchers from multiple disciplines
- Increase public awareness of the University as a provider of outstanding research that is relevant and beneficial to the community.

## Conditions of Grant

### *Funding Payment Schedule:*

The grant can be paid in two or three tranches linked to key deliverables as identified in project description section of the grant application. The payment schedule will be agreed between the Coordinating Investigator and the Wildfire Futures HRI prior to the commencement of the project.

### *Relationship with other funding schemes:*

There are a number of University schemes to support projects and applicants should consider the scheme most suitable for their project. Applications that request funds to supplement another current internal University grant, external grant or research contract will generally be excluded from consideration. Details of other schemes can be found at <https://gateway.research.unimelb.edu.au/>

### *Further conditions:*

1. Grant Offers must be accepted in writing by the Coordinating Investigator and their Head of Department/School.
2. Successful applicants must provide appropriate acknowledgement of the Wildfire Futures Hallmark Research Initiative when communicating project outcomes.
3. The Coordinating Investigator:
  - a. Will be the contact person for all administrative matters to do with the project and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.
  - b. Must ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with University policy, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and policies on human research ethics, animal experimentation ethics, requirements of the Office of Gene Technology Regulator, health and safety and intellectual property. No project may proceed unless the appropriate ethical or other required clearances have been obtained.
  - c. Must comply with any instructions or conditions in the Offer of Grant relating to approved items of expenditure. This includes entering into a Collaboration Agreement with external parties involved in the project.
  - d. Is responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of the grant is broadly in accord with the budget presented in the application and is consistent at all times with the nature and aims of the specific project approved and the objectives of the Scheme.
  - e. Will be required to provide reports and presentations on the progress and outcomes of the project at the times and in the form requested by the Selection Committee from time to time, *with a formal final report required on the outcomes of the project within 3 months of the project's completion*. Summaries of projects funded and project final reports may be published.
4. The Wildfire Futures Hallmark Research Initiative:
  - a. Will assign a Theme Leader to oversee and communicate with the project team.
  - b. Will arrange project kick-off meetings, a mid-term review and an end of project review with the Coordinating Investigator. Other members of the team who wish to attend are most welcome.
  - c. Will use project information for promotional purposes.
5. The project must be completed by end December 2023.