



# Allied Health Research in Australia: Contribution of the NHMRC & strategies to increase/improve clinical research in Allied Health

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*ccre spine*  
centre of clinical  
research excellence



**Spinal Pain,  
Injury & Health**

NHMRC funded centre



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

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# Overview

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- Funding to Allied Health
  - Strategies to increase increase/improve clinical research in Allied Health
  - Summary
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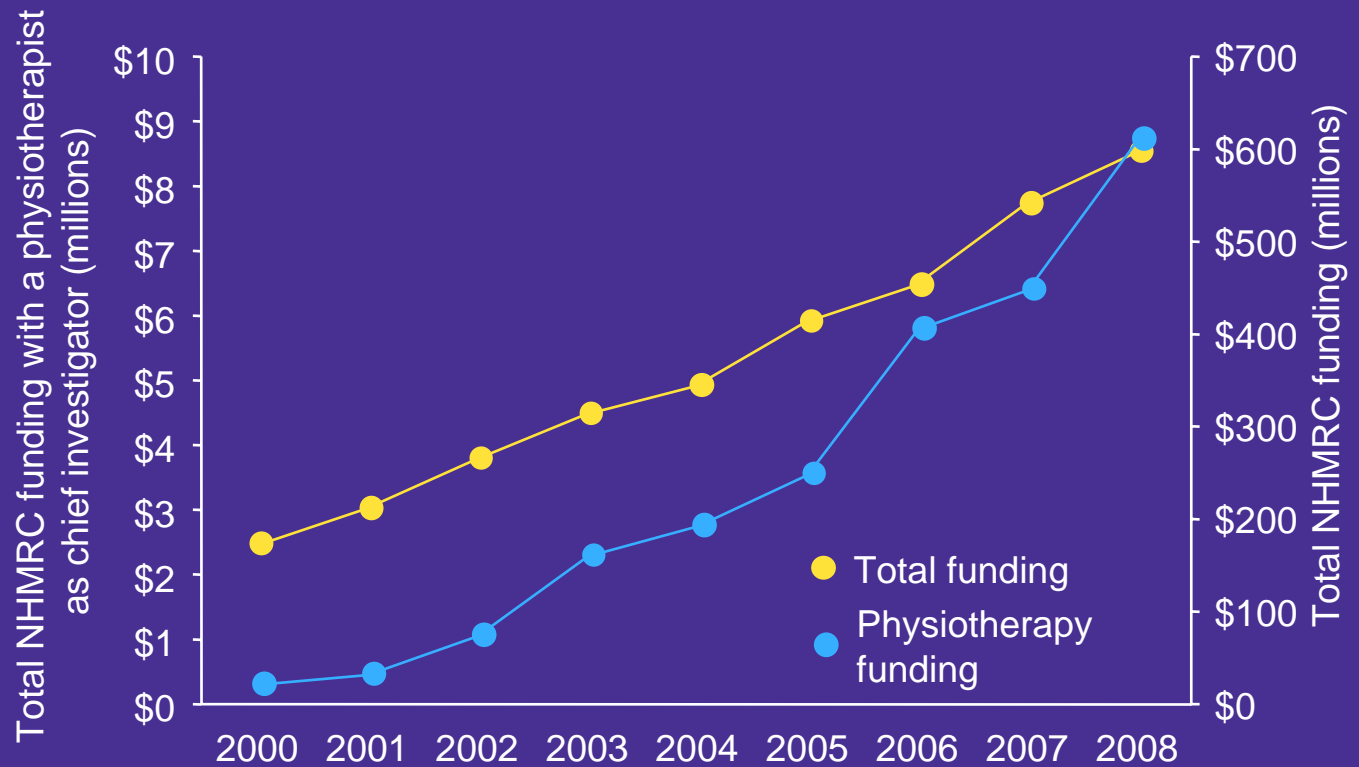
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# Funding to Allied Health

## A snapshot of physiotherapy funding

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# NHMRC Funding to Physiotherapists



# Career Path

PhD

No more than 2 years  
post-doc at  
application  
2-5 years postdoc

2-12 years post doc  
2-7 years  
7-12 years

Usually more than 9  
years post-doc

**Post-Graduate Scholarship**

**Training (Postdoctoral)  
Fellowship**  
Clinical/Biomedical/Public Health

**Career Development Awards**  
Clinical/Biomedical/Public Health  
Level 1  
Level 2

**Research Fellowship**  
Senior Research Fellow  
Level A  
Level B  
Principal Research Fellow  
Senior Principal Research Fellow

**Practitioner Fellowship**  
Level 1  
Level 2

# NHMRC "People support" funding to physiotherapists

NHMRC people support funding to physiotherapist (millions)



# NHMRC "People support" to physiotherapists in 2008

2008

8

**Post-Graduate Scholarship**



**Training (Postdoctoral) Fellowship**

Clinical/Biomedical/Public Health



**Career Development Awards**

Clinical/Biomedical/Public Health

2

Level 1

0

Level 2



**Research Fellowship**

Senior Research Fellow

1

Level A

2

Level B

1

Principal Research Fellow

0

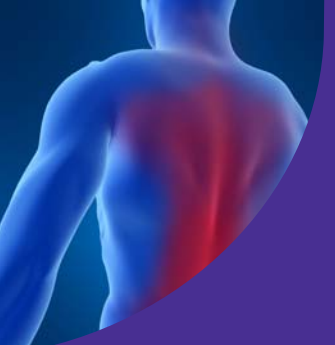
Senior Principal Research Fellow



**Practitioner Fellowship**

Level 1

Level 2



# ARC funding to physiotherapists

Total ARC funding with a physiotherapist  
as chief investigator (millions)



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# National Competitive Grants

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- Upward trajectory
  - Capacity and infrastructure to support new researchers through “people support” schemes
  - Other notable examples
    - Vic Neurotrauma
    - Michael J Fox
    - NIH
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# Strategies to increase/improve clinical research in Allied Health

Funding opportunities  
Experience with a CCRE  
Strategies

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# NHMRC funding opportunities

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- Short-term/project specific
    - Project grants
    - Partnership grants
  - **Long-term/program of work**
    - Program grants
    - **CRE grants**
  - Enabling grants
  - People support
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# NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence (CRE)

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- Provide funding for capacity building and translation
  - \$2.5 million over 5 years
  - Key features
    - Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary
    - Strong track record
    - Important and achievable outcomes with potential to make a difference
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# NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence (CRE)

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- Expectation:
    - Establish and promote innovative, high quality, collaborative, translational research
    - Create and facilitate the transfer of knowledge, and
    - Provide opportunities to increase critical mass and develop new independent researchers
  - May be a single physical entity, or a geographically disparate network
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# CCRE in Spinal Pain, Injury & Health

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- Background
  - Experience
  - Thoughts about reason for successful application



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# CCRE SPINE

- Team
  - 9 CIs (physiotherapy (x4), psychology, rheumatology, radiology, exercise physiology, health economics)
- Programs
  - Training
  - Translation
  - Research



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# Training/Capacity Building

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- Programs
  - Post-doctoral fellowships
  - PhD scholarships
  - Clinician researcher grants
- Leverage
  - Joint funded post-doctoral positions
    - Qld Health
    - University of Queensland
  - Joint funded PhD scholarships
    - University of Queensland
    - Australian Ballet



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# Translation

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- Web based evidence and education portals for consumers
    - “Whiplash” complete
    - “Low back pain” under development
  - Education programs
    - Clinical practice
    - Experimental methods
  - Consumer reference group
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# Research

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- Support for collaboration
  - National Network of Spine Scientists
  - Infrastructure
    - Leverage through equipment grant scheme
  - “Summit” meetings
  - Clinical research grants
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## CCRE SPINE successful features

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- Multiple disciplines representing key stakeholders
  - Track record of team members
  - Focused rather than general
  - Broad range of strategies
  - Clear aims and outcomes
  - Engage national research community
  - Clear translational objectives
  - Leverage - additional ~\$1 million
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# Critical features of successful applications for large funding

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- Multidisciplinary Research
- Focused - not try to solve every problem
- Translational component
- Community engagement
  - Research
  - Clinicians
  - General community (e.g. patients)
- Clinical trials
  - Need to sell innovation and significance





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# Summary

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# Important issues

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- Large funding arrangements appear ideal for the Centre - particularly CRE
  - Focused research appears to fare better - How can the focus of the centre be defined?
  - Novelty - not just replicate what is already available
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Thank you

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