**Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize** **- Application Guidelines 2021**

**Closing date: Thursday 26th August 2021, 6:00 pm AEST**

Late or incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the application form.

1. **Introduction**

The Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize aims to reward an outstanding mid-career researcher with a demonstrated background of excellence in neuroscience research. The Prize will be a grant of up to $200,000 for an innovative and collaborative two-year project to advance the understanding, treatment and care of [classical forms of MND](http://www.mndaust.asn.au/Documents/Research-documents/Grants/Definition-of-MND-for-website.aspx).

Betty Laidlaw lived with primary lateral sclerosis for over 30 years with John as her primary carer. John passed away late in 2019 and Betty passed away early in 2020. The Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize acknowledges the incredible generosity of John and Betty Laidlaw who supported the Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize from its inception in 2015.

1. **Objectives of the Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize**
   1. To enable an exceptional mid-career scientist to become established as a leader in the field of MND research.
   2. To initiate a scientific research project which is innovative and fulfills one of the following objectives;
      1. To advance MND research to understand its causes;
      2. To foster treatment development and clinical trials; or,
      3. To enhance clinical and healthcare research and the evidence-base for clinical and healthcare practice.
   3. To encourage a collaborative approach. While the applicant must be the Principal Investigator and have the lead role in directing the project, participation of other mid-career researchers from multiple institutions in Australia or internationally will be considered favourably. The project must be conducted predominantly in a recognised Australian Institution(s). No funding will be provided for international collaborators who may participate in the project.
   4. To participate in the International Symposium on ALS/MND either in 2022 or 2023 if being held face-to-face.
   5. The research focus should be directed towards classical MND. Research investigating other forms of MND should demonstrate a potential benefit to the classical forms of MND. Classical MND includes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) & bulbar palsies (progressive bulbar palsy and pseudobulbar palsy), progressive muscular atrophy (PMA) and primary lateral sclerosis (PLS).
   6. The Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize is offered to a maximum value of $200,000 for a two-year project.
2. **Application**
   1. **Key eligibility criteria**
      1. The applicant should be a mid-career scientist who has a track record in MND research or in areas of neuroscience related to MND.
      2. A mid-career researcher is defined as a person with a PhD or equivalent research doctorate who, at 26th August 2021, has at least five years but no more than 12 years postdoctoral research experience from the date their doctoral thesis was passed.
      3. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or have permanent resident status.
      4. The applicant must be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.
      5. If the applicant has previously been awarded a Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize and still meets all the eligibility criteria, the previous Prize winner can apply a second time with another novel project.
   2. **Application process**
      1. **Applications will only be accepted through** [NHMRC administering institutions](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/manage-your-funding/nhmrcs-administering-institutions). **Applications should be submitted by the institution research office**. Applications submitted by the applicant will not be accepted.
      2. The applicant must be the Principal Investigator and will also have the lead role in directing the project.
      3. The level of contribution and role of the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigators must be clearly defined in the application.
      4. Applicants must use the relevant application form on the MNDRA website.
      5. If the **applicant** has received previous funding from MNDRA **in the past five years**, reports on this previously funded work must be sent with the current application.
      6. If the **applicant** is named as an investigator on other proposals for MNDRA funding for 2021, list the project title and principal investigator for those other applications.
      7. If the applicant has received or will be receiving funding for a similar project from another funding body, the application must clearly define what additional benefit will result from the MNDRA funding.
      8. Researchers should not apply if they are unable to provide a financial acquittal for previously funded work before 30th June 2022.
      9. All applications will be assessed by the [[MNDRA Research Committee](https://www.mndaust.asn.au/Discover-our-research/About-MNDRIA/MNDRIA-s-people.aspx)](https://www.mndaust.asn.au/Discover-our-research/About-MNDRIA/MNDRIA-s-people.aspx) and external reviewers against the selection criteria as outlined in these guidelines and on the MNDRA website. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applicants who fail to meet any one of the eligibility criteria will be deemed to be ineligible.
      10. The MNDRA Research Committee is responsible for the final ranking of applications and making their recommendation for funding approval to the Board of MND Australia.
   3. **Applications close at 6:00pm AEST Thursday 26th August 2021**.
      1. Proposals are to be sent to Dr Gethin Thomas, Executive Director Research by email to [research@mndaustralia.org.au](mailto:research@mndaustralia.org.au).
      2. All sections of the application, including the cover sheet, must be saved and forwarded as a single PDF document.
      3. Font must be Arial and at least 11 pt.
   4. **Incomplete or misleading information**
      1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that applications are complete and accurate. If an application is incomplete or inaccuracies are identified, MNDRA will exclude it from further consideration.
      2. If any application is found to have been intentionally completed (or failed to be completed) in such a way as to mislead MNDRA, or is otherwise false or misleading in any material respect, the applicant will be disqualified from the grant.
3. **Proposal**
   1. **Research proposal for a 2-year project (maximum 5 pages) should include:**
      1. **Aims and hypotheses (maximum 1 page)**
         1. The aims of the research must be clear to the reviewers, and be relevant to classical forms of MND.
         2. State clearly which hypotheses are to be tested.
      2. **Background**
      3. **Preliminary data**
      4. **Research Plan**
         1. Provide a detailed outline of the 2-year project.
         2. The contribution and role of the people doing the research must be clearly defined.
   2. **Significance (1 page)**

Explain what is innovative about this project and how it will meet one or more of the objectives;

* + 1. To advance MND research to understand its causes;
    2. To foster treatment development and clinical trials; or,
    3. To enhance clinical and healthcare research and the evidence-base for clinical and healthcare practice.
  1. **References (maximum 2 pages)**
  2. **Curriculum vitae (maximum 2 pages).** 
     1. The people who will be doing the research are identified by their role in the research and by a **brief but adequate CV** for each investigator. The CV should include at least:
     + Academic background
     + Present and past employment positions
     + Research grant support (past 5 years)
     + Selected publications included in the two-page CV should be restricted to the past five years. This list should not include publications 'in preparation' or 'submitted' or published on preprint servers.
  3. **Budget and justification (1 page maximum)**

The budget must be directed to the aims of the project.

* + 1. Budget items up to $200,000 can include:
       1. Salary for team members in Australia
       2. Direct research costs (reagents and consumables)
       3. Attendance of the applicant at the International Symposium on ALS/MND in 2022 or 2023 if the meeting is held face-to-face.
    2. Budget items cannot include:
       1. Attendance at meetings (other than 4.5.1.3 above)
       2. Travel (other than 4.5.1.3 above)
       3. Computers
       4. Equipment (except small items included in 4.5.1.2 above)
       5. Indirect or overhead costs.
    3. Other proposed sources of funding to support the project should be disclosed.
  1. **Name(s) of institution(s) where the work will be carried out** 
     1. State in which department(s) and which institution(s) this project will primarily be carried out.
  2. **Completed cover sheet**
     1. Applicants must complete all sections of the cover sheet as part of the application form.

1. **Review process**
   1. Applications will be reviewed by a minimum of four independent reviewers as part of a competitive, peer review process.
   2. Applications will be scored according to 1) Research Quality; 2) Innovation and creativity; 3) Significance and 4) Capability. Further information on these criteria is available on the MNDRA website.
   3. Funding decisions will be made by the MNDRA Research Committee at a Grants Allocation Meeting in late 2021. The successful applicant will be notified after this meeting.
   4. The decision of the Research Committee is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
2. **Commencement of the Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize**
   1. The successful applicant must commence the Betty and John Laidlaw Prize no later than 30th June 2022 or the grant will lapse.
   2. **Payment and reporting**
      1. The grant will be paid in four equal amounts. The grant will commence with the first payment at the beginning of 2022 on signing a contract with MNDRA. Subsequent 6-monthly payments will be made on receipt of satisfactory 6-monthly progress reports.
      2. If the progress report is not concordant with the grant proposal, then no further funds will be forthcoming. If the grantee wishes to change the emphasis of the study, then that must be with the approval of the MNDRA Research Committee.
      3. A final report and financial acquittal must be submitted on completion of the project.
      4. Lay reports may be included on MNDRA’s website and newsletters to members, patients, carers, the MND Associations and others who provide funds to MNDRA.
   3. **Alterations to the Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize project** 
      1. The Grant-holder must adhere to the approved project.
      2. Any proposed alterations should be submitted in advance for approval by the MNDRA Research Committee.
      3. MNDRA must be notified immediately if circumstances change during the tenure of the Prize, particularly if this affects the ability to undertake the project. MNDRA retains the right to review the Prize in light of these changes and reserves the right to terminate the Prize should this be deemed appropriate.
   4. **Publications, presentations and acknowledgements**
      1. The successful applicant will be expected to publish their findings in an appropriate scientific or professional journal.
      2. Publications and presentations must acknowledge MNDRA and the Betty and John Laidlaw MND Research Prize.
3. **Privacy of individuals / confidentiality**
   1. All personal information provided in the application and assessment details will be kept by MNDRA and only be used for the purposes of administering this application, and if successful, the Prize.
   2. Applicant’s personal information will be disclosed to reviewers as noted above.
   3. Some details of the successful application will be published on the MNDRA website, including name, location, project title and a brief description of the project.
   4. Information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential unless otherwise stated by MNDRA.