

# ARMS 2024 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

**Theme:** Professional research management as an embedded practice

**Title:** Lean times but we still need the wins: Innovation in developing funding-readiness of researchers

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**Abstract:**

Researchers and research offices alike report the frustrations ECRs especially face in lack of knowledge about how to tackle the Australian research funding landscape and the burden of grant development, especially fellowships. Despite best efforts in the form of in-house programs, seminars, fact sheets and 1:1 support etc, a last minute, stagger to the finish line approach to grant development by some applicants perpetuates. This is at best a false economy; rewards are low and inputs are high. The sector is screaming out for innovation but thwarted by dwindling resources and the difficulties in engaging increasingly time-poor researchers.

We collaborated with universities and MRIs across Australia to build a new approach in the form of a multimodal, evidence-based, scaffolded online grant development program. We piloted this program with 16 universities and medical research institutes for the 2024 NHMRC Investigator Grant round. Here we present the results of the pilot and report on participants' feedback, including usability, fit for purpose, and learning outcomes. We discuss whether this ushers in a new era of funding-readiness and grant development competency for Australian researchers. We answer the question 'will this innovation make life easier for both researchers and their supporters?'