



# Miracle Babies Foundation Marlene Dunn Scholarship

## "Families First: Advancing Neonatal Care Together"

2026

### Call for Applications

ACNN members are invited to apply for the Miracle Babies Foundation Marlene Dunn Scholarship, "Families First: Advancing Neonatal Care Together".

Families play a crucial role in the care and development of premature and sick neonates cared for in neonatal units. Evidence shows parent involvement improves neonatal outcomes, enhances parental confidence, and strengthens the bond between parents and their infants. The Families First: Advancing Neonatal Care Together Miracle Babies Foundation Scholarship, for ACNN members, aims to support the professional development of neonatal nurses and foster quality improvement or research projects directed at enhancing outcomes for families during their hospital stay and post-discharge.

### Timeline

- Application submission opens: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026
- Application submission closes: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2026
- Outcome notification date: Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026
- Formal announcement: Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2026 (at COINN2026 in Darwin)
- Project must commence by: Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2026

### Applicant Criteria

- Be a current ACNN member who has been a financial member for at least 18 consecutive months
- Currently working in neonatal nursing in one of the following capacities: clinical, education, management, or research.

### Applicants must submit the following:

**1. Cover Letter (maximum 3 pages).** The cover letter should outline the:

#### *Purpose of Application*

- Clearly state if the application is for a Quality Improvement Project or a Research Project.
- Describe the project's aim and objectives, emphasising how it will enhance the experiences and outcomes of families with neonates in a neonatal unit.
- Detail the specific challenges the project addresses (e.g., improving parent-infant bonding, enhancing communication with families, supporting parental mental health, or easing the transition to home care).
- Explain how the project will support families during their hospital stay and after discharge.

#### *Impact and Sustainability*

- Discuss how the project will lead to long-term improvements in family-centred care practices within a neonatal unit.
- Outline strategies for sustaining changes in practice and disseminating information to colleagues, families, and broader neonatal networks.

### Conclusion

Summarise why you should be awarded the scholarship, highlighting the potential to improve care for families within a neonatal unit.

## 2. Supporting Documentation

- Curriculum Vitae (CV): highlighting neonatal nursing experience, professional development, and relevant achievements.
- Project Protocol: including project aims, objectives, timeline, and budget.
- Ethics Application and/or Approval: where applicable.
- Letter of Support: from the hospital or university where the project will be undertaken, confirming support for the project and outlining the method of payment.

## Scholarship Terms and Conditions

### 1. Eligible Projects

Scholarships are awarded to support Quality Improvement or Research Projects focused on improving outcomes for families (including neonates) cared for in the neonatal unit during hospital admission and/or post-discharge.

### 2. Eligible Expenses

- Equipment or consumables required for the project.
- Principal investigator time.

### 3. Ineligible Expenses

- Research assistant time.
- Computer or data analysis software.

### 4. Additional Conditions

- A formal contract will be established with successful applicants.
- Outstanding receipts and/or required documentation must be provided before scholarship funds can be released.
- Scholarships will be paid in two instalments:
  - First instalment: upon receipt of the scholarship claim form and all outstanding receipts/documents.
  - Second instalment: upon submission of an article for publication in the ACNN newsletter.
- All claim forms, receipts/documents, and the article/report must be submitted by email to [scholarships@acnn.org.au](mailto:scholarships@acnn.org.au)
- Scholarship recipient/s will be formally announced at the ACNN National Conference and acknowledged through ACNN media channels, including newsletters, emails, and social media.
- Scholarship recipient/s are required to present at an ACNN National Conference or ACNN Branch in person event in 12 months of receiving the scholarship (e.g. receive the scholarship in 2026; required to present in 2027).

Enquiries to [scholarships@acnn.org.au](mailto:scholarships@acnn.org.au)