

## **Stream Two – Information Workshop Questions and Answers**

### **How does APHCRI make funding decisions?**

There is a two-step decision-making approach:

1. Expert Review Committees (ERC) are convened to consider proposals against declared criteria and make recommendations to the Research Advisory Board (RAB).
2. The RAB considers these recommendations and makes decisions about which proposals will be funded and the final amount of funding to be allocated.

### **Will there be any external reviews as for NHMRC grants?**

No, the ERC makes the recommendations. The RAB makes the final decisions and may or may not accept all the ERC's recommendations.

### **Who makes the final decision to fund? Does it need to be run by the Department of Health and Ageing?**

The RAB makes the final decision, as this is its delegated role. The Department does not make these decisions.

### **In Stream 2, will the same ERC consider both the expressions of interest and the full proposals?**

Yes. The same ERC will consider EOIs and make recommendations to RAB. That ERC will be reconvened after 29<sup>th</sup> November 2004 to consider the full proposals.

### **Who is eligible to sit on Expert Review Committees?**

ERC membership is decided by the RAB. The RAB will appoint members with experience and expertise appropriate to the specific task. APHCRI is committed to ensuring that ERC membership appropriately reflects the balance between relevant academic expertise, consumer and provider perspectives and the perspective of policy makers. Therefore, in general, membership of ERC will be drawn from people with the following kinds of experience/expertise/perspective:

1. General Practice/Primary Health Care researchers
2. Consumers
3. Providers of general practice/primary health care services
4. Rural/remote
5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
6. Health Economics
7. Primary Health Care Nursing/Allied Health
8. Policy makers

One person may bring to an ERC more than one of these perspectives.

One member of an ERC will be an RAB member.

Wherever possible, one member of an ERC will be an international expert.

Depending on the task, a particular ERC may not require all of these perspectives to be included.

People associated with applications for funding within the stream being considered by an ERC are excluded from participating as members of the ERC.

APHCRI Hub Staff members and employees of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing are excluded from participating in any ERC.

### **How are you recruiting ERC members?**

Via networks, and RAB members suggest names of potentially suitable members.

### **Have ERC members for Stream 2 been chosen?**

The ERC for Stream 2 is being constituted at present.

### **Will the names of ERC Members be made public?**

In keeping with the commitment of the Institute to transparency it is intended that the names of ERC members will be made public. However, there are two caveats. It will not be before they have fully completed their task and made their recommendations to the RAB. Then, it will only be once the signed consent of the individual ERC members has been given for the release of their names.

### **How are conflicts of interest between RAB Members and potential Spoke projects managed?**

The following words are taken from the governance document of APCHRI

*“With the membership of the **Research Advisory Board** largely being drawn from major relevant stakeholder groups, there is the likelihood of conflicts-of-interest among members.*

*Conflicts of interest arise when **Research Advisory Board** members are also members of research teams seeking APHCRI Spoke funding, employees of institutions housing Spoke research teams, or have other associations with research teams that might make individuals’ assessments of a Spoke proposal be, or appear to be, biased.*

*At the time of their appointment, members of the **Research Advisory Board** will sign a statement agreeing to refrain from attempting to influence any decisions about funding research in which they may have, or be perceived as having, a personal interest.*

*At the commencement of each face-to-face meeting of the **Research Advisory Board**, members will disclose actual or perceived Conflicts of Interest by completing and signing the Conflict of Interest form and giving this to the Chair.*

*For non face-to-face meetings or business of the **Research Advisory Board** members will disclose actual or perceived conflicts of interest verbally and/or by other means appropriate to that forum.*

*In situations where a conflict of interest has been declared, **Research Advisory Board** members will excuse themselves by withdrawing from the room where the discussion is taking place, or, in the case of non face-to-face meetings of the **Research Advisory Board**, from participation in the discussion until the appropriate course of action has been determined.*

*The Chair will, in discussion with the Research Advisory Board Members with no declared conflict of interest, determine the appropriate course of action in each case. Details of these processes are outlined in the Research Advisory Board Members Handbook.*

*The minutes of each **Research Advisory Board** meeting will include a note of **Research Advisory Board** members withdrawing, and a statement of the course of action determined in each case.”*

### **Can RAB members apply for Stream 2?**

Yes they can, but the ERC will not include anyone who is applying to Stream 2, and as stated above, any RAB Member involved in an application will not participate in the RAB’s decision making with respect to that Stream.

### **The RAB has decided that APHCRI Hub staff cannot apply for Stream 2 funding. Does this mean that they can apply for subsequent rounds of funding?**

At present, the RAB has only announced Stream One and Stream Two. Subsequent “streams” will be announced at a later time. APHCRI Hub staff are not applicants for funding within Stream One nor within Stream Two. The effect of the RAB’s decision in June 2004, is that APHCRI Hub staff will not be applicants for any subsequent “streams” of work supported by the \$10,000,000 research funds.

### **Why did the RAB decide this?**

Originally, it was proposed that APCHRI Hub staff members could bid or be involved in bids for funds from the \$10,000,000. However, as the RAB worked through the inherent difficulties around conflicts of interest and unfair advantage that this approach created, they came to the view that no matter how careful the processes, the perception of a conflict of interest would remain. This led to their decision.

### **Will this undermine the Hub?**

No, because there are alternate ways for the hub to engage in research without having to access the \$10,000,000. These could include:

- “in-kind” collaboration with a particular Spoke, after the decision to fund that Spoke has been made, and at the invitation of the Spoke
- research supported through other funding sources

### **Will the funds allocated from the \$10,000,000 be considered to be competitive grants?**

It is hoped that this will be the case. APHCRI is currently applying to have grants from the \$10,000,000 listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register. The paperwork is due to the Department of Science, Education and Training on 9 July 2004. Once APHCRI is informed of this decision it will place this information on its website.

### **Can Divisions of General Practice collaborate with APHCRI?**

Yes. APHCRI is a virtual institute comprising the Hub and Spokes. Together, the Hub and Spokes accomplish APHCRI’s strategic objectives. APHCRI’s work should be useful to academic audiences, to consumers and providers of primary health care services

and to policy makers. APHCRI encourages potential spokes to consider carefully these perspectives in shaping the research question(s) and methodologies. APHCRI considers that active engagement of these different groups within the potential spoke structures is a very important means of achieving this. Divisions are clearly a major component of primary health care structures in Australia. Potential spokes are expected to work out how best to incorporate these views in their project.

**With regard to the Stream Two criteria, are they all given equal weighting when EOIs are being considered?**

Yes, as they are written, they all have equal weighting.

**How much detail would you expect in EOI, given equal weighting?**

The EOI should not exceed 8 pages.

**What should be included in the track records of Investigators?**

When it comes to the track record of investigators, applicants should highlight key relevant information rather than submit full CVs. Note that relevant information is not just “academic” information like publication lists. The track record information should convey the skills and expertise that is being brought to bear on the project to bring it to successful completion. Again, an important aspect of this is to demonstrate that the necessary skills are included increasing the likelihood of successful completion.

**Should budget indications be included in full proposal?**

The EOI should have two components with regard to the budget:

1. An indication of what the “up to \$20,000 dollars would be used for (3 – 4 lines). Ask for what you need – even if this is less than \$20,000. Do not ask for more than \$20,000.
2. An indication of what the full proposal budget would be.

The intent of this section is to demonstrate that the proposal is “grounded in reality”. It is feasible and “doable”. It would be legitimate to include an indicative range for the full proposal budget in the EOI. The full budget details would be in the full proposal. Indicative line items might include personnel, overheads, travel, and collaboration.

**Can groups who are unsuccessful in obtaining Stream 2 funding to develop their EOIs still submit their proposal on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2004?**

Yes. However, such groups would have to undertake this at their own expense. Groups, that are going to do this, should notify APHCRI of this decision following the announcements of the funding decisions to ensure that they are fully included in relevant communications. All proposals specifically relating to Stream 2 will be judged on their merits against the criteria for the full proposals. The criteria for assessing the full proposals are not yet fully developed. There may be some further specification of the criteria used for assessing the EOIs to ensure greater clarity and focus. The intent of any such further specification is to reduce any ambiguity.

**Will the full proposals submitted in November still be called Stream 2?**

Probably not. Stream 2 relates to funds for the development of a full proposal. The full proposals will be called something else – perhaps Stream 4. This is yet to be determined.

**How many projects will be funded?**

This decision has not been made. Early thinking has been that it is more likely to fund a relatively small number of projects for relatively larger amounts of money, rather than a larger number of projects for smaller amounts of money.

**What happens after Stream 2?**

This decision has not been made. A discussion paper being prepared for the RAB raises the possibility of a Stream 3 to build on Stream 1; Stream 4 to build on Stream 2 and possible Streams 5 or more if the RAB identifies new priorities or specific topics within existing priorities. Once the RAB has considered the options and made decisions, these will be communicated widely.

**Will APHCRI give feedback to applicants – especially unsuccessful applicants?**

The intent is to do this, as APCHRI recognizes this as best practice, consistent with the commitment to transparency, and part of its capacity building role.

The detail and specificity of that feedback will depend on the number of EOIs received. If there are relatively few, the feedback will be more detailed. If there are many, the feedback will be more general.

**Are Spokes a program of work?**

Yes. A spoke is not an institution or entity, it is a program of work. In that sense, a spoke will have a beginning and an end. It may reconstitute for another program of work, but is not an organisation, person or entity. A spoke will identify an entity to be the contractual link with the hub.