

Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute



SPOKE HANDBOOK:
Information for
Researchers and Administrators

Purpose of the Spoke Handbook

This handbook provides information about procedural matters to researchers participating in the research program of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) by developing APHCRI “Spoke” research.

Abbreviations used in the Handbook

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute.....	APHCRI
The Australian National University.....	ANU
The Department of Health and Ageing.....	the Department
Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development Strategy.....	PHC RED
Research Advisory Board	RAB

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Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute

In 2002 the Australian Government, through the Department of Health and Ageing, began the process of establishing a national primary health care research institute under its Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development (PHC RED) Strategy. The overall aim of PHC RED is to embed a research culture in Australian general practice specifically and Australian primary healthcare more generally.

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) was established at the Australian National University in 2003.

APHCRI's Mission

To provide national leadership in improving the quality and effectiveness of primary health care through the conduct of high quality priority-driven research and the support and promotion of best practice.

APHCRI's Aims

- To strengthen the knowledge base of primary health care by conducting and supporting research that provides a solid foundation for policy initiatives.
- To facilitate the uptake of research evidence in primary health care policy and practice.
- To enhance research capacity in primary health care through strategic partnerships with other relevant national and international groups.

APHCRI's Research Priorities

APHCRI's responsibility is to focus on important sectoral questions relating to the **organisation, financing, delivery and performance** of primary health care, rather than on clinical research that emphasises diseases or anatomical systems or public health research that emphasises health concerns of populations.

The Institute's Research Advisory Board has determined that the research priorities for APHCRI are:

1. Innovation in State/Commonwealth relationships
2. Innovation in funding arrangements for new or existing services/models
3. Innovation in organisation and linkages within the Primary Health Care sector.

APHCRI's Funding

The Australian Government has committed funding of \$15.8 million to APHCRI - \$5 million to support the *research coordination activities* of the "hub", \$0.8 million to support the *research activities* of the Hub, and a further \$10 million to fund *research activities* of APHCRI Spokes.

APHCRI's Structure

APHCRI's structure is based on a “hub and spoke” model. An agreement between the Australian Government and the Australian National University (ANU) established the ANU's responsibility to provide the Hub services for APHCRI's first five years of operation (from 2003 to 2007, inclusive). Under this agreement, APHCRI is formally part of the ANU but is obliged to undertake certain wider responsibilities and be accountable in particular ways. The Institute is embedded within the ANU and so it has a well-established academic infrastructure and is supported by the ANU's management and financial services and systems.

In consultation with the Australian Government, the ANU has established governance structures for APHCRI that accommodate the Australian Government's requirements for the Institute to meet the need of the Australian primary health care community. It has also developed mechanisms that govern the allocation of funds to primary health care researchers and research organisations.

The **Hub** at the ANU comprises a Director, a research team, and a secretariat. The Director is responsible for APHCRI's academic, financial and management activity.

The **Research Advisory Board (RAB)** is established to provide advice on APHCRI's activities and progress. It also has decision-making authority in three areas:

1. The RAB decides on the priority-driven research questions that will be addressed by the Australian Government's APHCRI Spoke grant to (\$10 million).
2. The RAB decides on research funding allocations recommended by Expert Review Committees and review funding decisions at periodic intervals thereafter.
3. The RAB decides on membership of Expert Review Committees who will assess project proposals and make funding recommendations.

Expert Review Committees assess proposals from potential **Spokes** for research funding.

The **Spokes** are the priority-driven research projects and programs undertaken by APHCRI and will vary in location, identity and duration depending on the projects and programs APHCRI supports. This Handbook is designed to inform researchers undertaking Spoke research and the administrators of the institutions that house these researchers.

APHCRI Spokes

Role and responsibilities of the APHCRI Spokes

The overarching purpose of the **APHCRI Spokes** is to address the priority-driven research questions proposed by APHCRI. Steering committees or reference groups may be constituted for any individual **Spoke**.

The unit of interest is a project or program of priority-driven research. A priority-driven project or program may be undertaken by APHCRI Hub researchers or by researchers external to the APHCRI Hub or by a combination.

Tasks of researchers participating in Spokes

- To identify a Coordinating Investigator to be responsible for interactions between the APHCRI Hub and the **Spoke**.
- To conduct research according to the protocol or plan recommended for funding by the Expert Review Committee and decided on by the Research Advisory Board.
- To liaise and interact with the APHCRI hub as required to unify the activities of APHCRI Hub and Spokes and to monitor research projects and programs.
- To develop and implement dissemination strategies for APHCRI research projects and programs.

Composition of the APHCRI Spokes

APHCRI Spokes will be constituted as required for the conduct of each funded APHCRI project or program.

Terms of appointment of the APHCRI Spokes

APHCRI Spokes are specific APHCRI research projects and programs. Researchers and institutions may participate in more than one Spoke at any time.

Conditions of appointment to APHCRI Spokes

Personnel will hold positions in APHCRI Spokes according to their contracts with their institutions, the overriding Spoke or Unit will carry out their Program of Work in accordance with their contract with the ANU, an example of this contract is at Attachment 2.

APHCRI Spokes will retain their positions as Spokes while they are completing APHCRI research. In the event of APHCRI Spokes being unable to complete APHCRI research as planned, further financial support of the Spoke will be withdrawn or revised.

Administering Institutions

A single administering institution must be identified for each spoke. Institutions administering APHCRI spokes are required to be NHMRC-registered institutions. Organisations not registered with the NHMRC should 'self-assess' according to the NHMRC criteria (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/policy.pdf>) and submit their assessment to the Research Advisory Board for consideration.

Conflicts of interest related to APHCRI Spokes

Personnel working on **APHCRI Spokes** are bound by the ANU's comprehensive policy on Conflict of Interest and Commitment (2003 01368 *Conflict of Interest and Commitment*, November 2002, Attachment 1) and by the Conflicts of Interest policies of their own institutions.

APHCRI Hub researchers may not be funded from the Spoke research allocation (\$10 million or such other core funding allocated in the future). An additional allocation of \$0.8 million supports Hub researchers' research projects. The processes for accessing this Hub research fund are identical to the Spoke processes for accessing the Spoke allocation of \$10 million.

Hub personnel may undertake a priority-driven research project or program alone (Model 4) and they will interact in different ways with Spoke personnel on every research project.

Conflicts of interest may arise with respect to the interactions of **APHCRI Spokes** and other non-APHCRI potential and actual funders of **APHCRI Spoke** research. To deal with this, potential **APHCRI Spoke** researchers will be asked to list other potential and actual co-funding agencies when they present their Spoke proposal to the Expert Review Committees. If further funding for APHCRI Spoke research is obtained after Spoke researchers have received APHCRI funding but before their obligations to APHCRI cease, **Spoke** researchers will be asked to advise APHCRI of this.

Ethics Clearance

APHCRI Spokes will be expected to apply for Ethics clearance through the Ethics Committee of their relevant administering institution, in accordance with the NHMRC Guidelines “the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans](#)”^T. Spokes are expected to provide APHCRI with a copy of the relevant Ethics clearance once obtained.

Dissemination

Spokes will be expected to disseminate the results of their research appropriately, in order to achieve the principal goals of APHCRI.

Other issues

APHCRI Spokes need to be aware that by signing the contract with the ANU they will be agreeing to conform to the following items from the main funding contract with the Department of Health and Ageing:

- **Contract Material**
The project material created during research carried out by Spokes with funding from APHCRI will become the property of the ANU.
- **Intellectual Property**
Intellectual Property in the Contract Material vests in the Spoke upon creation and development. The Spoke grants to ANU a perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free and licence fee-free, worldwide, non-exclusive licence (including a right of sublicense) to use, copy, modify, publish, reproduce, integrate and exploit the Contract Material including the Intellectual Property. This is in order to allow the ANU to fulfil the requirements of its contract for the funding with the Department.
- **Dispute Resolution**
There will be a formal process outlined in the contract for dealing with complaints and disputes. This reflects also the need for ANU to conform to the appropriate clause in its funding contract with the Department.

Role of the APHCRI Secretariat

In addition to participating with Spokes in APHCRI research (as above) APHCRI Hub staff will assist APHCRI Spokes by:

- Providing this Handbook.
- Monitoring and coordinating APHCRI Spoke activities.
- Administering contracts and funding.
- Ensuring the dissemination of the results of APHCRI research.
- Assisting with identifying technical research resources as needed by Spokes.
- Developing and implementing practices to work iteratively and collaboratively with research funding applicants in respect of:
 - proposals for developing APHCRI projects, and
 - publications resulting from successful grants.

Brokering Collaboration

APHCRI reserves the right to broker collaboration between Spokes and between Spokes and other institutions.

Acknowledgement and Publications

Acknowledgement

The contribution of the Department will be acknowledged in all correspondence, public announcements, advertising material, and other material produced by or on behalf of APHCRI.

This acknowledgement will normally be of the form:

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Publications of APHCRI Research

Acknowledgement of the Institute's role in publications of Spoke research will normally be of the form:

The research reported in this paper [or presentation] is a project of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The information and opinions contained in it do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute or the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

On notification by a publisher of intent to publish an article or research report submitted by an APHCRI Spoke, Spoke researchers will advise the APHCRI hub of the paper's acceptance for publication and send the Hub a copy of the final version of the paper or report, embargoed from further dissemination until publication.

Advice to the Australian Government about APHCRI reports and papers

Most APHCRI research will be published by independent publishing agencies that are not part of APHCRI, the ANU, or the Australian Government.

APHCRI must provide the Department with a quarterly publications notice listing all anticipated publications under APHCRI's work program for that period.

The routine processes for reporting APHCRI publications to the Department are:

Any article, paper, or presentation resulting from APHCRI Spokes will be listed in a quarterly publications notice and a copy of the article, paper, or presentation shall be provided to the Department with the first quarterly publication notice made after publication.

In exceptional circumstances, the Department may be advised of pending APHCRI publications. In this event:

All publications provided to the Department will be embargoed from further dissemination beyond Department and the Minister until publication, and will clearly be marked on each page with the label "CONFIDENTIAL: NOT FOR DISSEMINATION OR CITATION".

If final changes are made to materials after they have been sent to the Department and prior to publication, a copy of the amended materials will be sent to the Department as soon as possible.



Attachment 1

Conflict of Interest and Commitment – 2003 01368, November 2002.
http://www.anu.edu.au/cabs/policies/1303a_conflictinterest.pdf

Attachment 2

Example of the Agreement to be entered into by the APHCRI Spoke and The Australian National University: http://www.anu.edu.au/aphcri/Spokes_Research_Program/Handbook.php