



NATIONAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROGRAM
FUNDING ROUND 2024

Handbook

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1 Purpose of this document

This document describes how the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) funds and coordinates research and dissemination activities through its National Housing Research Program (NHRP).

The NHRP supports an evidence-base of practical applied research to support policy development through the generation of new knowledge in housing studies and related disciplines. The NHRP Research Agenda is updated annually to provide direction in the development of this evidence-base and to set priorities for the annual funding round.

The annual funding round is the main process by which research is selected and funded through the NHRP.

To submit an application for an AHURI Inquiry, an Investigative Panel or Research project please read this handbook carefully and refer to the AHURI NHRP Application guidelines.

To submit an application for a Postgraduate Top-up scholarship please refer to AHURI Postgraduate Top-up Scholarship guidelines and Application Form.

All applications must be submitted through an AHURI Research Centre.

2 The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) is a national not-for-profit independent network organisation that funds, conducts, disseminates and tailors high quality research on housing, homelessness, cities and related urban research. Its work informs the policies and practices of governments, industry and the community sector, and stimulates debate in the broader Australian community.

2.1 About AHURI

AHURI comprises a professional research management company, AHURI Limited, which works with a collaborative network of researchers, universities and the policy and practice communities nationally.

AHURI receives funding from:

1. the Australian Government and state and territory governments
2. university partners
3. research commissioned by industry and the not-for-profit sector on emerging housing issues of interest where opportunities arise.

2.2 AHURI's mission and strategic goals

To inform and impact better housing, homelessness, cities and related urban outcomes, through the delivery and dissemination of relevant and authoritative research.

The strategic goals are to:

1. Inform and influence cities policy, planning and practice across government, private and not-for-profit sectors
2. Inform and influence housing policy, planning and practice across government, private and not-for-profit sectors
3. Foster engagement across all sectors and stakeholder groups
4. Build public and professional understanding and informed dialogue on housing and cities issues
5. Enhance national policy and research capability and relevance for informed outcomes
6. Optimise the value we deliver.

2.3 AHURI

AHURI is a national independent research network with an expert not-for-profit research management company, AHURI Limited, at its centre. Its mission is to deliver high quality research that influences policy development to improve the housing and urban environments of all Australians. AHURI's staff are experts in research, research management, knowledge transfer and research dissemination, including event design and organisation, and evidence-informed facilitation. AHURI Limited manages the National Housing Research Program.

2.4 AHURI Research Centres

There are nine AHURI Research Centres across Australia.

- AHURI Research Centre—Curtin University
- AHURI Research Centre – Monash University
- AHURI Research Centre—RMIT University
- AHURI Research Centre—Swinburne University of Technology
- AHURI Research Centre—The University of Adelaide
- AHURI Research Centre—The University of South Australia
- AHURI Research Centre—The University of New South Wales
- AHURI Research Centre—The University of Sydney
- AHURI Research Centre—University of Tasmania

3 The AHURI National Housing Research Program

3.1 What is the AHURI National Housing Research Program?

Through the National Housing Research Program (NHRP), AHURI has published over 540 peer-reviewed reports, which are the primary published outcome of AHURI funded research, as well as over 140 additional research reports. A variety of policy-application focused plain language research summaries are available in different formats which are produced by AHURI to enhance research accessibility and contribute to policy analysis, these include close to 325 policy evidence summaries and over 250 policy briefs. The NHRP invests in a range of activities including:

- the conduct of research
- research capacity building
- research dissemination
- facilitated engagement between the research and policy communities.

The main mechanism by which NHRP funding is awarded for research is the annual funding round.

The NHRP is building an evidence-base of practical, applied research to support policy development and which adds new knowledge to housing studies and related disciplines. The NHRP Research Agenda is updated annually to provide direction in the development of this evidence-base and to set priorities for the annual funding round. The Research Agenda is developed through consultation with the AHURI Board, state and territory governments, the Australian Government, Research Centre Directors and the NHRP Research Panel.

3.2 The National Housing Research Program Research Agenda 2024

The Research Agenda 2024 is structured one AHURI Inquiry, three Investigative Panels, 12 Research projects including a Data project topic. These topics call for research to inform policy and practice, and have direct relevance to policy development which is central to the AHURI model.

3.3 The Policy Development Research Model

The Policy Development Research Model facilitates engagement between the research and policy communities. Policy development research integrates the traditionally separate processes of evidence building and policy development into one set of practices. Policy development research demands a high degree of collaboration within and between the research communities and the policy and practice community. This occurs through specialised research vehicles developed by AHURI in which research and policy engagement are integrated. These vehicles include Inquiries, Investigative Panels and Research projects which are established to address priority policy issues (see Chapters 4 and 5).

3.4 The NHRP Funding Round

All applications will be assessed on the merit of the application which is determined according to the criteria for assessing research applications (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Applications should seek to build on the existing evidence-base or identify evidence gaps that require further research to contribute to addressing the issue.

Research through the NHRP is intended to foster collaboration across AHURI Research Centres. Building research capacity through supporting new academics, postgraduate scholars and early career researchers, including Indigenous scholars and researchers, is also a key outcome sought through NHRP funding. Opportunities to build international linkages with experts and institutions are also highly regarded. Researchers are encouraged to explore collaborative and comparative research activities with international partners (see Chapter 8).

It is the applied, policy focussed nature of research funded by the NHRP that differentiates it from other sources of research funding. This has implications for the style and format of AHURI published outputs. AHURI reports and papers should be written in plain English and will be used to promote engagement with the policy and practice community and to foster policy discussion (see Chapter 9). It also has implications for the conduct of research and drives high expectations of timeliness in delivery of research (see Chapter 10).

It is important that AHURI research builds on the existing evidence-base. Researchers should consider previous AHURI research reports on the fully searchable AHURI website to ensure that new research builds upon the existing evidence base.

4 Inquiry structure

An Inquiry is an integrated research program which responds to the policy issue. An Inquiry consists of an Inquiry Program and a suite of integrated research projects. The Inquiry leadership team draws together evidence, the outcomes of the research, and the policy and practice expertise of the Inquiry Panel to address the policy issue and to make recommendations for policy development or practice innovation.

AHURI Inquiries can be understood as an integrated set of research modules within an overarching Inquiry program. Projects are an administrative solution to funding and contracting collaborative programs of research with partner universities, but should not drive the research approach.

4.1 Inquiry leadership team and research team

The Inquiry leadership team consists of an Inquiry leader and the leaders of each of the research projects. The Inquiry leadership team develops the Inquiry program which encompasses the research design, the conduct of the Inquiry Panel, the production of Discussion Papers, the Panel meeting outcomes report, the Inquiry Final Report, and the overall program management of the Inquiry. The Inquiry leadership team supports and convenes meetings of the Inquiry Panel. The Inquiry leadership team is also responsible for ensuring the integration of all research and engagement activities across the Inquiry. It is strongly advised that the role of project manager is considered in the staffing of the Inquiry. There is considerable coordination and administrative support required which is in addition to the management of the research program. This includes ensuring timely meetings, travel for Inquiry Panel meetings, meeting administration, updates and communication across the Inquiry team.

The Inquiry leadership team authors the materials for the Inquiry Panel and all publications for the Inquiry.

The research program is delivered by a team of academics with the capacity and expertise appropriate to the research methods. Research teams are expected to deliver the research on time and to a high standard and (where appropriate) to build future research capacity. The leader of each project will be responsible for managing the progress of the module or modules in the projects, and will participate in the Inquiry leadership team.

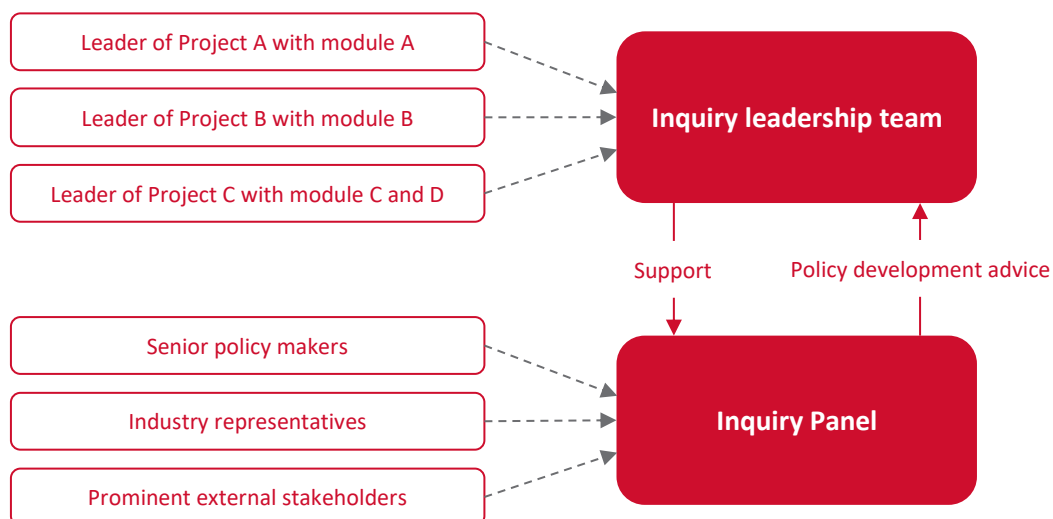
4.2 Inquiry Panel

Engagement with the policy community and practitioners is central to AHURI's aim of delivering high quality research that influences policy development to improve the housing, homelessness and urban policy outcomes for all Australians.

The Inquiry Panel draws a mix of policy and practice expertise from government, non-government and private sectors together to consider the evidence and the outcomes of the research to address the policy issue. The discussion of research evidence at Inquiry Panel meetings, and the sharing of expertise and perspectives between researchers, policy makers, and practitioners informs policy

development and practice innovation, and is captured in the Final Report of the Inquiry. The Inquiry Panel meets as many times as appropriate over the course of the Inquiry; this, and the facilitation arrangements for the Panel meetings are determined by the Inquiry leadership team in consultation with AHURI (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Inquiry key personnel structure - **example**



4.3 Inquiry program

The Inquiry program is developed and implemented by the Inquiry leadership team. The Inquiry program outlines the scope of the Inquiry and sets out the conceptual framework, research approach including methods and the conduct of original research on the Inquiry topic. This includes the framing of the overarching policy issues for the Inquiry which will in turn guide the research questions for the research program.

The Inquiry program sets out how all research and engagement activities will be integrated across the Inquiry (see Figure 2). The Inquiry program also sets out how the Inquiry considers policy development timelines including government reviews, changes in policy and policy initiatives.

4.4 Integration of Inquiry research activities

It is critical that the Inquiry program is well-integrated. An overarching Inquiry policy issue should be articulated. Research questions must explicitly connect the research approach to a stated policy issue. It may assist in the development of an Inquiry to consider research modules and then how these are best managed through projects. Clear linkages between modules are needed, as is a framework for the Inquiry program that is shared across the projects.

To maximise the integration and impact of the research, common units of measurement or comparison should be used across all projects—such as households, geographic areas and time periods. Care needs to be taken that the research activities each contribute to the program, building the evidence-base to present a coherent platform for the policy and practice discussion.

The Inquiry research program uses a wide variety of research methods and vary in scale from primary data collection and analysis to discrete secondary data analysis to syntheses of existing evidence to investigative panels. Innovative mixed method and multi-disciplinary research is encouraged.

4.5 Inquiry outputs

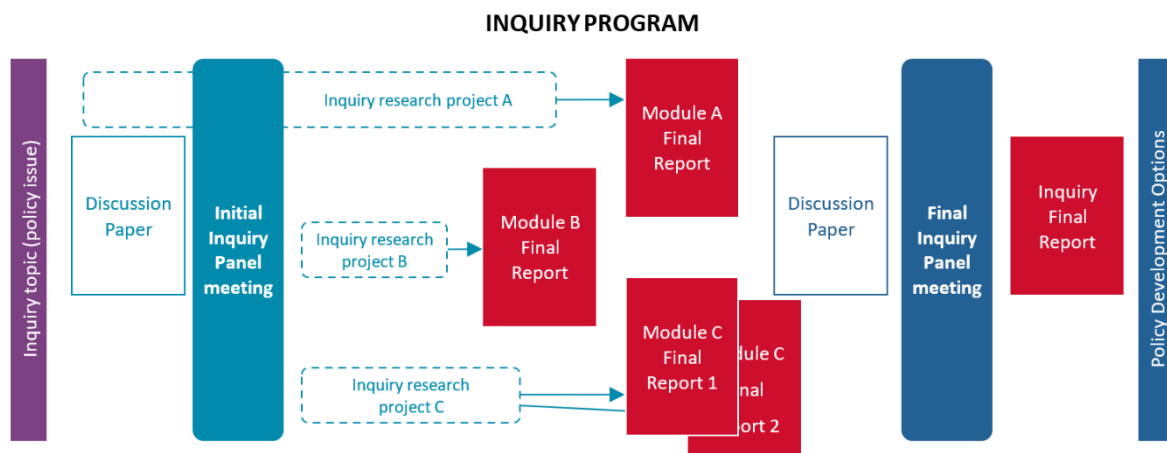
The Inquiry research outputs will be authored by the Inquiry leadership team or the research team (see Figure 2). There is an Inquiry Final Report and Final Reports for Inquiry projects. These are double-blind peer-reviewed and published in the AHURI Final Report series. It is possible that an Inquiry project which incorporated two modules might require two peer reviewed reports.

The Inquiry leadership team produces discussion papers in advance of each Inquiry Panel meeting, a brief outcomes report for each Inquiry Panel meeting and the Inquiry Final Report which presents the overall findings and recommendations of the Inquiry. The Inquiry Final Report is double-blind peer-reviewed and published in the AHURI Final Report series.

While the Inquiry Final Report will reflect issues discussed through the Inquiry Panel process, the report is independently authored by the research team who develop the key findings and policy recommendations. The Final Report in an Inquiry program needs to stand alone as a research report conceptualising the issue—informed by the literature and explicitly stating the key findings using evidence from the research program. The Final Report addresses the overarching policy issue using the evidence of the integrated research activities; producing findings which are original, innovative and do not duplicate existing knowledge. The report discusses the method by which data derived from research activities including panel engagement, is analysed and findings and policy recommendations developed. Inquiry Panel members will be listed in the Final Report. The Inquiry Final Report should not summarise the Project Final Reports but is expected to build on these outputs from the Inquiry.

The structure of the Inquiry Final Report should directly respond to the policy issue. The intention is to report on the application of evidence gathered through the Inquiry and to provide recommendations for policy development and practice innovation. AHURI may require the Inquiry leadership team to submit progress reports which may include work in progress reports, Inquiry Panel meeting agendas and associated papers.

Figure 2: Inquiry structure and outputs



4.6 Inquiry scale

The scale of the Inquiries will vary in relation to the scope of the topic and the amount of original research that is required to address the policy issue. An Inquiry can be no longer in duration than 18 months.

For AHURI Inquiries with a budget between \$450,000 and \$600,000 there must be a minimum of three universities leading projects in the Inquiry. Under \$450,000 a minimum of two universities leading projects is required (see Table 1).

5 Investigative Panels and Research projects

5.1 Investigative Panels

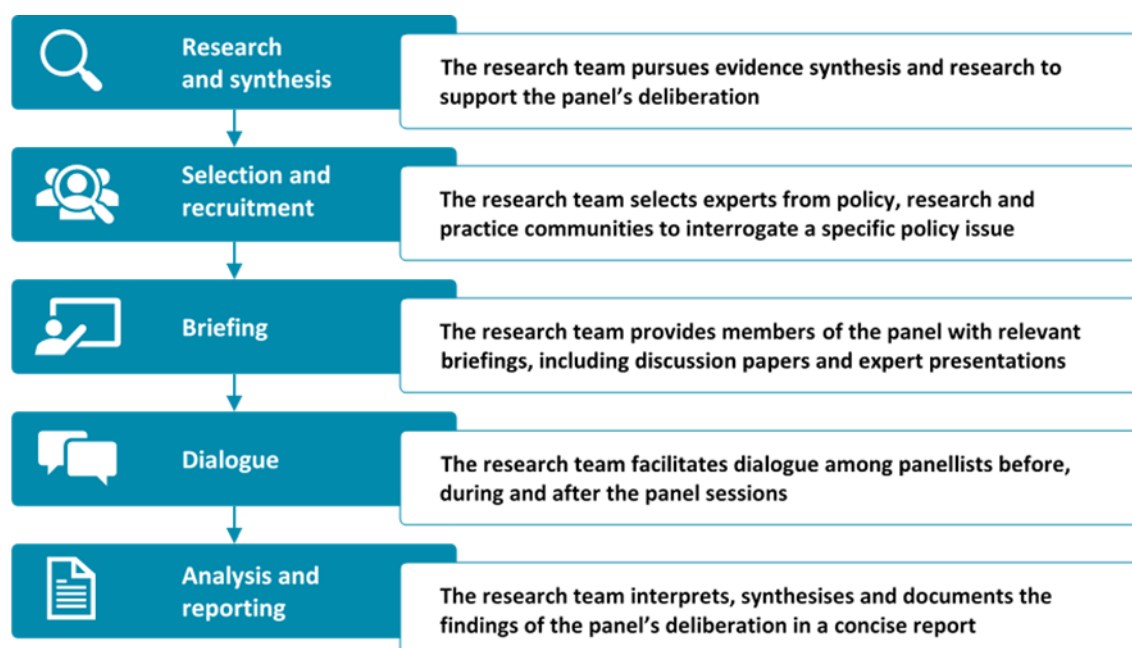
The Research Agenda 2024 also identifies the opportunity for Investigative Panels. There is a cap of \$120,000 on the costing of these and none should be longer in duration than 12 months and it is expected they can be undertaken in less time. An Investigative Panel costed above \$50,000 will involve more than one university (see Table 1).

The funds uncommitted after decisions about funding the Inquires are available for the Investigative Panels and projects.

Investigative Panels are designed to bring about direct engagement between experts from the research and policy communities, and practitioners from industry and community sectors, to interrogate a specific policy or practice question. They are best suited to research examining new or emerging policy issues, for which rapid evidence building is required.

The Investigative Panel is a research method that draws together elements of key informant interview and focus group approaches, to generate new knowledge through expert panel discussions. The research approach may also include other research activities or methods such as a literature review, interviews or secondary data analysis but the information from the Panel members is an important contribution to the research. Panel members are chosen for their expertise and knowledge about the subject. The Final Report is however authored by the Researcher(s) and contributions from individual panel members are not attributed or identifiable.

Figure 3: Investigative Panel process



5.2 Research projects

The Research Agenda 2024 also identifies the opportunity for Research projects. There is a cap of \$180,000 on the costing of these and none should be longer in duration than 12 months. It is expected that there will be a diversity of projects across a range of timelines and costs. A Research project costed at \$70,000 or above should involve more than one university (see Table 1).

The funds uncommitted after decisions about funding the Inquires are available for the Investigative Panels and Research projects.

A Research project can use a wide variety of research methods to tackle a contained research topic. Research projects may vary in scale and can range across discrete secondary data analysis to limited primary data collection exercises. Engagement with the relevant practice and policy community is critical to the conduct of research for the NHRP and the most appropriate engagement method needs to be included in the design of the research project.

AHURI encourages innovative approaches to add value to the Australian understanding of housing, homelessness and urban issues by building on, enriching or extending the AHURI evidence-base. AHURI encourages innovation in the publishable outputs that result from Research projects, and these are expected to vary in accordance with what is suitable to the research. However, the findings of an Investigative Panel or Research project are generally published in the double-blind peer reviewed Final Report series.

6 Criteria for assessing research applications

The NHRP Research Panel assesses each application only on the basis of the information provided in the application. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

6.1 Relevance

The issues identified in the Research Agenda 2024 are housing policy priorities in Australia, and as such delineate questions which require original and innovative research to inform policy development. The research team must demonstrate that they have an understanding of the policy issue and that the breadth and scope of proposed research is appropriate to the Inquiry, Investigative Panel or Research project topic outlined in the Research Agenda. Applications for data projects should clearly demonstrate the policy issue, the policy development rationale for undertaking the data analysis and that the research approach is realistic and appropriate. The onus in all AHURI research, is on the research team to develop appropriate conceptual frameworks, the research approach including methods and the conduct of original research. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the findings will inform policy development and in the case of the Data project how it will be relevant to policy.

6.2 Research approach

The conceptual framework and research approach (research activities, methods and timeline) must be realistic and appropriate. Methods must be suitable for the research activity chosen, and research activities appropriate.

The Inquiry application should outline an overarching policy issue, the overall conceptual or theoretical framework and how it is shared across the projects. The application should develop appropriate research questions to connect the research approach to the policy issues. Timelines must be realistic and commensurate with policy development timeframes and achieving the methods outlined.

Applications for Inquiries and Inquiry projects, Investigative Panels and Research projects should outline policy issues and have research questions which guide the research, detailing (where appropriate) theoretical frameworks, definitions, research design, data sources, measurement models, analytical methods and any processes of consulting with informants. They must be ethical and preferably replicable. Threats to internal and external validity should be identified and strategies put in place to minimise or overcome such threats (e.g., triangulation, extension of sampling using other means etc.).

The project management plan must outline the management approach including for Inquiries how projects will be integrated and coordinated to provide research outcomes to the Inquiry, how communication will be managed and how risks will be addressed. As timeliness is critical for policy makers, all Inquiry applications must be completed within a timeframe of 18 months or less and should include a realistic timeline that will be met. Investigative Panels and Research projects must be completed within a timeframe of 12 months and include a realistic timeline that will be met.

6.3 The research team

Research teams must demonstrate capability to undertake independent original research on time to a high standard and (where appropriate) to build future research capacity. The research team should be capable of undertaking the methods suggested. Past track record in undertaking research funded by AHURI and other research in housing, homelessness and urban fields and areas relevant to the Inquiry and Investigative Panel and Research and Data project topics will be considered in making an assessment.

Inquiry leadership teams, in addition to proven research capacity, should also demonstrate capability to manage large-scale research projects and engage with policy makers and other relevant experts. Inquiry leadership team members should allocate sufficient percentages of their time to lead, manage and contribute to the research. Project management should be explicit in the project plan and the budget and time allocated accordingly. The commitments of the Inquiry leadership team is also a consideration, in terms of overdue AHURI reports as well as leadership responsibilities above the maximum quota of two AHURI research projects and one Inquiry Program. International linkages are important to AHURI research and relevant collaborations will be favourably considered.

Research teams that demonstrably contribute to the strategic capacity of the Research Centre (e.g., by including Indigenous or Early Career Researchers as a member of the research team, or as research team leader) will be favourably considered. Collaborations with new research areas in universities and across universities that serve to build the capacity of the housing research community in a strategic and logical manner will also be considered favourably. It may be important to demonstrate how new researchers will be supported and include housing or AHURI expertise on the team.

The Policy Development Research Model requires a high level of collaboration across the AHURI Research Centre Network. Inquiry teams must include an appropriate number of universities from within the AHURI Research Centre Network (see Section 6.6). Where an Inquiry leadership team includes academics from different universities they should, where practical, be leaders on Inquiry projects which are contracted to their respective university. AHURI looks for collaboration in Investigative Panels and Research projects supporting national reach and relevance. Teams should demonstrate appropriate skills and experience to undertake the project.

6.4 Budgets

Budgets must be realistic, justified, cost-effective and commensurate with achieving the methods outlined. Value for money needs to be demonstrated and in-kind support documented. Budgets must be sufficient for the purposes of meeting timelines, including resource allocation to complete report writing, and applying the approach provided in the application. The NHRP funding is for the costs associated with the delivery of the research activities. This includes direct and in-direct costs of research e.g., salary, travel, data, specific software but not associated staffing costs, such as leave entitlements and severance pay or university facilities and infrastructure items such as laptops.

There is a budget cap of \$600,000 for an Inquiry. There is a cap of \$120,000 on Investigative Panels, and a cap of \$180,000 on Research and Data projects.

6.5 Integration of the Inquiry

Inquiries should be well-integrated with a framework for the Inquiry research program that articulates clear linkages between projects. The integration of the Inquiry application will be evaluated on a scale where success is an integrated program that works as a whole. An Inquiry application where projects would more appropriately be combined in a single project or where projects could be dropped without compromising the integrity of the Inquiry program and policy development outcomes, would not be considered well integrated.

6.6 Timelines and collaboration

The timely production of research is important to AHURI. Research must be realistic and commensurate with achieving the objectives and methods outlined in the proposal. An Inquiry should be no more than 18 months in duration and an Investigative Panel or Research project should be no more than 12 months in duration.

Collaboration is also critical to achieving AHURI research objectives. For AHURI Inquiries with a budget between \$450,000 and \$600,000 there must a minimum of three universities leading projects in the Inquiry. Under \$450,000 a minimum of two universities leading projects. AHURI assessment criteria includes: collaboration across the university network, supporting university partners working together, and national reach of research. AHURI assessment criteria includes capacity building in development of ECRs and interdisciplinary research.

Table 1: Summary parameters

Research Vehicle	Budget Cap	Collaboration	Time limit
AHURI Inquiry	\$600,000	If the budget is between \$450,000 and \$600,000 there must be a minimum of three universities leading projects in the Inquiry. Under \$450,000 a minimum of two universities leading projects.	18 months
Investigative Panels	\$120,000	AHURI values collaboration across universities and expects more than one university in a project valued above \$50,000.	12 months
Research projects	\$180,000	AHURI values collaboration across universities and expects more than one university in a project valued above \$70,000.	12 months

7 NHRP assessment

7.1 The assessment process

The assessment process for funding through the NHRP is competitive and based on the absolute merit of the application. Each application is independently assessed against key selection criteria by four assessors—two academic assessors who are not affiliated with the AHURI Research Centres, one state or territory assessor and one assessor from the Australian Government. The AHURI Editorial Panel provides advice to the AHURI Research Panel on method and international relevance. AHURI provides advice on capacity and track record of applicants, the eligibility of team leaders, operational risk and budgets.

The applications are ranked by merit, based on the findings of the assessment process, and subject to the deliberations of the NHRP Research Panel. This ranking determines the advice provided to the AHURI Board on the funding of applications and it is the AHURI Board who approve the funded applications.

7.2 The NHRP Research Panel

The NHRP Research Panel is a sub-committee of the AHURI Board and is chaired by the Managing Director of AHURI. It is consulted in the development of the Research Agenda and assesses applications for the merit ranking of applications.

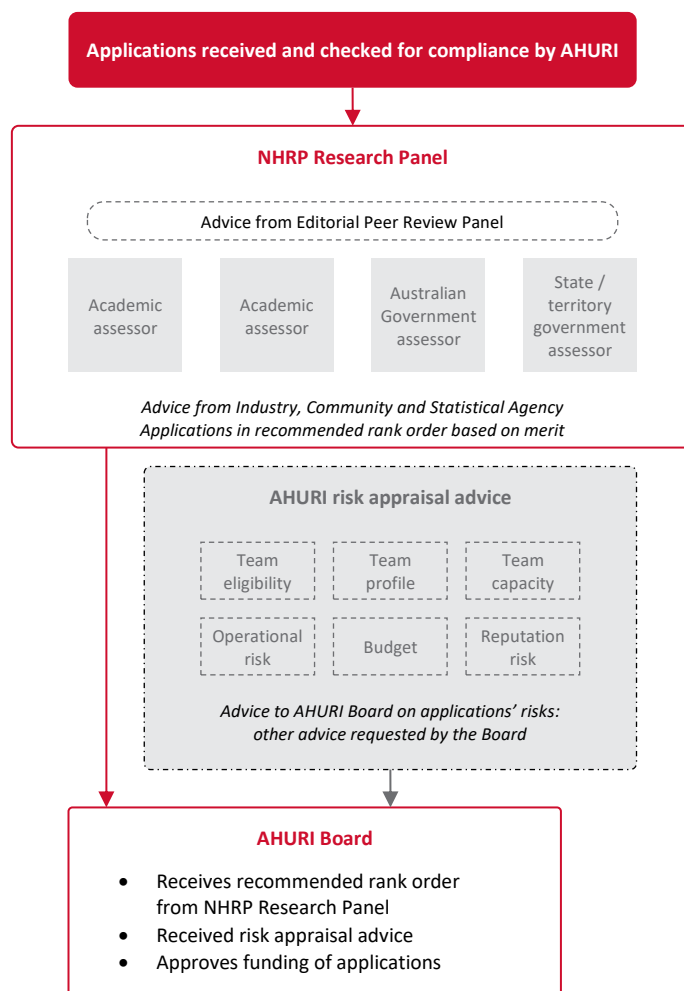
The NHRP Research Panel consists of:

- Independent Academic Assessors—academics who are not affiliated with AHURI Research Centres and with expertise in disciplines relevant to the AHURI Research Agenda including an expert in Indigenous studies.
- Representation from the state and territory governments—the representative to the NHRP Research Panel will have consulted with senior policy officers in all the states and territories to form a view about the merit of every application.
- Representation from the Australian Government—the representative consults broadly within the Australian Treasury, Department of Social Services (DSS) and across Australian Government departments where necessary to provide an assessment of every application.
- Two members from the non-government sector, one community and one industry representative who provide advice but do not assess applications.
- A representative from a statistical agency such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare or Australian Bureau of Statistics who provides advice but does not assess applications.

The AHURI Editorial Board provides additional advice to the NHRP Research Panel to assist in its deliberations. Every application is matched to a reviewer with relevant expertise to provide advice

specifically on the research approach and an international perspective. This advice is provided to the NHRP Research Panel to assist in their assessment of applications.

Figure 4: The assessment process



7.3 The AHURI Board

The AHURI Board provides advice on the development of the AHURI Research Agenda and approves its release for the NHRP Funding Round each year. The AHURI Board receives the applications from the NHRP Funding Round ranked in order of merit with advice from the AHURI Research Panel. AHURI provides advice about the capacity and track record of applicants and budget. The AHURI Board approves funding priorities and the funding of research contracts.

7.4 Notification of outcomes

Research Centre Directors and leaders of funded research are informed of outcomes of the funding round as soon as possible, following a decision of the AHURI Board in November.

Funding round outcomes are embargoed and must not be shared until:

- a. AHURI notifies Research Centre Directors that policy stakeholders have been informed of the funding round outcomes, and
- b. All Research contracts for successful applications have been signed and returned by the university.

Deputy Vice Chancellors-Research and the policy stakeholders; the Australian Government and state and territory governments, are informed of the outcomes early in the new year. AHURI announces the new research when all contracts are completed and policy stakeholders have been informed.

8 Research approaches

8.1 Research methods

AHURI funds a variety of research using a range of methods, including broad exploratory analysis of emerging issues through to evaluative research around current policy. AHURI funds research that:

- Draws on different disciplines, including economic, geographic, sociological, anthropological and architectural perspectives.
- Utilises a range of data sources, including government administrative data, secondary survey data, investigator-initiated surveys, focus groups, informant interviews and stakeholder workshops.
- Uses innovative analytical methods including statistical modelling, qualitative analysis and natural experiments.

Researchers are strongly encouraged to make use of new and existing data sets when appropriate.

8.2 Indigenous housing research

Indigenous housing research is a strategic priority. AHURI maintains the principle that all funded research should include an Indigenous focus. Funding applications that do not include an Indigenous focus should provide a justification for not including an Indigenous focus.

8.2.1 Ethics of Indigenous research

Research that includes a focus on Indigenous housing issues must adhere to appropriate research ethics as specified in Ethical principles and guidelines for Indigenous research. These principles and protocols apply to all stages of the research—including development of the proposal, assessment of the proposal, conduct of the research, and dissemination of the research findings. An important element is the need for consultation with Indigenous people at key stages throughout the research process.

8.3 International research collaboration

International collaboration is an integral feature of the activities of AHURI, and it is a growing feature of the National Housing Research Program. Housing researchers are encouraged to explore prospective collaborative and comparative research activities with international partners. Research applications through the NHRP Funding Round 2024 will be considered favourably where international collaboration relevant to the proposed research topic is included.

International collaboration should aim to meet the following objectives:

- Adding quality to research through international comparative analysis by experts in other countries.
- Building research capacity by creating international exchange and professional development opportunities.
- Building the profile of AHURI as an institute of international standing.
- Enabling AHURI to present and participate in international research events.
- Supporting AHURI events programs by encouraging international experts to visit Australia.

8.3.1 International networks

AHURI is a member of two international research networks:

Asia-Pacific Network for Housing Research

The Asia-Pacific Network for Housing Research (APNHR) aims to provide a forum for housing academics, policymakers and the like who have a strong interest in housing in the region to critically examine and review housing issues and experiences in the respective and comparative socio-political and economic contexts, and to draw lessons from outside the region.

European Network for Housing Research

The European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) is composed of researchers from a variety of social science disciplines dealing with housing and urban issues. In addition to its basic goal of supporting research, the Network also seeks to promote contacts and communications between researchers and practitioners within the housing field.

The Network sponsors major international conferences every two years, publishes a comprehensive Newsletter four times a year, provides a framework for nearly 20 working groups, encourages smaller conferences and seminars every year and has an active group of PhD students (new housing researchers).

9 AHURI research practice and publications

9.1 Policy engagement

Policy development research demands a high degree of collaboration within and between the research communities and the policy and practice community.

The Inquiry Panel is the primary form of engagement in the NHRP. It is designed to bring about direct engagement between senior policy makers and experts from the research and policy communities, and practitioners from industry and the community sector in policy development. AHURI will support engagement in all research activities and will negotiate the most appropriate forms of engagement with Project Leaders.

The Policy Development Research Model seeks to more closely integrate engagement with the policy and practice communities and dissemination of AHURI research. AHURI is committed to innovation in strategies for dissemination and engagement with the policy community, other stakeholders and the public. To achieve this, AHURI takes an active role in supporting engagement and in disseminating research findings through a range of activities.

9.1.1 Engagement activities

Research projects and Inquiries may incorporate policy engagement strategies which are specific to the project, in addition to the Inquiry Panel (where applicable). AHURI encourages the development of strategies for engaging policy makers and practitioners. Engagement with the policy community throughout the research process achieves two aims:

- Enabling researchers to seek advice from policy makers about the policy focus of research and how the research might most productively inform policy development.
- Providing information to the research team about the progress of policy development.

There are a number of strategies currently used to ensure the engagement of policy, practitioner and industry representatives in throughout the research process. These include:

- Reference groups and advisory groups, which facilitate the active involvement of key individual policy makers, practitioners and other relevant expert advisors, are tailored to suit the requirements of the research, and involve one or more teleconferences or face-to-face meetings.
- A policy brief or discussion paper with interim findings developed for discussion with policy stakeholders.
- Policy development workshops or roundtables, which enable policy makers to engage with research findings and policy implications to support the development of policy or practice innovations.

AHURI will seek to support policy engagement in NHRP research and promote research activities at regular intervals throughout the year to ensure participation across the policy community.

9.1.2 Third Party or matching funds

Third party funds are not appropriate in the NHRP funding mechanism. Where an organisation is prepared to partner for research activity it is most appropriate for researchers to contact AHURI through their Research Centre Director to negotiate contract research.

9.2 AHURI research publishing, dissemination and engagement

AHURI's Marketing and Communications team is responsible for the publishing of all new AHURI research and liaising with researchers around all dissemination and engagement opportunities. Researchers are expected to take an active role in dissemination activities including media opportunities, presentations at conferences and promoting research through university channels. AHURI will provide advice and support where necessary.

AHURI's dissemination and engagement activities include:

- **Website and Email newsletter**—new research reports are published on the AHURI website via a dedicated final report page, are added to the research library and featured on the website homepage. Reports are generally featured as the lead story in the AHURI News email newsletter sent to AHURI's full subscriber mailing list (10,000+) on the morning of publication.
- **Media**—each new report is assessed by the Head of Marketing and Communications for its suitability for media promotion. As a high-volume publisher of similar themed reports, not every report will be deemed suitable for media promotion. In these cases, AHURI supports the lead University undertaking media engagement. When media engagement is proposed, a draft media release is prepared by AHURI and finalised in consultation with the lead author of the report (and in consultation with the corresponding University media unit). AHURI will engage directly with journalists who have written regularly on housing and urban issues. The Head of Marketing and Communications engages directly with the lead researcher regarding the distribution of media releases to ensure their availability for media interviews. All media coverage is further promoted via AHURI channels.
- **Policy Evidence Summary**—the Policy Evidence Summary supports the publication of all new research. The Policy Evidence Summary is a short, plain English summary of the key findings and policy recommendations for each final report and will feature infographics, tables and graphs. The Summary will often be distributed to media as part of the media campaign for each new report release and will be published alongside the final report and Executive Summary on the AHURI website.
- **Editorial content**—AHURI will explore opportunities to develop further editorial content for the AHURI website based on new research. This may include AHURI Briefs, new items, or Policy Issue Analyses.

- **Social media**—new reports are promoted via AHURI’s three social media channels—Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Relevant researchers, research centres and Universities are tagged across social media to further engagement.
- **Conferences, events and webinars** —AHURI endeavours to feature new (or recently published) NHRP research at an in-person, or hybrid AHURI hosted event or via an online webinar. This could include:
 - **One-day Conference** – each conference is centred around a policy issue, with new research relevant to that issue identified and lead researchers invited to present. AHURI endeavours to ensure alignment between conference topics and completing AHURI Inquiries.
 - **Discussion Series** – each event is underpinned by a presentation on a new AHURI report, followed by a 90-minute panel discussion.
 - **National Housing Conference and National Homelessness Conference** – recent research that is relevant and published prior to each of the biennial multi-day conferences will be considered for inclusion in the program.
 - **Research Webinar Series** – each webinar features a 20 – 30 minute presentation based on a newly published report, followed by an industry response and audience Q&A.

When researchers are invited to present at AHURI events, all logistical aspects of the event will be organised by AHURI and expenses relating to travel will be met by AHURI.

9.2.1 Other activities

In some cases, rather than a conference presentation, project leaders or research team members may be asked to participate in roundtables or workshops where their research is presented to a targeted group for discussion.

Researchers are encouraged to present the results of AHURI funded research at conferences and other housing or social policy related conferences. Should researchers be invited to present on AHURI funded research at non-AHURI events or conferences, they are asked to advise the AHURI Head of Marketing and Communications. This is so that assistance can be provided where possible and presentation details can be promoted through AHURI’s communication channels (including the AHURI website, e-newsletters and social media).

9.2.2 Media requests

AHURI receives numerous requests for comment on research findings. In these instances, the AHURI Marketing and Communications team undertakes to contact the relevant Research Centre Director and/or research team leader in a timely and efficient manner.

Should researchers be contacted directly by the media for comments on AHURI funded research, they are asked to advise the AHURI Head of Marketing and Communications so that media interest

can be coordinated in a strategic manner, and AHURI can further publicise media coverage. This will also help ensure that all media coverage regarding AHURI funded research is included in AHURI's reports to funding bodies.

AHURI requests that all comments to the media regarding AHURI funded research acknowledges that the research was 'undertaken for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute'. No comments regarding unpublished AHURI funded research (i.e., AHURI funded research that hasn't been through the formal peer review and notification process) can be made to the media without prior negotiation with AHURI.

9.2.3 Embargo on unpublished research

AHURI funded research must not be disseminated, or research findings shared or publicly discussed prior to publication by AHURI.

For example:

- sharing of unpublished research outside of the research project team
- presenting unpublished research at events
- discussing unpublished findings with the media.

AHURI research is only disseminated once it has been through the double-blind peer review process ensuring the quality and rigour of AHURI research. Reports ready for publication must go through a ten day notification period where it is shared with government stakeholders. This is a crucial condition of the AHURI funding agreement. AHURI may agree to preliminary findings being shared but permission for this must be sought from the Head of Marketing and Communications.

Reports ready for publication must go through a ten-day notification period where it is shared with government stakeholders.

9.3 AHURI publications

AHURI publishes high-quality double-blind peer reviewed research that provides an accessible and relevant evidence-base for the development of policy, available publicly on the AHURI website.

AHURI encourages innovation in published outputs but will publish a double-blind peer reviewed Final Report for each project and each Inquiry program. There are some limitations on the length and content of reports to ensure that they meet the needs of a policy-maker audience.

9.3.1 Final Reports

AHURI provides a template for the Final Report. The quality of AHURI research is assured through the double blind peer reviewed process. The audience for AHURI Final Report is the policy, stakeholder and broader community.

AHURI reports should be written in plain English, with attention to defining terms and avoiding jargon. A Final Report presents:

- A standalone executive summary which provides an overview of the research project, the key findings, and their link to policy development.
- A summary of the key policy, practice and research issues.
- A comprehensive account of the research conducted.
- The findings from the investigation, specifically identifying the unique contribution of the work to housing, homelessness and urban studies rather than a descriptive account of what the research has done.
- The key implications for the development of housing, homelessness and urban policy. Where possible this should also include some analysis of the potential to implement any recommendations in the contemporary Australian context.
- In the case of Inquiry Final Reports, they should not summarise each Inquiry project and should include the policy development recommendations developed through the Inquiry process.

9.3.2 Peer review

The Final Report series is subject to double blind peer review prior to publication. AHURI has an Editorial Board of international peer reviewers, specialising in a range of housing related subject areas. Each report is allocated to two peer reviewers with relevant expertise. The peer review process typically takes four to six weeks from AHURI acceptance of the report to delivery back to the author for revisions. The author is asked to submit an electronic copy of the revised report and a separate list which outlines the revisions made. This list should also provide reasons for not making revisions that were requested by the peer reviewers.

AHURI peer reviewers use the following criteria:

- Purpose of the report and policy issues are clearly stated.
- Report makes an important contribution to policy, practice and literature.
- Literature and policy/practice reviews are relevant to policy issues.
- Methods are explicit, sound and appropriate to the policy issues.
- Findings are relevant to policy and practice and supported by the analysis.

- Writing is clear, direct and effective and the report is no longer than 50–70 pages.

9.3.3 Publishing through AHURI

To ensure that reports are concisely written and well communicated, AHURI reserves the right to require that a report be altered. Templates for Discussion Papers, Work-in-progress Reports and Final Reports as well as the AHURI style guide are available on the Member extranet. Directions for access to the extranet should be sought through AHURI.

AHURI is committed to ensuring research is delivered in timeframes that are relevant to policy makers and to working with the research community to manage the delivery of published outputs in accordance with contracted timelines. AHURI undertakes ongoing research management and monitoring of contracted deliverables. For further details please refer to Section 10.2.

AHURI retains the copyright on all AHURI published outputs. Researchers retain intellectual property rights to their research and may also seek to make their work known through articles in peer review journals and papers delivered at academic conferences with due acknowledgement of AHURI as the source of funding.

10 Research contracts

10.1 Contracting

Research contracts will be negotiated with successful applicants and Research Centre Directors. Inquiry and project leaders must make arrangements to be available for contracting negotiations from January to March. Research contracts set out the expected completion date, key milestones and associated payment schedule—including a schedule for incentive payments, penalty payments (see Section 10.2), publishable outputs and the agreed overall budget.

The Inquiry program contract will be negotiated with the Inquiry Leader and their Research Centre Director. Inquiry project contracts are negotiated with the research project team leader (in consultation with the Inquiry Leader) and their Research Centre Director subject to the Inquiry contract conditions.

Contracts for Investigative Panels and Research projects are negotiated with the Project Leader and Research Centre Director.

Contracts clarify the obligations of each party to ensure that timely, worthwhile results emerge from the research and the resources of AHURI are productively spent. All projects will be contracted directly with the respective lead Research Centre.

10.1.1 Embargo on Funding Round outcomes

AHURI informs the Research Centre Director and Inquiry and Project leaders prior to Christmas of funding round outcomes. This information is strictly embargoed until AHURI has completed stakeholder communications and has contracted all new research. AHURI will inform universities when it is possible to make announcements of successful applications.

10.2 Timeliness

AHURI is committed to conducting timely, high quality, policy relevant research. Time delays on research deliverables and the completion of projects disappoint policy-makers' expectations, and can affect AHURI's reputation, as well as AHURI's capacity to efficiently plan and maintain publication scheduling, the flow of funds out to the Research Centres, and the schedule of dissemination events.

AHURI reserves the right to take fair and reasonable action to ensure research activities are completed in a timely manner. Accordingly, AHURI undertakes a range of management actions to ensure timeliness.

The Inquiry program and each Inquiry project will be treated separately when evaluating timeliness and applying incentive and penalty payments.

The shared management of research delays relies on regular and clear communication between AHURI, Research Centre Directors and Inquiry leaders, Inquiry Project leaders and Project leaders. It

is expected that any emerging delays in the research will be identified early in the process and that the Research Centre Director, Inquiry leader, Inquiry project leader or Research project leader will work constructively with AHURI to address the issue.

It is expected that there are ongoing discussions between the AHURI and Research Centre Directors, and Inquiry leaders, Inquiry Project leaders and project leaders about likely delays. Records of the discussion of the reasons for the delay, and how it will be addressed forms the basis of any subsequent negotiation about a contract variation. The final decision to grant a contract variation rests with AHURI and will only be issued prior to the due date of a deliverable.

All contracts include a schedule for incentive and penalty payments based on the timely delivery of peer reviewed deliverables.

Contract Variations are available when there is a legitimate delay to a research activity. However, Contract Variations are the exception rather than the norm in addressing project delays and will only occur when there are exogenous circumstances.

A Contract Variation is considered when the research cannot be completed within the contracted timeframe. These variations apply to due dates, including to peer review reports, and can result in corresponding variation to penalty dates.

Incentive payments are predicated on the early availability of research findings to the policy community, and may not be amended through contract variations unless specifically stipulated by AHURI.

Exogenous issues are delays which the research team could not have reasonably predicted to have occurred, or are due to factors beyond their control. This may include matters of a personal nature such as significant illness or family situations. It may also include delays in fieldwork beyond the control of the research team including unanticipated problems accessing data, stakeholders being uncooperative and political issues with governments, departments or other stakeholders. Conversely, endogenous factors refer to those issues which the research team could have reasonably predicted and avoided, or could have been remedied in the timeframe. These may include:

- Leave that might be predicted to occur ahead of time (e.g., maternity leave or annual leave)
- Research related problems (e.g., changes to the methodology)
- Time management (e.g., researcher being too busy).

10.2.1 Incentive payments

Incentive payments are provided to a research team for the timely delivery of peer reviewed reports published by AHURI.

- The incentive payment is set at 10 per cent of the total monetary value of the peer reviewed milestone payment.

- Timely delivery requires the submission of the project deliverable by 5.00pm (AEST) on the deliverable due date, acceptance of the project deliverable by AHURI, the project deliverable passing peer review with minor or no changes and being resubmitted with any changes, and a list of these changes, within the agreed timeframe.
- A cap of \$10,000 will be established when exercising incentive payments.

10.2.2 Penalty payments

Penalty payments and the termination of contracts are always measures of last resort.

Penalty payments are incurred by a research team when peer reviewed reports are more than 10 per cent overdue.

- The penalty payment is 10 per cent of the total monetary value of the peer reviewed milestone payment.
- A cap of \$10,000 will be established when exercising penalty payments.
- A continued delay in the project deliverable, of 15 per cent or more, will result in a review of the project by the AHURI with the view to discharging the contract.

10.3 Eligibility of research team leaders

An application led by a leader who has overdue AHURI reports will not be considered. All overdue contracted research deliverables must be acquitted prior to applying for AHURI funding.

Researchers are eligible to lead a maximum of one Inquiry and two AHURI projects at a time. This is to ensure that Inquiry and research team leaders have the capacity to complete research within the contracted timeframe. This is also considered in the assessment of applications and alternative arrangements for project leadership and management may be negotiated in contracting.