AHURi

NATIONAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROGRAM

Research Handbook

2027

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PART A:

Research context

A1 About AHURI

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) is an independent not for profit national research organisation that conducts and disseminates high quality research on housing and homelessness. Our activities inform the policies and practices of governments, industry and the community sector, and stimulate public debate.

Our strategic framework is:

Vision	Mission
Better outcomes for housing and communities through credible and independent evidence	Working collaboratively to inform and impact better policy and practice in housing, homelessness and urban issues

Strategic goals

1. Build public and professional understanding and informed dialogue on housing and cities issues
2. Inform and influence housing policy, planning and practice across relevant sectors
3. Inform and influence cities policy, planning and practice across relevant sectors
4. Foster engagement across all sectors and stakeholder groups
5. Enhance national policy and research capability
6. Optimise the value we deliver

Using high quality, independent evidence and through active, managed engagement, AHURI works to inform the policies and practices of governments and the housing and urban development industries, and stimulate debate in the broader Australian community.

Our Board is governed by a Constitution and comprises AHURI's Managing Director and directors nominated and appointed by our government and university funders.

A2 About the National Housing Research Program

The National Housing Research Program (NHRP) is an annual, nationally competitive program managed by AHURI on behalf of funders and partners.

Research funding

The NHRP is funded by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments. Under the multilateral agreement governing the management of the NHRP, AHURI is required to:

- Commission, manage and deliver balanced, high quality, solution-oriented and policy relevant research for the purposes of informing Commonwealth, State and Territory reforms and policy development
- Disseminate research findings publicly to stimulate community interest and facilitate policy debate
- Effectively engage the policy and research communities in developing research priorities and delivering and disseminating research findings
- Provide governance and reporting so that the transparency of activities, outcomes and performance are maintained.

Research partners

Research through the NHRP is undertaken by our network of partner universities from across the country. Our current partners are:

- Adelaide University
- Curtin University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- Queensland University of Technology
- RMIT University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of NSW
- The University of Queensland
- The University of Sydney

NHRP research is designed to foster collaboration between AHURI partners and to explore collaborative and comparative research activities with international partners.

Each of AHURI's university partners nominates a senior researcher as its Research Centre Director (RCD). The RCD plays a key coordination role between AHURI and their university's research teams. Details of current RCDs are provided on the AHURI website.

A3 About the research approach

Research model

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

The NHRP is underpinned by the Policy Development Research Model, which has been designed to facilitate engagement between the research and policy communities. The model seeks to integrate the traditionally separate processes of evidence building and policy development into one set of practices.

Research vehicles

The Policy Development Research Model's core research outputs manifest in AHURI's five research vehicles:

- Inquiries
- First Nations Research Projects
- Investigative Panels
- Research Projects
- Unsolicited Data Projects.

Information on each of these research vehicles is provided in the following section.

Research Agenda

AHURI releases an annual Research Agenda which sets out the NHRP's priorities for housing and homelessness research. The agenda is developed through consultation with Australian Government agencies, state and territory government agencies, RCDs, the AHURI Board and the NHRP Research Panel.

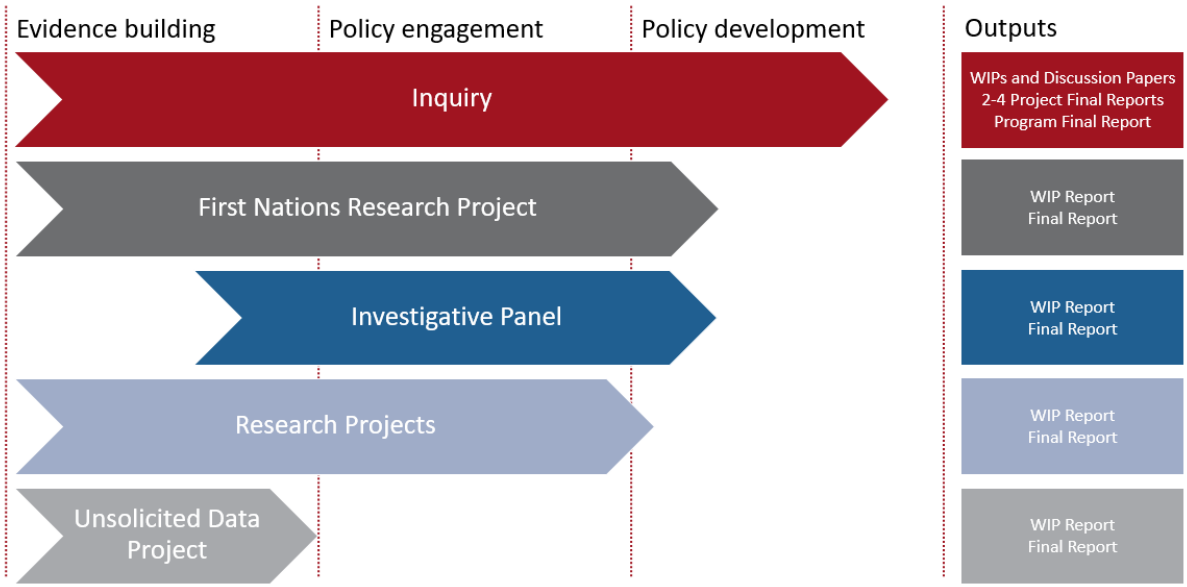
The Research Agenda is structured as a set of topics allocated to Inquiries, Investigative Panels and Research Projects, and invites proposals for relevant research for First Nations Research Projects and Unsolicited Data Projects. It is provided to RCDs, and made available on the AHURI website, in April May each year for NHRP-funded projects to commence the following year (see Section B1).

A4 About the research vehicles

As illustrated in the Figure 1, the five research vehicles have different levels of emphasis on key aspects of NHRP projects: evidence building, policy engagement and policy development.

All research vehicles produce a Work in Progress (WIP) report partway through a project, as well as a Final Report.

Figure 1: Comparison of NHRP research vehicles



Inquiries

AHURI Inquiries focus on substantial and complex policy issues and engage key experts in policy development. Inquiry topics are set out in each year's Research Agenda. Inquiry Programs are typically led by senior academics with prior experience managing NHRP-funded projects, though this is not a mandatory requirement.

There are three key features which distinguish Inquiries from other NHRP research vehicles. Inquiries are:

- **Integrated**, incorporating 2-4 subprojects (referred to as 'Inquiry Projects') which are undertaken by separate teams but conform to an overall logic and research design (referred to as the 'Inquiry Program'). Inquiries are led by teams which include an overall Inquiry Program lead, as well as the leads of each of the Inquiry Projects. Leadership teams may also include members with expertise in program management, particularly for more complex Inquiries with a larger number of Projects.

- **Participatory**, with key stakeholders from government, industry and community coming together with researchers in structured Inquiry Panel meetings to consider preliminary research findings and inform policy development and practice innovation. Inquiry Panel meetings are informed by

a Discussion Paper prepared by the Inquiry leadership team, and organised and facilitated by AHURI in consultation with the leadership team.

- **Cumulative**, with the outcomes of the Inquiry Projects and Inquiry Panels informing the Final Report for the Inquiry Program as a whole. The Inquiry Final Report is a standalone report that conceptualises the Inquiry, articulates its key findings and provides overarching policy development options and recommendations. It should bring together and build on the findings from the Projects, rather than just consolidating sections from each Final Report.

Potential Inquiry structures are provided in Appendix I.

First Nations Research Projects

Closing the Gap is a National Agreement in which all Australian governments are working with First Nations people and communities to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Closing the Gap priority reform areas are grounded in the insight that in order to achieve better outcomes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations need to be empowered in genuine partnerships and in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services.

AHURI encourages researchers to consider needs and responses for First Nations people and communities across all project types. In addition, it provides a specific funding pathway for projects which focus on First Nations housing and homelessness, in alignment with Closing the Gap.

These projects must also include First Nations people in meaningful roles within the research team.

Investigative Panels

Investigative Panels are a form of project designed to bring about direct engagement between experts from the research and policy communities, as well as industry and community sectors, to interrogate a specific policy or practice question. They are best suited to research new or emerging policy issues for which rapid evidence building is required, or issues which fall between the typical framing of portfolio responsibilities.

Panel members are chosen from a range of stakeholder groups for their expertise and knowledge on specific policy or practice issues. A panel may be called together for one or two meetings, or separate panels may be established to focus on jurisdictional or subject issues, depending on a project's research approach. The research may also include other activities, such as a literature review, synthesis, interviews or secondary data analysis, in support of the Panel's principal contribution to the project.

Investigative Panels have been particularly effective in bringing practitioners and industry representatives into the research process. The contributions of individual panel members are not attributed or identifiable in the project team's Final Report.

Research Projects

Research Projects address specific topics set out in the Research Agenda. They are designed to be responsive to the policy community and wider public discourse, and form a complementary stream of research to the Inquiries. They underpin the development of AHURI's evidence base.

Research Projects provide scope for a wide variety of methods to tackle a research topic and can vary significantly in scale. They may focus on secondary data analysis or primary data collection, including through engagement with policy and practice communities, and they provide an opportunity to apply innovative research methods.

Unsolicited Data Projects

The NHRP includes limited opportunities to undertake data projects on topics which are not specified in the Research Agenda. Unsolicited Data Projects may include data update projects and data linkage projects. These projects ensure the AHURI evidence base remains current and incorporates new data sets as they are developed.

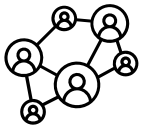
Unsolicited Data Projects provide an avenue for emerging policy research relevant to housing and homelessness policy. This category of project attracts additional scrutiny. Applications in this category need to justify the inclusion of the policy priority being addressed, and why this issue should be considered alongside the research priorities identified by senior policy makers.

All NHRP projects, including Unsolicited Data Projects, must result in a Final Report which includes implications for policy development and practice improvement.

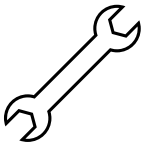
A5 NHRP points of difference

The policy focussed nature of the NHRP differentiates it from other research programs. The NHRP funds research that is:

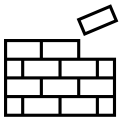
Policy focused, aligned with the Research Agenda and supporting program and practice improvement



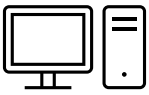
Collaborative, requiring partnerships across universities, disciplines and jurisdictions



Practice informed, incorporating engagement with government, industry and the community sector

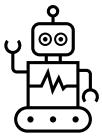


Cumulative, with newly commissioned research building on the considerable existing evidence base



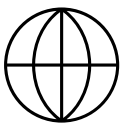
Freely available, with reports accessible without charge or registration requirements

Timely, with research undertaken relatively rapidly to inform real time policy and practice

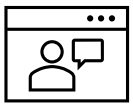


Innovative, trialling emerging approaches and technologies and examining their research application

Locally grounded, considering the differing contexts experienced in different places across Australia



Globally informed, based on contemporary understandings of international systems, policies and practice



Actively disseminated, through media, webinars, conferences and more.

PART B:

Applying for research funding

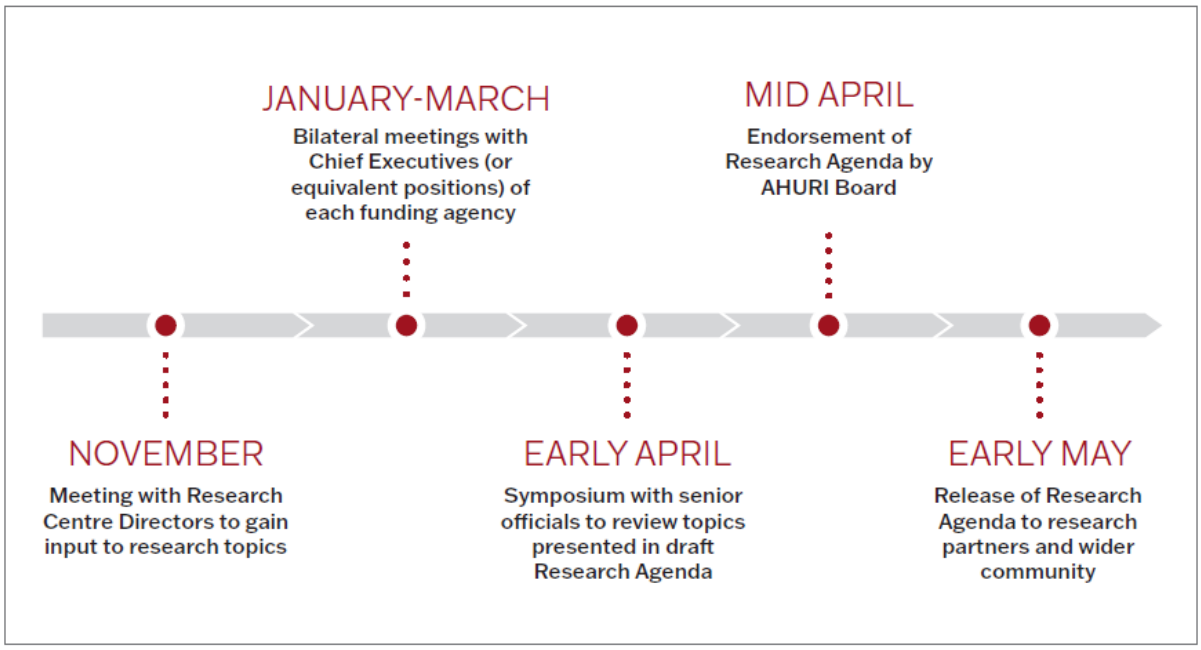
B1 Funding Round overview

The main mechanism by which NHRP project funding is awarded is the annual Funding Round. The Funding Round is competitive, with researchers from AHURI partner universities eligible to apply.

All applications must be submitted by the university's RCD.

For most project types, applicants must address the priority housing and homelessness topics set out in the Research Agenda. The high level timeline for the NHRP Funding Round is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: NHRP Funding Round timeline



B2 Research vehicle funding parameters

The funding parameters for each NHRP research vehicle are set out in the table below.

The reporting timeframe is calculated from the date the contract is executed to the date the Final Report is accepted by AHURI (prior to peer review, copy editing and graphic design).

Research vehicle	Budget cap (ex GST)	Collaboration	Reporting timeframe
Inquiry	$450,000	Requires at least two universities in the research team	18 months
	$600,000	Requires at least three universities in the research team	
First Nations Research Project	$70,000	May be undertaken by researchers from one university Requires the inclusion of First Nations researchers in meaningful roles within the research team	18 months
	$200,000	Requires at least two universities Requires the inclusion of First Nations researchers in meaningful roles within the research team	
Investigative Panel	Not applicable for funding round 2027		
Research Project	$70,000	May be undertaken by researchers from one university	12 months
	$190,000	Requires at least two universities in the research team	
Unsolicited Data Project	$70,000	May be undertaken by researchers from one university	12 months
	$190,000	Requires at least two universities in the research team	

For most research vehicles, the maximum project budget increases where there is collaboration between researchers from two or more universities.

* As noted in Section A4, all Inquiry Programs must include at least two Inquiry Projects, led by different universities. The budget cap for Inquiry Programs increases where there are three or more universities leading Inquiry Projects.

B3 Compliance and assessment criteria

The table below sets out the compliance and assessment criteria for each NHRP research vehicle.

An application must meet all compliance criteria for the relevant research vehicle to be accepted by AHURI for assessment. The assessment criteria are used by the NHRP Research Panel to review and assess NHRP funding applications (see Section B5 for further information on the Research Panel).

Vehicle	Compliance criteria	Assessment criteria
Inquiry Programs	Compliance with the: • budget cap • collaboration requirements • project time limits as set out in Section B2. Direct relevance to an Inquiry topic included in the Research Agenda for that year Compliance with application word limits	• Clarity of the **research questions** and alignment with the policy issue set out in the Research Agenda • Strength of the **structure and management** of the Inquiry Program • Appropriateness of **methodology** to the research questions • Approach to **integrating** the findings from the Inquiry Projects into an Inquiry Final Report • Achievability of the proposed approach and research **timeline** • Value for money provided by the **budget** • Demonstrated **skills, experience and performance** of the team, including in previous AHURI projects
First Nations Research Project	Compliance with the: • budget cap • collaboration requirements • project time limits as set out in Section B2. Inclusion of First Nations team members in meaningful roles Compliance with application word limits	• Demonstration that the research topic is a housing and homelessness **priority** for First Nations communities, and incorporates a focus on genuine self-determination • Clarity of the **research questions** and alignment with the research topic • Appropriateness of **methodology** to the research questions • Achievability of the proposed approach and research **timeline** • Value for money provided by the **budget** • Demonstrated **skills, experience and performance** of the team, including in previous AHURI projects

Vehicle	Compliance criteria	Assessment criteria
Investigative Panel	Compliance with the: • budget cap • collaboration requirements • project time limits, as set out in Section B2. Direct relevance to an Investigative Panel topic included in the Research Agenda for that year Compliance with application word limits	• Clarity of the **research questions** and alignment with the policy issue set out in the Research Agenda • Appropriateness of **methodology** to the research questions • Achievability of the proposed approach and research **timeline** • Value for money provided by the **budget** • Demonstrated **skills, experience and performance** of the team, including in previous AHURI projects
Research Project	Compliance with the: • budget cap • collaboration requirements • project time limits, as set out in Section B2. Direct relevance to a Research Project topic included in the Research Agenda for that year Compliance with application word limits	• Clarity of the **research questions** and alignment with the policy issue set out in the Research Agenda • Appropriateness of **methodology** to the research questions • Achievability of the proposed approach and research **timeline** • Value for money provided by the **budget** • Demonstrated **skills, experience and performance** of the team, including in previous AHURI projects
Unsolicited data Project	Compliance with the: • budget cap • collaboration requirements • project time limits, as set out in Section B2. Compliance with application word limits	• Demonstration that the research topic is a **priority** for Australian housing and homelessness policy • Clarity of the **research questions** and alignment with the research topic • Appropriateness of **methodology** to the research questions • Achievability of the proposed approach and research **timeline** • Value for money provided by the **budget** • Demonstrated **skills, experience and performance** of the team, including in previous AHURI projects

B4 Preparing applications

Application form

There are two different application forms for NHRP project funding:

- applications for Inquiries should use the 'Inquiry Program Application Form'
- all other applications, including for Inquiry Projects, should use the 'Projects and Investigative Panels Application Form'.

All parts of the application form must be completed.

Word limits

The following table sets out the word limits for each section of the application form. These word limits are also stated in the application forms.

To support a fair and equitable application process, AHURI will not progress the assessment of applications which exceed the word limits.

Application part	Maximum words
A: Program or project summary	13 words for program or project title 50 words for precis
B: Program or research team	Not applicable
C: Executive summary	500 words
D: Research proposal	2,000 words total, including tables
E: Risk management	250 words
F: Timeline	Not applicable
G: Budget	150 words for 'budget justification'
H: Distribution of funds	Not applicable
I: Research team	400 words for 'research team statement' No more than one page for each team member's CV
J: References	Not applicable

Program or project summary

Part A of the application form requires summary details for all programs and projects to be provided in a table. Project titles and precis should be precise and interesting, to encourage understanding and engagement from a policy and generalist audience, including the media.

Research lead and team

Part B of the application form requires details for all program or research team members to be provided in a summary table:

- 'affiliation' refers to university affiliation or other relevant institutional affiliation
- 'research team role' refers to key functions for the project.

Mobile phone numbers must be provided for the project leader and at least one other senior team member.

Project leader

The project leader is required to take an active and ongoing role in the management of the research, including responsibility for:

- Project contracting
- Timely delivery of project milestones
- Quality assurance of the Final Report and other deliverables
- Resolution of research challenges.

There is no requirement for the project leader to be the most senior academic in the research team.

AHURI typically expects the project leader to be the first listed author on the Final Report. If it appears likely that another team member will become the first listed author, the project leader should contact the Head of Research Program to discuss proposed arrangements well in advance of Final Report submission.

To enable project contracts and university records to accurately reflect team roles and responsibilities, the nominated project lead must be an employee of the lead university.

Team members who are not university employees, including researchers in adjunct and emeritus roles, can play valuable roles in contributing to projects, sharing expertise and mentoring other researchers. However, due to contracting requirements, they cannot act as project leaders.

First Nations researchers

First Nations people experience systematic disadvantage in Australia, including in relation to housing. Closing the Gap includes a target that people can secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.

All applications for NHRP funding are encouraged to include First Nations team members, engagement with First Nations peoples and consideration of the impacts of the research for First Nations communities.

First Nations Research Project applications must include First Nations team members in meaningful roles. Recognising the wide range of knowledges, relationships and expertise which First Nations people contribute to housing and homelessness research, it is not mandatory for First Nations team members to have university affiliations or formal academic backgrounds.

Early career researchers (ECRs)

Enhancing national policy and research capability is one of AHURI's six Strategic Goals. All applications for NHRP funding are therefore encouraged to include ECRs in the research teams.

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* Given the considerable amount of investment in Inquiries, Inquiry applications must include ECRs in research teams, with appropriate support and supervision.

Executive summary

Part C of the application form requires an executive summary. This should bring together key points from the application, including the:

- research questions and methods
- contribution to housing and homelessness policy priorities.

The executive summary should be able to be read without reference to the remainder of the application. It should not include information which is not provided elsewhere in the application.

* Inquiry Program applications should also include reference to the Inquiry Panels and coordination between Inquiry Projects.

Research relevance and approach

Research relevance and approach must be set out in Part D of the application. A table summarising research questions, data sources, and methodology must be completed as part of the response to this section for all project types other than Inquiry Programs.

The following elements must also be addressed. Beyond the completion of the summary table, applicants can use their preferred response structure to address these elements.

Element	Description
Policy context	Summary of relevant policy context, which may include any pertinent differences across jurisdictions or regions
Research context	Summary of the research context, including existing research and relevant literature and data
Research questions	Small number of clear questions expressed in language suitable for a generalist audience, informed by the policy and research context
Research methods	Detailed description of the proposed methods and rationale for their selection
Research outputs	List of research outputs, which must include a WIP report and Final Report and may include other ways of communicating research findings
Policy outcomes	Description of the ways in which the research will actively inform policy development

* For Inquiry Programs, the research approach needs to include details about Inquiry Panel recruitment, objectives and outcomes, as well as coordination between Inquiry Projects.

  Conversely, applications for Inquiry Projects need to include details about how methods align with the Inquiry Program framework.

Risk management

Research limitations and foreseeable risks must be detailed in Part E of the application form. Risk mitigation actions must be clearly articulated.

Some risks frequently encountered in NHRP projects include:

- difficulty in accessing data
- difficulty in recruiting interview, survey or focus group participants
- lack of availability of team members with critical knowledge or skills.

* For Inquiry Programs, foreseeable risks and risk mitigation actions must be detailed with reference to systems and processes to ensure effective:
  - communication and collaboration within and between Program and Project teams
  - coordination of project timelines and research and report production activities.

Timelines

The applied, policy focussed nature of research funded by the NHRP has implications for the conduct of research and drives high expectations of timeliness in delivery of research. AHURI is committed to conducting timely, high quality, policy relevant research.

It is therefore important that research proposals include timeframes that are realistic and commensurate with the research methods and questions.

Part F of the application form addresses project timelines, which must be outlined in the table provided. The following milestones must be included in the timeline:

- project commencement
- WIP report
- report (which refers to a Final Report submitted for peer review)
- copy edited report (which refers to a revised report following copy editing).

The timeline must also include other key tasks and milestones that are specific to the project, such as key research activities.

Specific delivery dates for AHURI-payable milestones, as indicated in the application form, must also be provided.

It is essential that timelines allow sufficient time to prepare a Final Report that is in AHURI's required format and to the required standard (see Section C4).

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* For Inquiry Program applications, the timeline must also include:
  - delivery of Discussion Papers (which may replace a WIP report)
  - scheduling of Inquiry Panel meetings
  - key tasks and milestones for Inquiry Projects so the overall Program timeline is clear.

Justification of project budget

A statement justifying the value for money of the program or project budget items is required in Part G of the application.

Calculation of project budget

The project budget is provided in Part G of the application form and must reflect the total end-to-end costs of delivering the research project, calculated as per the instructions below.

An NHRP budget calculator in Excel format is provided to assist researchers in calculating project budgets. The spreadsheet includes automated formula which align with the project calculation instructions. If using the budget calculator, please complete the cells shaded blue. The cells shaded grey will calculate automatically.

Once the project budget is completed, the relevant section of the spreadsheet can be copied and pasted into the application form.

Use of the NHRP budget calculator is optional and applicants may use other tools to assist them in preparing the budget, as long as they comply with the instructions provided below and the format included in the application form.

Team budget

Salary costs for each team member are allocated on a per day basis and must be calculated as follows:

- multiply gross annual salary (excluding superannuation) by 1.26 (reflecting 26 per cent on-costs)
- divide by 210 (reflecting the number of working days per year).

For example, a team member with gross annual salary of $117,500 would have a daily salary cost of $705, calculated as follows: $117,500 x 1.26 = $148,050; $148,050 / 210 = $705.

Where a team member 'buys-out' teaching responsibilities to participate in a project, the calculation must reflect the salary of the replacement teacher, not the team member.

The following project stages must be included:

- project management
- WIP report
- report preparation
- copy edited report preparation.

Other relevant project stages, such as literature review, ethics approval, data collection and data analysis, are also to be documented.

✻ The budget for Inquiry Programs should also include delivery of Discussion Papers and Inquiry Panel meetings.

Disbursements budget

This part of the budget should include all non-personnel costs, inclusive of GST. Examples of disbursements may include:

- accommodation
- airfares
- daily travel allowances
- data purchase
- meeting catering
- venue hire.

Infrastructure charge

The 'infrastructure charge' on AHURI projects must not exceed 20 per cent of total project costs.

Use of third party funding

For a range of reasons, including the need to retain the rigour and independence of research, third party funds cannot be used to contribute to a proposed NHRP project budget.

In-kind contributions

In some cases, projects may propose the use of in-kind contributions. Examples include a charity providing access to a dataset free of charge, or a community or government organisation enabling the inclusion of questions on a survey.

Where in-kind contributions are proposed, they must be clearly described in Part G of the application.

In considering in-kind contributions, researchers must be mindful of maintaining the rigour and independence of the research.

Distribution of funds

In most cases, NHRP research teams include researchers from more than one university.

The table in Part H of the application form must be completed to show the funding each participant university will receive. This information is used by AHURI to calculate the total research funding each participant university receives through the NHRP.

For the avoidance of doubt, Part H should be completed even where the project is proposed to be undertaken by one university only.

Research team statement

Part I of the application form requires a statement about research team members that addresses:

- demonstrated relevant skills, experience and performance of team members, including in previous AHURI projects
- the extent to which the team comprises a balance of early- and mid-to-senior researchers and, if relevant, how ECRs will be supported.

CVs are also to be provided for each team member. They should include the team member's ORCID ID and be no longer than one page.

References

The last part of the application, Part J, is provided for the referencing of sources cited throughout the application.

B5 Assessment of applications

Assessment of NHRP applications is conducted in line with rigorous AHURI procedures and in accordance with Australian Competitive Grants Category 1 funding standards. A key feature of the assessment process is the NHRP Research Panel.

The Research Panel ensures the selection and funding of NHRP projects is based on merit. The Panel is established in accordance with the AHURI Participants Agreement and AHURI Constitution.

Research Panel assessment

The Research Panel comprises two categories of membership: assessors and advisors. The nature and role of each category of Panel member is set on the following page.

All Panel members must be independent and free from relationships with applicants. In particular, Australian academics must not be based within universities which are members of the AHURI network nor have recent working relationships with applicants.

Panel members review applications individually, in accordance with the criteria in Section B3. Panel members then come together in a one day meeting to discuss applications and finalise scores.

The outcomes of the meeting are merit ranked lists of applications for:

- Inquiries
- First Nations Research Projects
- Research Projects and Investigative Panels
- Unsolicited Data Projects.

Risk assessment

Following the Research Panel's assessment, AHURI management undertakes an individual and collective risk assessment of projects recommended by the Research Panel for funding. This assessment considers the way in which applications:

- incorporate the expected collaboration between universities
- help in building capacity of ECRs and across the research network
- commission research relevant to all Australian jurisdictions
- engage with international research and policy making.

The risk assessment also includes a financial review to ensure the budgets of recommended projects have been calculated correctly, are within the parameters for the relevant research vehicle and represent value for money.

Category	Description	Role
Assessors		
Policy makers	Each application is assessed by policy makers from Australian Government and state and territory government agencies. The views of these agencies are then represented by **two** Research Panel members, who attend the Panel meeting: • One representing the views of Australian Government agencies • One representing the views of state and territory agencies.	• Review the policy merit of each application • Provide qualitative feedback to the Research Panel • Score each application based on the assessment criteria
Australian academics	Each application is assessed by **two** Australian academics who are independent from applicants. Applications are matched to the relevant expertise of academics. All academic assessors attend the Research Panel meeting.	• Review the academic merit of allocated applications • Provide qualitative feedback to the Research Panel • Score allocated applications based on the assessment criteria
Advisors		
Stakeholder advisors	Stakeholder advisors review the Executive Summary of each application, and full applications on request. **Three** stakeholder advisors attend the Research Panel meeting: • One representing the perspectives of industry and the private sector • One representing the perspectives of the community and not-for-profit sector • One representing the views of Australian data custodians.	• Provide qualitative feedback to the Research Panel

B6 Approval of funding

Board approval

The AHURI Board approves the allocation of annual research funding each year, based on the recommendations of the Research Panel. This typically occurs at the Board's November meeting.

In considering the funding allocation, the Board receives a range of information, including the:

- merit ranking of applications by the Research Panel
- funding requested by each application
- risk assessment prepared by AHURI management.

Notification of outcomes

As soon as possible after the relevant Board meeting, RCDs in each partner university are verbally advised of the Funding Round outcomes by AHURI's Head of Research Program.

Successful applicants are then formally notified of Funding Round outcomes in December, with outcomes embargoed while contracting between AHURI and successful applicant universities is undertaken.

AHURI provides feedback to project leaders of successful funding applications as part of the project commencement stage (see Section C2). Feedback on unsuccessful applications is provided on request.

Key stakeholders, including Ministers, agency Chief Executives and university Deputy Vice Chancellors of Research, are informed in writing of outcomes early in the new year.

PART C:

Delivering funded research

C1 Overview

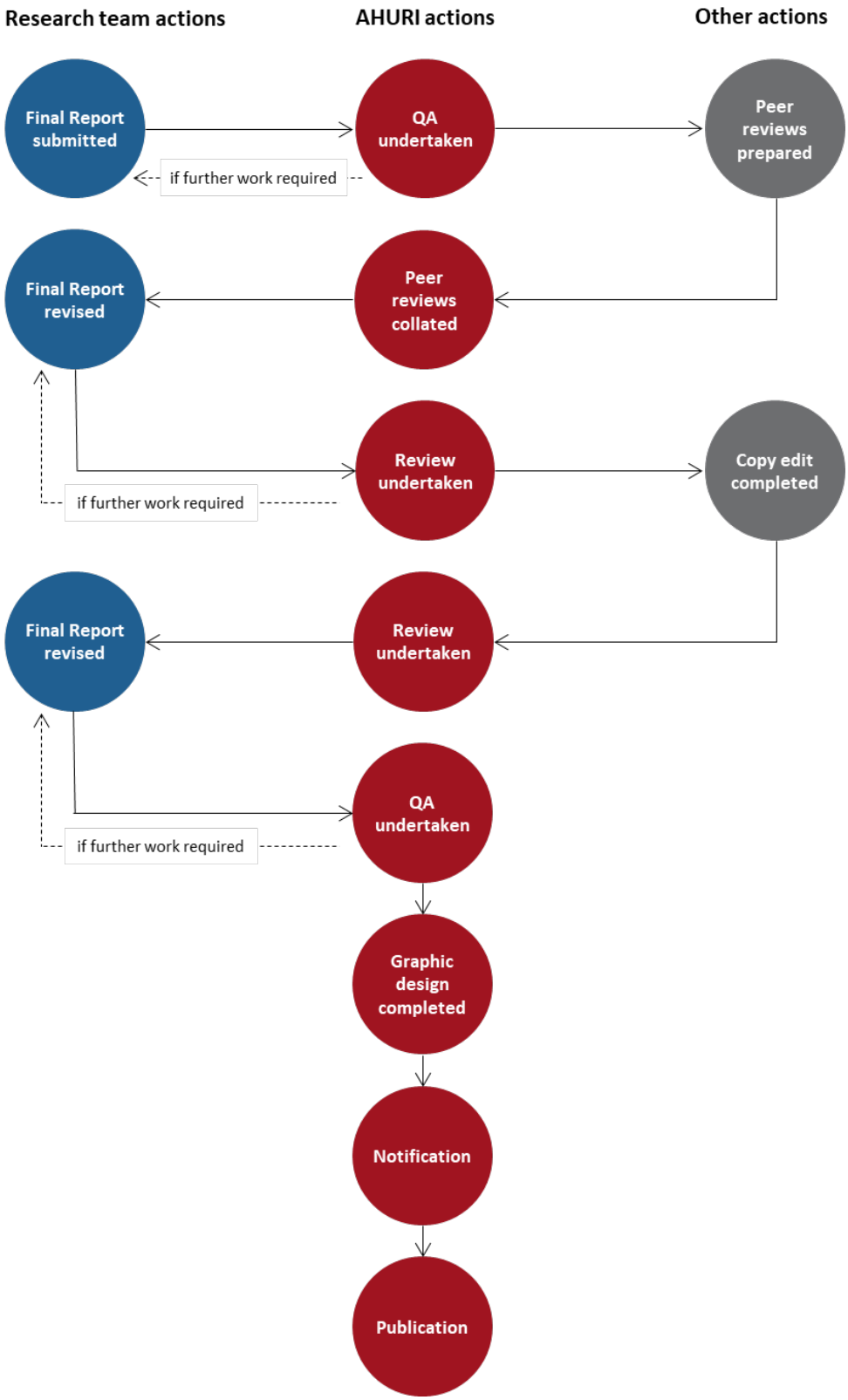
There are six key stages in the delivery of NHRP-funded research projects and publication of Final Reports, as summarised below. The remainder of Part C provides further information on each of these stages.

Following publication of a Final Report, AHURI engages in research dissemination activities, as outlined in Part D.

Stage	Description	Key outputs
Contracting and commencement	Project plan finalisation and contract execution between AHURI and project leader's university.	Executed contract
Research and project management	Research and project management activities conducted in accordance with the contracted project plan.	WIP report and Discussion Papers
Report production and quality assurance	Structuring, drafting and editing of Final Report in accordance with AHURI's template and style guide; AHURI quality assurance review.	Final Report
Peer review	Double blind peer review of Final Report and preparation of revised report.	Revised report
Copy editing	Professional copy editing of revised Final Report and preparation of pre-publication version of report.	Copy edited report
Publication	Professional graphic design of Final Report, notification to funding agencies and publication.	Published Final Report

A diagram of the process from submission to publication of a Final Report is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Process from submission to publication of Final Report



C2 Contracting and commencement

The key activities undertaken in the contracting and commencement stage of a NHRP project are described below.

Contracting

The contracting process between AHURI and successful applicants begins immediately after the notification of outcomes, typically in early December. The intention is for contracts to be signed by AHURI and universities as soon as possible to enable prompt project commencement. All projects should be contracted by March of the year the project commences, and preferably before.

Note that AHURI does not become involved with, nor is it a party to, subcontracting arrangements between the project leader's university and other universities (i.e. those of other research team members). These are matters for the respective universities to resolve.

Commencement

A NHRP-funded research project can commence once the contract is executed.

Changes to project deliverable dates

The applied and policy focussed nature of NHRP-funded research drives high expectations of timeliness. This has implications for changes to contracted project deliverable dates.

Such changes will only be considered where there are issues which the project leader could not have reasonably predicted. They are more likely to be granted where the project leader has communicated with AHURI well in advance.

Dates changes will typically be documented through an exchange of emails with AHURI's Head of Research Program. If a Final Report is unlikely to be published before the contract end date, a contract variation will be required.

Invoicing

Payment by AHURI for contracted deliverables is made on receipt of an invoice from the project leader's university.

Invoices can only be issued following written notification that AHURI has accepted the relevant deliverable.

C3 Research and project management

Research teams conduct research and project management activities in accordance with their contracted project plan. The key outputs from this stage of a NHRP project are described below.

Work in progress (WIP) report

The WIP report is an important project milestone for NHRP projects.

The due date for the WIP report is contained in a project's deliverable schedule. It is usually not required until several months into the research phase.

The purpose of the WIP report is to inform AHURI of:

- progress against timelines
- preliminary findings
- next steps.

The WIP report can also provide a useful foundation for the Final Report.

The WIP report is crucial for identifying issues that may impact project delivery, such as ethics applications, access to data or participants, or team member capacity. If AHURI's Research Program team is advised of such issues in a timely way, whether in the WIP report or through direct engagement, it will be more likely to be able to assist or mitigate project delays.

WIP reports are to be completed using a template which is available from the AHURI Research Program team.

Once AHURI has formally accepted a project's WIP report, it will provide written notification to the project leader. This acceptance enables the submission of an invoice for payment.

Ethics approval

Project leaders must ensure that NHRP-funded research is conducted ethically and complies with their university's policies and procedures. This may include complying with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and having the research approach approved by the relevant ethics committee.

Discussion Papers

The submission of Discussion Papers is an important project milestone for Inquiry Programs, with relevant due dates contained in a program's deliverable schedule.

The Discussion Paper is an important input for an Inquiry Panel. It needs to:

- outline the purpose of the Inquiry Panel meeting, including articulating the policy issue and key questions for discussion
- detail the Inquiry's conceptual framework, including research methods and structure for individual Inquiry Projects
- discuss preliminary findings and their policy development implications, as well as potential policy development options.

Discussion Papers are due six weeks prior to an Inquiry Panel meeting being held.

They are to be prepared using a template which is available from the AHURI Research team.

Once AHURI has formally accepted an Inquiry Program's Discussion Paper, we will provide written notification to the project leader. This enables the submission of an invoice for payment.

C4 Report production and quality assurance

While, in practice, the research and project management stage and the report production stage of delivering a NHRP project will overlap, this section focuses on the key activities undertaken during the latter stage. In this context, report production refers to:

- the structuring, drafting and editing of a Final Report in readiness for submission to AHURI for peer review
- AHURI's assessment of a submitted report's readiness for peer review.

The Final Report is the principal means by which AHURI research is communicated to our target audiences and is therefore the key project output.

Report format

Audience

AHURI Final Reports need to be both academically rigorous and able to be used by policy makers, industry, community organisations and other non-technical readers. This broader audience means reports should be structured and written in a more accessible way than an academic journal article.

Template

Final Reports are to be completed using the AHURI Final Report template, which is provided to project leaders and available from AHURI's Research Program team; also available is a Final Report template information sheet. Reports remain as editable Word documents until they have been peer reviewed and copy edited. To simplify the work of report writers and AHURI's graphic designers, the template uses minimal formatting.

Word limits

Feedback shows that AHURI readers value reports which are evidence based, rigorous and relatively concise. To be accepted for peer review, Final Reports must conform to the following word limits:

- minimum of 15,000 words
- maximum of 35,000 words.

Reports of around 25,000 words are especially welcome.

Word limits exclude title pages, front matter (including report summary), references and appendices.

AHURI style

Style guide

AHURI uses the Australian Government's online Australian Style guide, which is the leading resource for government and business writing in Australia. The website is frequently updated to respond to changing communications practices, including in digital accessibility.

Where Australian Style is silent on a matter or provides options, writers should choose a preference and be consistent throughout the report.

Visual communications

AHURI strongly encourages researchers to incorporate visual ways of communicating information, including tables, graphs, images, maps and professional-quality infographics. Please ensure you have permission to use all figures and photographs included in the report.

Graphs

The associated data for each chart and graph should be submitted along with your report in a clearly identified Excel file. To make your graphs as user friendly as possible, clearly display the data values with their respective data point and label the axes.

Spelling, capitalisation and AHURI terms

Spelling should use English 's' spelling, not American 'z' spellings (for example, 'urbanise' rather than 'urbanize'). Capitalisation should align with direction provided in the Australian Style guide and be consistent throughout the report. AHURI-specific terms should be written as follows:

- Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)
- National Housing Research Program (NHRP)
- Final Report
- Inquiry
- Investigative Panel
- AHURI Research Centre—[insert full university name].

Referencing

AHURI uses the 'author-date' referencing style, as set out in the Australian Style website. This way of referenceing is based on the Harvard style. It provides details for author and date in the text, with full citations in a list of references at the end of the report.

Report submission

Please provide the following when submitting a Final Report for peer review:

- Word version of your report in the AHURI template
- Excel spreadsheet with a data table for each chart or graph used in your report
- clearly labelled, high resolution files of all images.

The project leader needs to ensure – and personally certify on the report template cover sheet – that their report is submitted at a standard that will satisfy AHURI's quality assurance review, outlined below.

Quality assurance review

Once a Final Report is submitted, it is reviewed by AHURI's Research Program team to ensure that it:

- complies with AHURI's word length parameters
- aligns with our report template and style requirements
- addresses the policy issues, research approach and scope set out in the project plan and WIP report
- is logically structured and written in a consistent and clear voice that is appropriate for a policy and generalist audience
- shows clear evidence of having been thoroughly reviewed, edited and proofread by an experienced writer.

If the Final Report satisfies AHURI's quality assurance review, it will progress to peer review (see Section C5). If not, the report will be returned to the project leader with a request that it be rectified and resubmitted.

C5 Peer review

The key activities undertaken during peer review of a NHRP project are described below.

Peer review process

All Final Reports published under the NHRP undergo double blind peer review. AHURI maintains a panel of international and Australian academic peer reviewers who are independent of AHURI's research network and have expertise in a range of housing-related subject areas or relevant disciplinary expertise.

Each Final Report, once accepted for peer review, is confidentialised then allocated to two peer reviewers with relevant expertise.

Peer review criteria and recommendations

Peer reviewers assess a report against six criteria:

- purpose of the report and research questions stated clearly
- report makes an important contribution to policy, practice and the literature
- literature, policy and practice is appropriate to the research questions
- methods are explicit, sound and appropriate to the research questions
- findings are relevant to policy and practice and supported by the analysis
- writing is clear, direct and effective.

Peer reviewers also recommend whether a Final Report should be:

- published as is
- published with minor changes
- published with substantial changes
- not published.

Responding to peer review

The peer review takes the form of a short report which addresses the criteria and makes a recommendation. It is expected that the research team will address all comments made by peer reviewers, with changes made in a subsequent draft.

The project leader is required to provide AHURI with a:

- clean copy of the revised Final Report
- copy of the revised Final Report with changes tracked
- document detailing responses to reviewer comments.

The response document needs to identify the changes requested in the peer reviews and the changes made by the research team, including relevant page numbers of the revised report.

Clear reasons must be provided if any recommended changes have not been made.

AHURI review

Once AHURI receives a revised Final Report, we assesses whether the report has been adequately amended. In some cases, further changes or clarification may be required from the project leader.

Following our formal acceptance of a revised Final Report, AHURI will provide written notification to the project leader. This acceptance enables the submission of an invoice for payment.

The Final Report will then progress to the copy editing stage.

C6 Copy editing

The key activities undertaken during the copy editing stage of a NHRP report are described below.

Copy edits

All Final Reports are professionally copy edited prior to publication. The copy edited version of the report will contain recommended tracked changes and, in most cases, tracked comments by the editor regarding queries, suggestions or instructions. These comments are focused on compliance with AHURI's report template and associated style requirements.

AHURI reviews all copy editor comments before the edited Final Report is provided to the project leader.

It should also be noted that AHURI takes an active role in research management and reserves the right to require that a report be altered prior to publication.

Revising the report

The copy edited version of the Final Report will be provided to the project leader with a request that the final version of the report be returned to AHURI usually within two weeks. The project leader may be asked to provide both clean and tracked versions of the report.

The project leader may also be requested to provide any other elements of their report that will be required during the publication stage (see Section C7), such as updated data for tables or higher resolution image files.

Importantly, this is also the final opportunity for the project leader to review and proofread the Final Report before publication. It is highly recommended that project leaders do so.

AHURI review

On receipt of a revised Final Report, AHURI will assess whether the report is acceptable for publication. In some cases, further changes or clarification may be required from the project leader.

Once AHURI has formally accepted the post-copy edited revised Final Report, we will provide written notification to the project leader. This acceptance enables the submission of the final invoice for payment.

C7 Publication

The key activities undertaken during the publication stage of a NHRP report are described below.

Graphic design

Once a Final Report has been accepted by AHURI after peer review and copy editing, it will be professionally graphic designed for publication.

Please see the AHURI research library for examples of graphic designed reports.

During this stage, the Final Report will be provisionally scheduled for publication. There may be liaison between AHURI's Marketing and Communications and/or Research Program teams with the project leader to finalise details, such as cover image selection or the project leader's availability for post-publication research dissemination activities (see Part D).

Notification

Final Reports are provided to funding agencies 10 working days prior to publication, under embargo. This process, known as 'notification', allows agencies to familiarise themselves with the report prior to public release, and provide internal briefings as required.

The notification period is not an opportunity for research teams to request changes to their report.

Occasionally, agencies will request corrections to a Final Report during the notification period. AHURI will only consider such requests where it is believed an error of fact has been made.

AHURI discusses any requests for change with the project leader, who may then liaise with the research team.

AHURI does not make changes to a Final Report without the knowledge and agreement of the project leader.

Publication

As the final steps in the process, AHURI:

- organises for the Final Report to be allocated an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
- publishes the document on the AHURI website.

PART D:

Disseminating research

D1 Dissemination activities

Once a Final Report is published, AHURI actively disseminates findings through our website and email newsletter, social media and potentially other media channels (see Section D2). AHURI also prepares a 'plain English' Research Summary to support the publication of Final Reports, which accompanies the report on our website.

AHURI may disseminate NHRP-funded research in other ways, including webinars, one-day conferences and discussion series, and at the National Housing Conference and Australian Homelessness Conference.

Project leaders and researchers are encouraged to present the results of NHRP-funded research at conferences and other housing or social policy related events.

D2 Media liaison

Media promotion

AHURI's approach to media engagement is strategically tailored for each Final Report—some reports address issues likely to generate media interest, while others are more relevant to a technical or policy audience. As such, AHURI considers each Final Report for media promotion.

When media engagement is proposed, a draft media release is prepared by AHURI and finalised in consultation with the project leader. AHURI engages with relevant journalists and liaises with the project leader to coordinate media coverage.

Where a Final Report is considered likely by AHURI to be of minimal media interest, proactive media outreach will be restrained. Nonetheless, in such cases, AHURI will support the project leader's university to undertake media engagement if they wish to do so.

Media requests

AHURI receives numerous media requests for comment on research findings. In these instances, our Media Specialist will liaise with the relevant RCD or project leader.

Should researchers be contacted directly by the media for comments on NHRP-funded research, they should advise AHURI's Head of Research Program or Media Specialist so that media interest can be coordinated in a strategic manner, and so AHURI can further publicise media coverage.

No comments regarding unpublished NHRP-funded research can be made to the media without permission from AHURI.

Acknowledging AHURI

AHURI requires that all comments to the media regarding NHRP-funded research acknowledges that the research was 'undertaken for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute'.

PART E:

AHURI key contacts

Research Program

For questions about applying for or delivering NHRP research, please contact the Research Program team:

Dr Rachel Trigg
Head of Research Program
rachel.trigg@ahuri.edu.au
0407 016 659

Dr John Doyle
Senior Manager Research Program
john.doyle@ahuri.edu.au
0412 720 096

research@ahuri.edu.au

Media

For questions about media liaison, please contact:

Ged Cann
Media Specialist
ged.cann@ahuri.edu.au
0402 896 066

APPENDIX I:

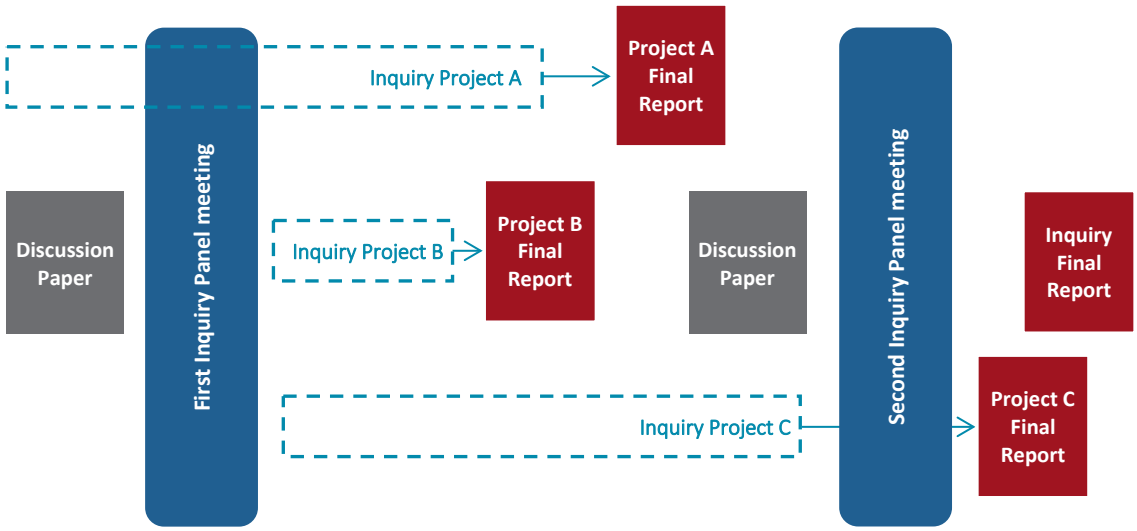
Potential inquiry structures

Inquiry Program with two Panel meetings

Figure 4 illustrates the standard structure of an Inquiry Program. It features two Inquiry Panel meetings, the:

- first to engage with senior stakeholders early in the research process
- second to discuss findings and policy development options.

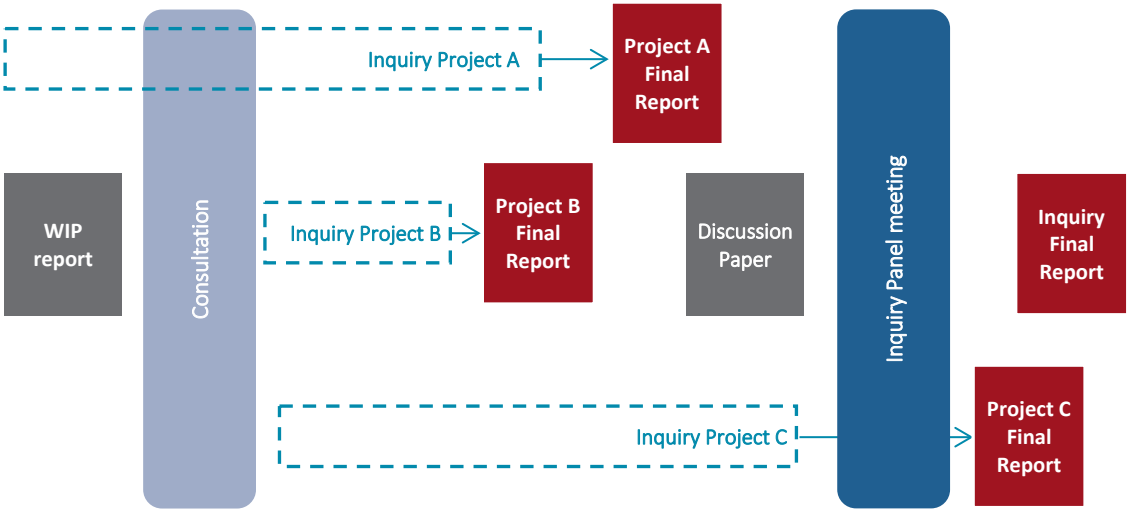
Figure 4: Inquiry Program with two Panel meetings



Inquiry Program with broader consultation and one Panel meeting

Figure 5 represents an alternative structure, in which the a WIP Report is substituted for the Discussion Paper and the first Inquiry Panel meeting is substituted with broader consultation.

Figure 5: Inquiry Program with broader consultation and one Panel meeting



Inquiry Program with one Panel meeting

Figure 6 illustrates a leaner program, in which there are:

- fewer Inquiry Projects
- no initial Inquiry Panel meeting
- a WIP report provided at an appropriate time in the Inquiry.

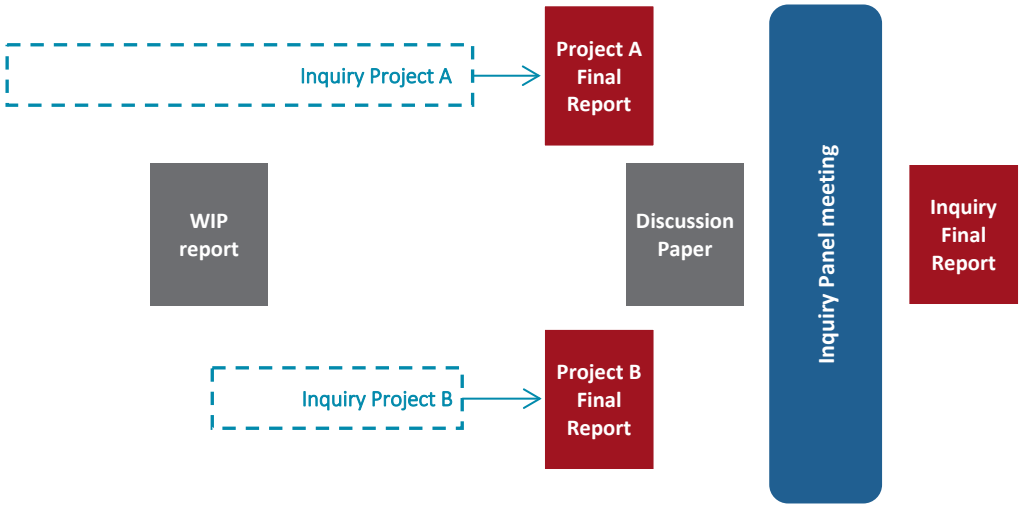



Figure 6: Inquiry Program with one Panel meeting