The Cochrane Collaboration

Round 6 Funding Guidelines

March 2013
1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Australian Government, through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), invests in health and medical research to address national health priorities and improve the health status of all Australians.

In particular, under the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act), it supports the development of rigorous, evidence-based advice for both health practitioners and the broader Australian community. Further, the NHMRC Strategic Plan, endorsed by the Minister for Health and Ageing, identifies “Accelerate research translation” as a key priority so that health care and the prevention of illness is based on evidence. The NHMRC Strategic Plan can be found at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au.

In recognising the need to support and facilitate the translation of evidence into practice and systems designed to prevent illnesses and improve public health, the Australian Government has a long-standing involvement with The Cochrane Collaboration. The NHMRC Strategic Plan recognises the work of The Cochrane Collaboration and aims both to support it and promote increased community access to its systematic reviews.

The Cochrane Collaboration is an international, independent and not-for-profit organisation of over 28,000 contributors from more than 100 countries that aims to promote evidence-based practice in service provision and clinical health care. Cochrane systematic reviews are a key element in improving the quality and accessibility of the evidence to support health care decision-making.

Australia is recognised as a major contributor to the work of the international Cochrane Collaboration in improving the quality of health care in Australia and around the world. A range of Cochrane Collaboration entities are either primarily based in Australia or are undertaking substantial work here.

The Cochrane Collaboration prepares, maintains and promotes the accessibility of systematic reviews of health care interventions which are published in the Cochrane Library which is made available free of charge to all Australians with Commonwealth Government funding. Cochrane reviews are intended to help providers, practitioners and patients make informed decisions about health care, and are the most comprehensive, reliable and relevant source of evidence on which to base these decisions.

NHMRC has funding available under the Health and Medical Research Program (Program) for three years (1 July 2013 – 30 June 2016) to support Australian-based Cochrane Collaboration activities. The funding will be used to support the work of the Australasian Cochrane Centre (ACC), Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) and Satellites of CRGs (SCRGs) that provide editorial and other support for Cochrane systematic reviews and their authors.

With the commencement of Round 6 in 2013, changes have been made to the Guidelines to strengthen requirements, better target funding and make them more consistent with the
NHMRC Strategic Plan in supporting the production of high-quality systematic reviews. Specifically, the Guidelines for Round 6:

- provide greater clarity around who is eligible to apply for funding under the Program; and
- better articulate the assessment criteria for applications to ensure that they continue to align well with the overarching funding objectives.

1.2 Purpose of the Guidelines

These Guidelines set out the policy and processes for administration and delivery of the Program. They replace all earlier versions of the Guidelines and Assessment Criteria – Funding to support Australian-Based Cochrane Collaboration Activities documents. The NHMRC reserves the right to amend these Guidelines at any time. Should the Guidelines be amended, applicants will be notified and a revised copy of the Guidelines will be distributed.

Before lodging an application, prospective applicants should read these Guidelines and the standard Funding Agreement at Attachment A to ensure that their organisation is capable of meeting the NHMRC’s requirements for funding recipients. In the event of any conflict between these Guidelines and the Funding Agreements, the relevant Funding Agreement will take precedence.

1.3 Program Objectives

Through the funding of The Cochrane Collaboration, the overall objectives of the Australian Government are to:

- support the conduct of work on systematic reviews that address the National Health Priority Areas endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers and identified in the NHMRC Strategic Plan including:
  - Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Conditions
  - Asthma
  - Cancer Control
  - Cardiovascular Health and Stroke
  - Dementia
  - Diabetes Mellitus
  - Injury Prevention and Control
  - Mental Health (with a focus on depression)
  - Obesity
- further NHMRC priorities including:
  - improving the health of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders
  - preparing Australia for the ‘omnics’ revolution in health care
  - primary health care
  - multiple and complex chronic disease
  - fostering a healthy start to life
• claiming benefits from human health not based on evidence
• new and emerging health threats
• health and research in our region
• support the development of rigorous, evidence-based advice for both health practitioners and the broader Australian community; and
• contribute to the body of knowledge around evidence-informed policy.

2. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

This section sets out the roles and responsibilities under the Program for Cochrane entities and the NHMRC.

The Program will be underpinned by strong partnerships between the NHMRC and the ACC, the CRGs and the SCRGs to support people around the world who undertake systematic reviews in their chosen field.

2.1 Australasian Cochrane Centre (ACC)

The ACC is responsible for facilitating and supporting the work of The Cochrane Collaboration in Australasia. It will do this by:

• training and supporting review authors and contributors to The Cochrane Collaboration in Australasia;
• providing coordination of Australasian Cochrane activities;
• working collaboratively with the NHMRC Research Translation Faculty;
• developing and implementing strategies to maximise usage of The Cochrane Library and update of Cochrane systematic reviews;
• contributing substantially to the international Cochrane Collaboration; and
• contributing to regional Cochrane Collaboration activity.

The ACC is also responsible for:

• actively monitoring and reporting to the NHMRC in accordance with its Funding Agreement;
• meeting all obligations contained in the Funding Agreement, including acquitting all funding; and
• adhering to recognition and acknowledgement requirements as required by the Funding Agreement.

2.2 Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) and Satellites of CRGs (SCRGs)

CRGs and SCRGs are responsible for:

• producing, disseminating and maintaining current systematic reviews of interventions relevant to the health issue, as identified in the application;
• providing health consumers, health professionals, health funders and the health industry in Australia and throughout the world with summaries of the best available evidence for the management of a specific health issue, as identified in their application, in accordance with the principles of The Cochrane Collaboration;
• providing opportunities for clinicians and consumers to contribute to the development and preparation of Cochrane reviews;
• encouraging all clinicians, policy makers and consumers involved in the identified health area to use Cochrane reviews for information needs on the effects of interventions;
• where appropriate, providing relevant information from their review products to guideline and policy developers; and
• fulfilling The Cochrane Collaboration’s reporting requirements for CRGs.

CRGs and SCRGs are also responsible for:
• actively monitoring and reporting to the NHMRC in accordance with their Funding Agreements;
• meeting all obligations contained in the Funding Agreements, including acquitting all funding;
• ensuring projects correctly adhere to recognition and acknowledgement requirements as required by the Funding Agreements; and
• participating in, and meeting monitoring and evaluation obligations.

2.3 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

NHMRC is responsible for the overall management of the Program and will develop and maintain strong relationships and provide support to key stakeholders, including The Cochrane Collaboration by:

• communicating regularly with Cochrane entities in Australia to ensure consistency in interpretation and application of policy by acting as a reference point, final arbiter, and policy helpdesk;
• assigning a NHMRC officer as a point of contact to provide operational support for approved projects;
• developing and updating Program documentation;
• communicating and reporting on the Program in the public domain; and
• managing complaints in relation to Program funding and/or administration.

Throughout the life of the funding, the NHMRC is also responsible for:
• advising the Minister and other Australian Government departments about The Cochrane Collaboration;
• evaluating applications and making recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer regarding in principle approval of individual projects;
• making decisions in relation to the administration of the Program;
• working with Cochrane entities, as appropriate, to negotiate final funding amounts and execute Funding Agreements;
• making and monitoring payments and managing financial compliance under the relevant Funding Agreements; and
• managing the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Program.

3. Eligibility Requirements
This section outlines the eligibility requirements for funding under the Program. Applications which do not meet eligibility requirements will not be considered. However, the NHMRC reserves the right to waive eligibility requirements in the case of exceptional or unforeseen circumstances.

3.1 Cochrane registration and approval
To be eligible to receive funding under the Program, an entity must be a Cochrane Centre registered by The Cochrane Collaboration, a CRG registered by The Cochrane Collaboration or a SCRG approved by The Cochrane Collaboration. To be registered as a Cochrane Centre or CRG, or approved as a SCRG, each entity must be assessed against a set of agreed criteria as determined by The Cochrane Collaboration. More information about the Cochrane registration and approval processes can be found at The Cochrane Collaboration website at www.cochrane.org.

3.2 ACC, CRGs and SCRGs
To be eligible to receive funding under the Program, an entity must be the ACC, a CRG or a SCRG in Australia, where:

**ACC:** The ACC is the overarching Cochrane Centre that facilitates and supports the work of The Cochrane Collaboration in Australasia.

**CRGs:** CRGs are registered Cochrane entities with their sole editorial base in Australia.

**SCRGs:** SCRGs are approved Cochrane entities with an overseas editorial base or with dual editorial bases one of which is in Australia. SCRGs must undertake a substantial component of their work in Australia and have an established record of providing support to Australian Cochrane review authors.
3.3 Administering Institution

Applications must be certified and submitted by an NHMRC registered Administering Institution. Further information on becoming an Administering Institution can be found in the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy at: http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admininst.htm.

4. Funding

This section provides information about the level of Program funding and the funding approval process.

4.1 Funding levels

There is no minimum amount of funding that an entity can seek for an individual application. Entities can apply for funding for one, two or three years. The maximum amount of funding an entity can apply for is as follows:

**ACC:** The ACC can apply for up to **$700,000 (GST exclusive)** per annum.

**CRGs:** Entities in this category can apply for up to **$120,000 (GST exclusive)** per annum each.

**SCRGs:** Entities in this category can apply for up to **$60,000 (GST exclusive)** per annum each.

4.2 Funding approval process

**Step 1** NHMRC will open the funding round and call for applications.

**Step 2** Applications received from eligible organisations.

**Step 3** Applications will be evaluated by the Australasian Cochrane Collaboration Review Panel (ACCRP) in accordance with Section 5 of these Guidelines.

**Step 4** The NHMRC will seek in principle approval from the Chief Executive Officer to fund applications recommended by the ACCRP.

**Step 5** Applicants will be notified of recommendations in writing.

**Step 6** Funding Agreements negotiated and executed.

The level of funding awarded to each entity will be based on merit.

If a Cochrane entity disagrees with the NHMRC’s decision about final funding, the entity should lodge a written complaint with the NHMRC (see Section 7.4 below).
4.3 Timeframes

Australian Government funding for Cochrane Collaboration activities has previously been provided through five funding rounds. Round 6 will allocate funding for the 2013/14 to 2015/16 year period. The closing time for applications for Round 6 is **2pm Friday, 5 April 2013, Canberra Time**.

Without limiting any other rights, NHMRC may suspend or discontinue the application process or the Program.

5. Assessment of Applications

This section provides details about how applications will be assessed.

5.1 Australasian Cochrane Collaboration Review Panel (ACCRP)

The NHMRC has established the ACCRP (the Panel) to assess each application against a set of assessment criteria. The Panel comprises Australian and international experts in systematic reviews. The Panel will evaluate applications against the criteria set out in Section 5.2 or 5.3 (Assessment Criteria) as appropriate.

5.2 Assessment Criteria for the ACC

The Panel will evaluate an application from the ACC to determine whether it represents high quality and will achieve value for public money for the Australian Government. In evaluating the application the Panel will consider the ACC’s capacity to:

- train and support review authors and contributors to The Cochrane Collaboration in Australasia;
- inform healthcare decisions through the uptake of Cochrane systematic reviews; and
- contribute substantially to the international Cochrane Collaboration.

5.3 Assessment Criteria for CRGs and SCRGs

The Panel will evaluate applications individually to determine whether they represent high quality and will achieve value with public money for the Australian Government.

Each application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of lodgement, as this will be used as the prime source of information available to the ACCRP. The NHMRC reserves the right to use any information acquired from the applicant or any other source in the assessment of applications. It may also use information provided by an applicant in response to one assessment criterion in considering any **other criterion**.

NHMRC may seek clarification or additional information from an applicant for the purposes of assessing an application.
In evaluating applications the Panel will consider quality, collaborative engagement, capacity and sustainability and significance.

5.3.1 Quality
This criterion examines the degree to which the application:

- focuses on a particular health problem or health care area;
- demonstrates the ability of the CRG or SCRG to support individuals who prepare and maintain one or more systematic reviews relevant to the scope of the CRG or SCRG;
- demonstrates how the CRG or SCRG will ensure that the systematic reviews it supports and publishes are comprehensible to the non-specialist and use outcomes that matter to people making choices in health care; and
- demonstrates how the CRG or SCRG will ensure the consistently high quality of the systematic reviews it produces.

5.3.2 Collaborative Engagement
This criterion examines the degree to which the application:

- demonstrates how the editorial bases will support the CRG’s or SCRG’s members (e.g. authors, consumers, editors);
- avoids duplication of effort across The Cochrane Collaboration, particularly between other CRGs and SCRGs;
- facilitates wide participation in the work of the CRG or SCRG by reducing barriers to contributing, encouraging diversity, and involving people with different skills and backgrounds;
- promotes effective and efficient communication between CRG and SCRG members; and
- demonstrates how the CRG or SCRG communicates effectively with key stakeholders.

5.3.3 Capacity and Sustainability
This criterion examines the degree to which the application demonstrates:

- a capacity to sustain and continue the CRG’s or SCRG’s program of work;
- the ability of the CRG or SCRG to undertake the objectives as specified in these Guidelines;
- the past performance of the CRG or SCRG; and
- the nature and value of contributions to the project made by other parties.

5.3.4 Significance
This criterion examines the degree to which the application:

- demonstrates how the project will deliver direct and indirect benefits to the Australian population and health and medical research community and relates to National Health Priority Areas and NHMRC priorities; and
demonstrates how the project will deliver direct and indirect benefits to the International population and health and medical research community.

All applications will be ranked Excellent, Very Good, Good or Poor against each of the four criteria. A Poor rating against any criterion will deem the application unsuccessful and it will no longer be considered for funding.

6. Funding Administration

6.1 Funding Agreement Conditions and Obligations

This section provides important information about funding conditions and obligations.

6.1.1 Funding Conditions

Funding is available to support a broad range of Cochrane activities including review author training and support, methodological development, consumer involvement, staffing, data management, communication and meeting expenses, travel expenses, equipment, consumables and capital expenses. Funding is not to be used wholly or mainly for infrastructure purposes.

Research infrastructure includes facilities necessary to the research endeavour that a responsible institution with research as a part of its mission would be expected to supply as a prerequisite to its engagement in research, and includes:

- Physical space and all the services associated with it;
- Furniture for research staff;
- Administrative services;
- Office services and consumables that are not specific to the research project;
- Laboratory services and consumables that are not specific to the research project;
- Animal house facilities;
- Computer networks and basic network utilities; and
- Personal computers, related network peripherals and software needed for communicating, writing, and undertaking simple analyses.

Research infrastructure does not include:

- Office services and consumables that are specific to the project;
- Individual human research subjects or research animal services specific to the project;
- Laboratory services and consumables that are specific to the project;
- Computer network facilities required to meet project specific needs;
- Personal computers, related network peripherals and software required to meet project specific needs; and
- Other items of equipment that are required to meet project specific needs.

Funding will not be provided for the completion of individual reviews.
Annual financial reports acquitting the funds received will be required of funding recipients.

6.1.2 Funding Instrument

Commonwealth funding will be provided through the standard Funding Agreement for this Program (Attachment A). This agreement will set out in detail the terms and conditions of the funding and the deliverables required by the Commonwealth during the funding period. Funding Agreements will include, amongst other things, the following details:

- the approved project;
- funding approved by the Australian Government;
- expected commencement and completion dates for the project;
- reporting milestones; and
- payment schedule.

Applicants should ensure they are familiar with and, where necessary, seek legal advice on the terms and conditions of the standard Funding Agreement to ensure that their organisation is capable of meeting the NHMRC’s requirements.

Any requests for changes to the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement are to be submitted along with the application form and will be considered as part of the assessment process.

The NHMRC may not consider requests for changes to the terms and conditions of the funding agreement if received after the closing time for applications.

A copy of the standard Funding Agreement is at Attachment A to these guidelines.

6.1.3 Variations to Funding Agreements

The NHMRC will consider variations to Funding Agreements on a case-by-case basis.

The NHMRC will not approve requests to:

- increase funds beyond the approved grant amount; or
- substitute a wholly new project for the project outlined in the application.

6.2 Insurances

All applicants should ensure they maintain currency for the following insurances:

- worker’s compensation insurance for an amount required by the relevant State or Territory legislation;
- public liability insurance for an amount of not less than ten million dollars ($10,000,000); and
- professional indemnity insurance for an amount of not less than ten million dollars ($10,000,000).
6.3 Goods and Services Tax

Applicants are to apply for funding on a GST exclusive basis. Those entities registered for GST may be liable for GST on the funding they receive from the NHMRC under the Funding Agreement. This will depend on whether the payment of the funding to the particular entity satisfies the requirements of subsection 9-17(3) of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (Cth) (*GST Act*) such that the funding will be exempt from GST as an appropriation.

Where the entity is liable for GST under the Funding Agreement, the NHMRC will pay an additional amount on account of GST to that entity, subject to the receipt of a valid tax invoice.

Applicants should note that where the Funding Agreement is signed by a public university (or other government related entity), for GST purposes, the payments will, prima facie, be considered by the Commonwealth as an appropriation and therefore not subject to GST (pursuant to subsection 9-17(3) of the GST Act).

If a public university (or other government related entity) applicant believes that GST is payable on any funding payable under the Funding Agreement, the onus will be on the applicant to substantiate to the NHMRC’s satisfaction that the payment is subject to GST.

6.4 Compliance with Funding Agreements

The NHMRC will monitor compliance with the obligations of funding recipients under their Funding Agreements. This includes whether Program funds are being used properly and efficiently, and whether Program objectives have been achieved. The NHMRC may withdraw funds if the project has not commenced within agreed time frames. The project will be monitored through the annual reporting obligations for the remainder of the grant period.

6.5 Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The NHMRC will be responsible for evaluating the Program’s appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency in achieving Program outcomes.

Key stakeholders, including Cochrane entities, may be asked to participate and contribute to Program monitoring and evaluation activities.

The data and reporting requirements for each Cochrane entity are outlined in the Funding Agreement and any subsequent variations agreed by the NHMRC.

7. Additional Information

This section provides important information about obligations of the NHMRC and stakeholders in administering the Program.
7.1 Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct

Research funded by NHMRC must comply with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code), which can be found at: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39). Particular reference should be made to Chapter 7 that examines Conflict of Interest.

The Funding Agreement contains provisions for the handling of allegations of research misconduct. Applicants and grant holders are referred to the NHMRC Policy on Actions to be taken in the event of research misconduct involving NHMRC funding. This is available at: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/funding/funded/manage/policy/policy_research_misconduct_nhmrc_funding.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/funding/funded/manage/policy/policy_research_misconduct_nhmrc_funding.pdf).

If an applicant has a conflict of interest, NHMRC may exclude the application from consideration or take any other action it considers appropriate.

7.2 Freedom of Information (FOI)

NHMRC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the FOI Act) and is committed to meeting the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability requirements. Changes to the FOI legislation as of late 2010 have implications for the way in which NHMRC responds to and reports on, requests for information under the FOI Act. The FOI Act provides a legal right of access to any person to obtain documents of Commonwealth agencies. Access to documents may only be refused where the FOI Act provides a legal basis for the refusal, such as where the documents are exempt.

However, subject to its FOI obligations, NHMRC remains committed to maintaining the confidentiality of applications, the expert review process and the privacy of people participating in the expert review. If an FOI application is received in relation to documents that contain your personal or business information, NHMRC will take into account the nature of those documents and, where appropriate, consult with anyone whose personal information or business information may be affected by the release of those documents (this is known as “third party consultation”).

Sections 27 and 27A of the FOI Act prescribe when third parties must be consulted in relation to the information contained in documents that are subject to an FOI request. In addition, where appropriate and practicable, NHMRC will consult above and beyond those requirements. In the event that you are consulted as a third party, NHMRC will send you a detailed letter seeking your views and giving you a reasonable time to respond.

However, please note that whilst FOI decision-makers are required to take into account third parties’ views on the release or non-release of their information, decision-makers are not bound by those views. Should a decision-maker decide to release a document containing your personal or business information after you have submitted that it should not be released, the FOI Act states that that document must not be released to the FOI applicant until you, as a
third party, have exercised and exhausted all your review rights, or chosen not to exercise them. Your review rights consist of:

a) a right to request the NHMRC to review its decision to release the document (called an internal review and conducted by a different decision-maker) or to request the Australian Information Commissioner to review the decision;

b) a right to request the Australian Information Commissioner to review an internal review decision if it is adverse; and

c) a right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal against an adverse decision of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Until such time as all those appeal rights are exhausted, the contested document cannot be released.

More information about FOI, including third party rights, is available from the Australian Information Commissioner’s website at http://www.oaic.gov.au/.

7.3 Confidentiality and Privacy

Section 80 of the NHMRC Act prevents NHMRC officers (including staff and members of NHMRC Council and committees) from disclosing commercial-in-confidence information acquired in the course of their duties and relating to matters under consideration by NHMRC, unless the disclosure is made in the performance of duties under the NHMRC Act. Information which may properly be regarded as confidential commercial information should be designated as such.

Information comprising the names of successful applicants, together with the title of the project and the funding awarded, may be published in the NHMRC Annual Report and will be available through NHMRC’s website. NHMRC may also release information about the areas of review, funding partners and a brief description of the grant.

Subject to section 80 of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC may:

a) use or disclose confidential information in order to consider applications;

b) disclose confidential information to the responsible Minister;

c) disclose confidential information in response to a request by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia; or

d) use or disclose confidential information where authorised or required by law.

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected by NHMRC in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (the Privacy Act), which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Privacy Act allows.

Subject to Section 80 of the Privacy Act, confidential information may be disclosed:
• to NHMRC's advisers or employees solely in order to consider the applications;
• to the responsible Minister;
• in response to a request by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia; or
• if authorised or required by law to be disclosed.]

7.4 Appeals and complaints management

Applicants may contact NHMRC seeking clarification on the outcome of their application for funding, or to state an objection to any part of the process. The complaint must be lodged in writing and should be received within four weeks of the date of notification of the outcome.

The complaint should be directed to the Complaints Officer at:

Complaints Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or via email to: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

The NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. The NHMRC policy on complaints can be found at: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/contact-us/complaint-form.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge a formal complaint with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints, as detailed in Part 8 of the NHMRC Act.

A person whose interests are affected may at any time lodge a complaint under section 59 of the NHMRC Act. Section 61 of the NHMRC Act provides the Commissioner of Complaints with discretion, including where a complainant has not approached the CEO with the complaint, to choose not to investigate and refer the complaint to the CEO.

Complaints to the Commissioner of Complaints should be addressed to:

NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Formal complaints can be mailed to the above address, or sent by email as a PDF letter to complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

Complaints must be in writing, be signed by the complainant, describe the action complained about and specify the nature of and grounds for the complaint. Complaints can only be considered against administrative process and not the merits of a particular decision. The grounds of complaint are detailed at section 58 of the NHMRC Act and are that:

a) the action involved a breach of the rules of natural justice;
b) the action was induced or affected by fraud;

c) there was no evidence or other material to justify the action;

d) an irrelevant consideration was taken into account in relation to the action;

e) a relevant consideration was not taken into account in relation to the action;

f) in the course of the action a discretionary power was exercised for a purpose other than the purpose for which the power is conferred;

g) the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in bad faith;

h) in the course of the action, a personal discretionary power was exercised at the direction of another person;

i) the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in accordance with a rule or policy without regard to the merits of the particular case; or

j) the action involved any other exercise of a power in a way that constitutes abuse of the power.

Complainants are advised to contact their Research Administration Officers (RAOs) prior to making a complaint to the Commissioner of Complaints.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can also investigate complaints about the actions and decisions of Australian Government agencies. For further information please refer to the Commonwealth Ombudsman website at: http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/.

7.5 Status of these Guidelines

Nothing in these Guidelines, or the submission of any application in response, or any conduct or statement whether before or after the issue of these Guidelines constitutes a contract, express or implied, with the NHMRC. The NHMRC intends that no contract will be formed unless and until the NHMRC signs a formal funding agreement with a successful applicant.

8. Lodgement

8.1 How to lodge an application

Application forms can be requested from NHMRC by emailing cochrane@nhmrc.gov.au.

Applicants should ensure they refer to these Program Guidelines when completing the application form.

Applications must be certified and submitted by an NHMRC registered Administering Institution as per Section 3.3 of these Guidelines.

Applications should include all information requested in the application form, including a scanned signed declaration. Incomplete applications may not be considered.
Applications must not include any false or misleading information. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.

Applications can be emailed to: cochrane@nhmrc.gov.au. The original hard copy of the completed application form should be forwarded to:

Professor John McCallum
Head
Research Translation Group
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

8.2 Closing time for applications

The closing time for applications for Round 6 is **2PM FRIDAY, 5 APRIL 2013, Canberra Time**.

Applications received after the closing time will not be considered, except where it can be identified that the NHMRC is at fault in causing a delay in receipt or in exceptional circumstances to be discussed with the NHMRC.

Requests for extensions will not be granted.

All applications received will be acknowledged in writing shortly after the closing time.

Information in applications will be treated as “Commercial-in-Confidence”.

All applications become the property of the Commonwealth on lodgement. Ownership of intellectual property in applications remains unchanged. However, NHMRC may use and copy application documents as it requires for the purposes of the Program, evaluating applications, negotiating and preparing Funding Agreements, audit requirements and complying with governmental and parliamentary reporting requirements.

Without limiting any other rights, NHMRC may suspend or discontinue the application process or the Program.