

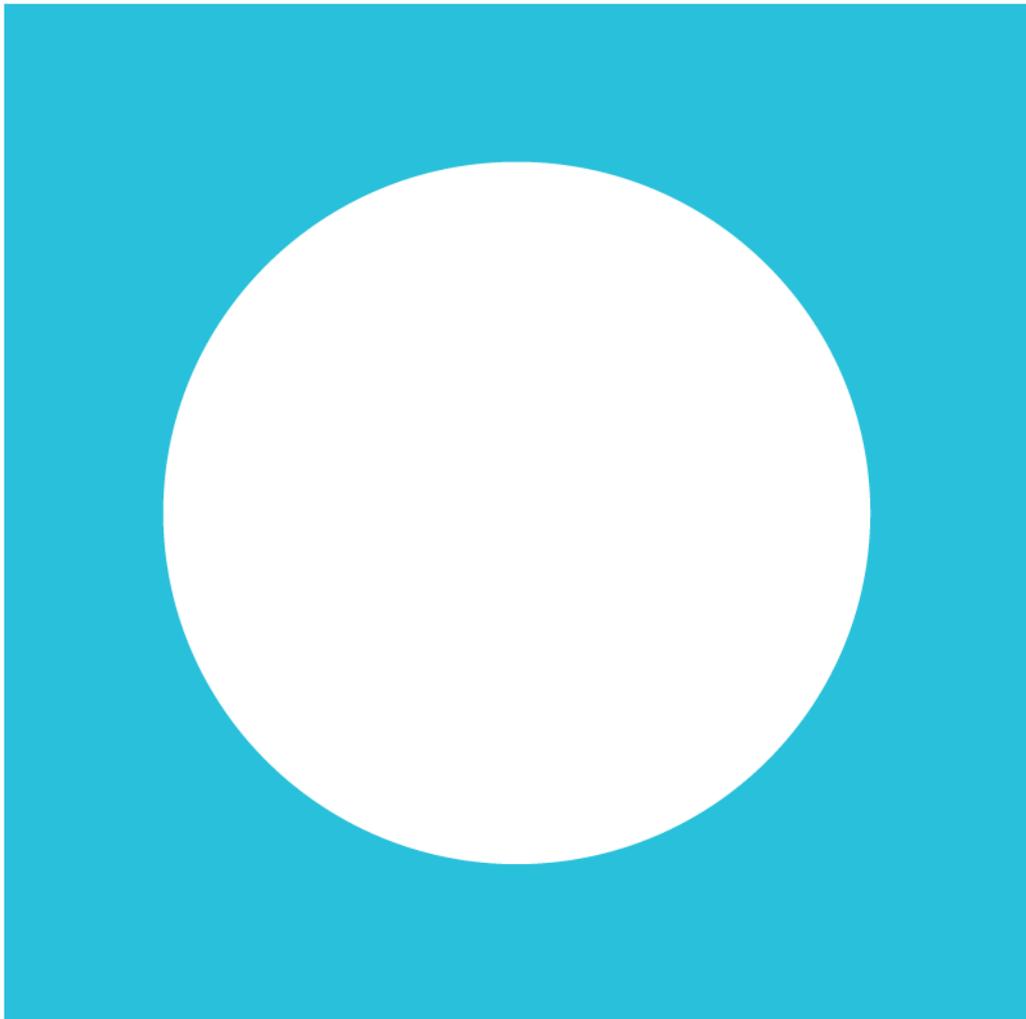


Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council



Guidelines for producing NHMRC Case Studies

August 2019





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Introduction

NHMRC seeks to maximise the reporting of impacts arising from the research that it funds and from its other activities, but it cannot undertake this impact reporting on its own. Partners are essential to impact reporting for a number of reasons, including that:

- Health and medical sector researchers working within partner organisations possess specialist and expert knowledge about their fields that is vital to the identification of possible impact cases and stories.
- Impact cases and stories often arise from complex interactions between specialist fields, including expert medical knowledge, research translation, technology transfer, innovation and government policy. Only partner organisations that are sufficiently connected to these areas of expertise can develop an accurate narrative that describes the pathway to impact and the genuine significance of the impact.
- Partner organisations hold data and information that are not publicly available but that are essential to the successful completion of an impact case study.

The *Guidelines for producing NHMRC Case Studies* (the Guidelines) are intended to assist partner organisations to work with NHMRC to produce case studies¹. NHMRC envisages broad and active participation and cooperation by health and medical research (HMR) sector organisations in this endeavour because it is advantageous for all organisations within the sector to regularly and clearly demonstrate the impacts arising from public investment in HMR.

Partnering with NHMRC to develop a case study confers some specific benefits upon partner organisations including:

- assistance from NHMRC staff in developing the case study
- verification of the impact story using NHMRC data
- quality assurance and validation of the partner's research translation activities and impacts
- NHMRC's branding applied to the partner's impact narrative
- promotion by NHMRC of the case study (and thus of the partner's impact and organisation).

Development principles

In developing the case studies, NHMRC is guided by a number of principles, as set out below.

Principle 1: All NHMRC Case Studies must be approved by NHMRC

While any HMR organisation in Australia (or overseas) may produce its own case studies using an approach similar to that used by NHMRC, such case studies can become NHMRC Case Studies only if formally approved by NHMRC.

¹These Guidelines are not intended to be used to guide the development of case studies for inclusion within NHMRC grant applications. Please follow the instructions within the relevant Grant Guidelines when applying for an NHMRC grant.

Principle 2: Each case study must involve NHMRC in some way

NHMRC recognises that few, if any, impacts arising from HMR will be the result of the work of a single individual or organisation. The development of any given impact will usually have been supported by funding from a number of different organisations. Nonetheless, NHMRC will only publish case studies on impacts which had underpinning research or other originating activities that received some support from NHMRC.

Principle 3: NHMRC will work closely with case study partners

NHMRC's ability to work closely with its case study partners is vital to the successful and timely completion of the case studies themselves. In order to ensure the maintenance of close working relationships with partners, NHMRC keeps partners informed of all key stages as each project progresses and provides opportunities for partners to comment on drafts and layouts. NHMRC also keeps a record of all comments provided by partners and alerts partners that the final version of the case study will be uploaded to NHMRC's website prior to the event.

Principle 4: All factual statements must be backed by evidence

In order for a case study to be approved by NHMRC, all of the claims made within it must be backed by evidence. Some of this evidence may be in the public domain while other evidence may be held by NHMRC or its partners. NHMRC will undertake to verify factual details about its own grants and investments that feature in a case study. For content contributed by partners, the partnering organisation will be required to declare that the claims being made are accurate.

NHMRC regards its partners as expert sources with respect to the claims that they make about their domain of expertise. That said, NHMRC may query claims made by partners and require evidence to support these claims. The decision to publish a claim will ultimately be made by NHMRC.

Over time, NHMRC expects to be able to increase the amount of historical data that it publishes about NHMRC grants. This will help partners to identify impacts and to verify their own internal sources of information about the grants that their researchers have received.

Principle 5: Case study topics are carefully selected

NHMRC takes the following considerations into account when selecting topics for case studies:

1. the focal impact should be a significant and noteworthy change
2. the attribution of the impact should be uncontested (refer below for further discussion of attribution)
3. the partner organisation should have the capability necessary to assist NHMRC to complete the case study.

In addition to the above, NHMRC is particularly interested in developing case studies that:

4. describe obstacles and barriers in the translation pathway and how these were overcome
 5. communicate research translations, outcomes and impacts that are not currently being effectively communicated through other channels
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6. relate to health and medical issues that have received significant or long-term NHMRC or other Australian Government funding, or that are or were strategic priorities for NHMRC and/or the Australian Government.

The process of selecting new topics for NHMRC Case Studies is intended to be comprehensive, transparent and justified. Topics will be selected to ensure that, collectively and over time, the case studies reflect the diversity of NHMRC-funded research.

Note on attribution

One of the most challenging aspects of case study development is correct attribution of impacts to researchers². Each case study must make reference to those individuals and organisations that made the most significant contributions to generating the impact under investigation.

As any given impact will usually have resulted from the work of a range of individuals and organisations, and because of the limited space available within the NHMRC case study template, it will usually not be possible for a case study to refer to all those individuals who made a contribution to the impact. The cited individuals will be selected on a number of criteria, including the degree and type of support that they received from NHMRC.

While NHMRC is not able to include every involved individual and organisation within any given case study, it can develop additional case studies within the same research or impact area. Please contact the case study development team if you are interested to pursue this option.

Principle 6: Case studies are drafted in plain English

NHMRC Case Studies strive to translate technical research and commercial language into plain English that can be easily understood by a non-academic audience. Consequently, some technical information and content provided by partners may be edited to simplify it and to align it with NHMRC's style guide. NHMRC retains final editorship of all case studies to ensure a consistent tone and style.

Principle 7: Case studies are intended to be used

For NHMRC, publishing the case studies does not constitute the end of the process. NHMRC will promote the case studies through its website and other mechanisms. Because promotion is essential to ensure that the case studies reach their intended audiences, NHMRC actively seeks opportunities to cross-promote each case study with its partner organisation(s).

² A detailed discussion of attribution may be found within CSIRO's Impact Evaluation Guide.

Development stages

The process to develop a case study follows the stages set out below.

Stage 1: Planning the case study

A small team within NHMRC is responsible for developing the case studies and for identifying opportunities for new case studies. Once an idea for a new case study has been provisionally agreed upon, staff within the case study development team undertake a preliminary investigation of available information to determine whether the case study idea is suitable for further development and the team has the capacity to undertake this work.

NHMRC Case Study topics that are generated in-house require significant background research to compile and edit. NHMRC's case study development team completes as much background research as possible before engaging with external individuals and organisations to develop the case study further.

Stage 2: Engaging with case study partners

Once the focal area for a new case study has been agreed upon and the planning phase has been completed internally, NHMRC staff identify and work with partners to further develop the case study. The working relationship with partners is informed by [Principle 3](#) and [Principle 4](#).

NHMRC encourages HMR sector organisations to identify where their research programs have led to significant positive impacts upon the health and wellbeing of Australians or people more broadly and to consider partnering with NHMRC to develop case studies on these impacts. NHMRC has a number of templates that may be shared with organisations that are interested in developing their own initial draft of a case study.

An HMR sector organisation could present NHMRC with a case study that was near to completion along with supporting evidentiary material, such that NHMRC's major role would be to assess the case study for accuracy and conformance with NHMRC's writing style.

Stage 3: Developing drafts

NHMRC staff work closely with partners to develop draft text for the case study that can then be placed into the case study template, prepared for approval by the partner and ultimately by NHMRC. Partners have ongoing opportunities to review drafts and provide comments during this process.

Stage 4: Fact and integrity checking

NHMRC undertakes internal review of factual content pertaining to NHMRC grants. It may also require partners to verify details mentioned in the case study, including such things as non-NHMRC funding, publications, patents, curriculum vitae details, timeline dates, conflict of interests and any other issues to do with that case study. Fact checking is undertaken consistent with [Principle 4](#).

Stage 5: Publishing

Subject to approval of the final case study by NHMRC's Chief Executive Officer, NHMRC prepares the case study for uploading onto its website and develops any other supporting material. This process may include the development of a cross-promotion strategy with the partner. Partners are kept informed of the likely timing of publication.

Questions

Any questions about the content and/or application of these Guidelines should be addressed to NHMRC's case study development team at research.sector.data.policy@nhmrc.gov.au.

Note: These Guidelines are not intended to be used to guide the development of case studies for inclusion within NHMRC grant applications. Please follow the instructions within the relevant Grant Guidelines when applying for an NHMRC grant.