



Consumer and community representatives participation in peer review panels



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How to use this booklet

This information booklet provides guidance on how the Targeted Calls for Research (TCR) peer review process works, what is involved, and the role and responsibilities of consumer and community representatives (CCRs) on peer review panels. The booklet also provides insight for anyone who is interested in participating in peer review as a CCR. The aim of the booklet is to ensure that all current and future panel members feel supported and informed throughout the peer review process.

Further guidance on participation in a specific panel can be found in the respective peer review guidelines on the [Targeted Calls for Research page](#) or by contacting Targeted.Research@nhmrc.gov.au.

NHMRC endeavours to make the peer review process as smooth as possible for all CCRs participating in a peer review panels and looks forward to working with all prospective CCRs.

Kind regards,

The Targeted Research Program Team



Australian Government
**National Health and
Medical Research Council**



**BUILDING
A HEALTHY
AUSTRALIA**

Targeted Calls for Research scheme

The TCR scheme is a dedicated funding stream used to address urgent or specific health issues where there is a lack of research to inform clinical practice guide or health policy.

NHMRC usually conducts four TCR grant opportunities a year. The priority areas for research are identified by the Australian Community or Professional groups - through the Community Research Priorities Portal, state and territory governments through a working committee, at the request of the Minister for Health and Aged Care or by NHMRC various expert committees. Further information on how they are identified and prioritised available on the [NHMRC website](#). The topics identified:

- Are of national importance
- link to community priorities and/or
- seek to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Once a suggested TCR topic has been approved, documents that guide research teams on the application and assessment process are drafted and published. These include the grant opportunity guidelines, which outline the application processes, and peer review guidelines, which guide the assessment of applications by the selected scientific and consumer/community peer reviewers. These documents can be found on [GrantConnect](#) and specific grant opportunity pages accessible via the [TCR webpage](#).

The role of consumer and community representatives in peer review

NHMRC seeks to recruit CCRs to its peer review panels who have, or care for someone with, lived experience of the health issue that is the focus of the grant opportunity. CCRs may also be people who represent the views and interests of consumers of specific health services, a health condition, community organisations, and/or patient advocacy groups.

NHMRC will select a mix of CCRs from various organisations to ensure a cross section of views and experiences necessary to assess the applications received. Each call aims to include an even spread of gender and location diversity. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as people from cultural, ethnic and linguistically diverse populations are approached and encouraged to participate in the assessment of TCR applications to ensure that the proposed research is conducted in a culturally appropriate manner.

NHMRC understands CCRs may have needs specific to individual calls, and endeavours to provide appropriate arrangements as required. These may include:

- translation services
- support personnel
- automated closed captions
- easy read documentation

Please discuss any specific requirements with NHMRC staff upon receiving the invitation to participate in the call.

Drawing on the lived experiences of people who the research is focussed on is an essential aspect in the assessment of grant applications. The active involvement of CCRs in the assessment and scoring of grant applications seeks to promote effective involvement of consumer and community perspectives in the design and implementation of proposed research. CCRs assessments also consider if proposed research projects are of benefit and relevant to the needs and values of the Australian community. CCRs are not expected to have scientific knowledge, qualifications or experience, and are not required to assess the scientific merits of an application other than its overall relevance to potential outcomes and impacts for consumers and community.

Peer review

NHMRC uses a 'peer review' process that is based on impartiality and expert advice to make funding decisions for a grant opportunity. TCR peer review panels are comprised of both CCRs and health and medical researchers (HMR). The role of the HMR members is to assess the scientific quality of the research, capabilities of the research team and the ability of the application to achieve the desired research outcomes detailed in the grant opportunity. Assessments are made against set criteria. The number of HMR and CCRs panel members will vary dependant on the number of applications received for each TCR.

Peer review panel members need to read the grant opportunity guidelines to understand the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of the TCR grant opportunity. The accompanying peer review guidelines outline the various stages of peer review for that grant opportunity, the specific roles and responsibilities of panel members and how the meeting will be conducted. It also includes the assessment criteria and accompanying category descriptors that assist both CCR and HMR members in identifying a suitable numerical score for each application. The Office of NHMRC will also conduct orientation meetings to provide more guidance on the peer review process.

Members are appointed to a peer review panel under Section 39 of the *National Health and Medical Research Act 1992*. This is an official appointment which carries some obligations regarding roles and responsibilities of members including behaving with honesty integrity and respect, declaring any conflicts of interest, and not disclosing information and maintaining lifetime confidentiality.

People appointed to a Section 39 working committee are also remunerated in accordance with the [Remuneration Tribunal](#) for their attendance at the peer review panel meeting or any other meeting NHMRC invites them to attend.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an integral part of the integrity of the peer review process. It ensures all grant applications are reviewed and assessed in an open, fair, and consistent manner. Members appointed to a peer review panel are not allowed to tell anyone details of their invitation and appointment to the panel. They are not permitted to discuss anything related to the applications being assessed or to disclose the names of other panel members. This confidentiality is a lifetime commitment. The benefits of lifetime confidentiality include safeguarding any member from being approached for information before or after panel meetings. It also means frank and honest discussion can occur at the panel meetings, ensuring assessment outcomes are balanced and fair.

As membership of a peer review panel is confidential, members are not allowed to discuss research applications with colleagues or members of an association. However, NHMRC understands there may be instances where a CCR requires a carer, advocate, or support person to assist in assessing the applications or help them at the peer review panel meeting. The support person will also be appointed to the peer review panel and will need to abide by the confidentiality requirements and declare any conflicts of interests with the applications being considered.

If you require a support person, please reach out to NHMRC and we can discuss how we can assist with individual CCR needs. NHMRC endeavours to provide an inclusive environment for CCRs to participate in peer review panels, noting the importance of hearing from CCRs on their lived experience when assessing grant applications.

Conflicts of interest

Before being assigned applications for scoring, CCRs need to declare any conflicts of interests (Col) with the applications to be assessed. Col include current or previous collaborations between the CCRs (or the organisation they represent) with member/s of the research team on the grant application. A Col can also include a CCRs having a personal connection or relationship with someone in the research team or assisting in the preparation of the grant application. Col that are not declared before the review of an application can create a perception of bias in the assessment of the application, tainting the peer review process.

There are different levels of Col, none, low and high. Factors that determine the level of Col are determined by the significance of the interest and whether it impacts on the impartiality of the CCRs. Some examples are provided in Table 1. Further details and guidance on declaring Col are provided in the Peer Review Guidelines for the grant opportunity. NHMRC staff are available to discuss and assist members throughout the Col process.

Situations	Explanations and Examples	Indicative Ruling
1. Contribution to the application under review	1.1 Are you a named consumer representative or investigator on the application under review?	Yes = High Conflict
	1.2 Have you had discussions or input into the study design or research proposal for this application?	Yes = High Conflict
2. Collaborations	2.1 Are you currently, planning to or have been approached to be involved in a grant application or other collaboration as a consumer representative with one of the investigators?	Yes = High Conflict
3. Working relationship	3.1 Do you have the same employer/organisation or work in the same locality?	Yes = Requires a ruling
	3.2 Are you involved with a consumer engagement/advisory program at the same institution?	Yes = Requires a ruling
4. Professional relationships and interests	4.1 Do you hold the same membership of scientific advisory or review boards, exam boards, or trial committees?	Yes = Requires a ruling
5. Patient/clinician relationships or other relationships of a non-professional nature	5.1 Does a personal or patient/clinician relationship exist between you, your partner or any other member of your family and the applicant or any other member of their family? These relationships could be of any nature (e.g. personal, medical, social, political, ideological, etc.) that might create a conflict in the assessors' ability to assess the proposal.	Yes = Usually a high conflict
6. Other interests or situations	6.1 Consider previous or pending disputes (may require consideration of events earlier than within the last five years)	Yes = High Conflict

Table 1: examples of Col

All Col need to be recorded in Sapphire, NHMRC's grant management system, prior to peer reviewers being given access to the full application package. CCRs will receive an application summary listing the application name, Administering Institution, project overview and the name of each Chief and Associate Investigator to enable them to complete their Col before they are given access to the full application package.

NHMRC also has additional guidance to assist in considering and identifying any Col in the [Policy on the Disclosure of Interests Requirements for Prospective and Appointed NHMRC Committee Members](#).

Sapphire

Sapphire is the online grants management system NHMRC uses for the administration of grants and peer review. All assessments by CCRs are conducted in Sapphire, with grant applications found in Sapphire for download and review. CCRs will need to have an account created in Sapphire in order to accept the invitation to participate in the panel, complete their suitability survey, conflict of interest, and assess and review applications. This will be done by the NHMRC team once participation on the panel is confirmed.

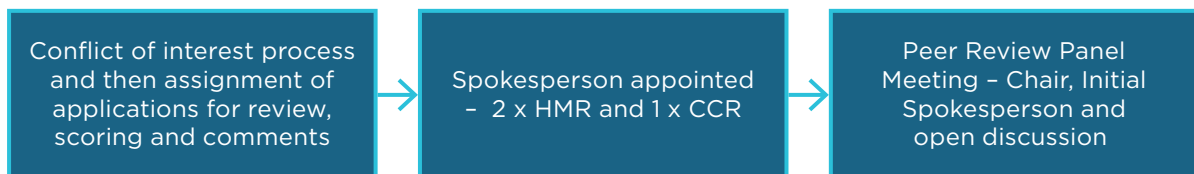
Once a Sapphire account is set up and the invitation to participate in the panel is accepted, reviewers complete a suitability survey and conflict of interest declaration form. The suitability survey ensures reviewers are matched with the applications most appropriate to their expertise. The Col declaration form ensures any potential conflicts with applications or the research team are disclosed.

Once these initial requirements have been completed, assessment of applications by reviewers can commence through the download and review of all applications that are assigned to them. Further information on this is discussed in the peer review section of this booklet, and instructions on completing these tasks in Sapphire can be found in the Researcher/My Assessments tab of the [Sapphire knowledge base website](#).

Peer review stages

The peer review process is comprised of several stages where applications are assessed, scored, and potentially removed from further progression in the process. More details on the stages and roles and responsibilities of CCRs during each stage and the processes are provided in the peer review guidelines.

A brief summary of the key peer review stages is described below.



Spokesperson assessments

Once prospective members have completed their CoI, NHMRC will formally appoint members to the Section 39 peer review panel. Appointed members are then assigned applications for which they are deemed the 'Spokesperson'. This requires the CCR to do an initial assessment and score each CCR criterion in Sapphire during the initial assessment window. Two HMRS and one CCR are selected as a spokesperson for each application. These spokespersons will be required to lead discussion of the application at the panel meeting with reference to the assessment criteria, using category descriptors as a guide. This occurs prior to the whole panel scoring the application (see peer review panel meeting).

Prior to the meeting, spokespersons are required to provide an initial score for the application and prepare comments that can be used as speaking notes at the peer review meeting. Video tutorials to help use Sapphire in the assessment process are available on the [Health and Medical Research Sapphire tutorial page](#). It is estimated that the initial assessment stage of the peer review process for CCRs will take approximately 2 hours per application including reading relevant information in the grant opportunity and peer review guidelines.

As TCR grant opportunities have limited funding, if a large number of applications are received compared to the amount of funding available, a Not for Further Consideration (NFFC) process is conducted. This means the least competitive research applications are removed from the peer review process. To do this, a ranked list is formed based on the initial assessment score against the assessment criteria, as described above. Applications that are the most competitive will proceed to consideration at the peer review panel meeting.

Peer Review Panel meeting

Peer Review Panel meetings are the final stage of the assessment process by reviewers and where members of the panel meet to discuss the applications and provide final scores. An independent Chair is appointed to direct the procedures of the meeting they do not assess applications.

Meetings are currently conducted virtually via videoconference.

The CCR and HMR spokespersons provide their assessments of an application which is followed by a discussion with the all the members of the panel. Discussion provides additional perspectives when considering the strengths and weaknesses of the application. Once complete, all panel members are asked to record their scores for that application in Sapphire. Spokespersons have the ability re-score the application as the discussion may prompt them to reconsider their initial score, however they can choose to keep their score the same and enter that into Sapphire in the My Assessments tab. If panel members choose to enter a score that is 2 or more away from the respective spokespersons score, they will need to provide a reason to the panel. NHMRC staff who will enter this into Sapphire on their behalf. The final score of the application is then calculated.

Peer review panel meetings can run for a few hours or up to three days, depending on how many applications are to be reviewed. All CCRs, even those who are not spokespersons, are required to review all the applications they do not have a conflict of interest with before the panel meeting. CCRs need to attend the meeting for its entire duration, unless they have a conflict for an application, in which case they will be temporarily removed from the meeting. NHMRC provides all peer reviewers with a running order of applications to be discussed prior to the panel meeting.

Assessment of applications related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Research applications that claim to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health or include specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in their research are required to be assessed against [NHMRC's Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria \(IREC\)](#).

IREC is an important part of the peer review process to ensure applications proposing research related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engage appropriately with the community and perform sustainable research that benefits the community. It also ensures researchers build capabilities within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through partnership and participation. A specific IREC assessor reviews these applications to assess how well they meet the pre-determined standards and benefits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

The IREC assessment is performed before the initial assessment of applications by CCR and HMR spokespersons. Spokespersons members are provided with completed IREC assessments and are asked to consider this when formulating their scores and comments against the assessment criteria. The IREC assessment is also read out at the panel meeting. The IREC assessment does not have a direct weighting towards the final score of the grant proposal. Applications that have a focus on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' health will be reviewed by CCRs that are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or have an understanding of the community involved in the research. All CCRs are welcome to contribute to this discussion at the panel meeting.

CCR assessment criteria and category descriptors

Applications are assessed against set assessment criteria that are outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines and the peer review guidelines. Every application is assessed on its individual merits and should not be compared to others.

Applications contain two to three pages outlining how consumers and or community organisations have been involved in the development of the research proposal and how they will continue to be included in the research method and reporting of outcomes. Details will also be given on how the outcomes of research intend to benefit the target populations and if the researchers have considered the diverse needs of different populations.

CCRs are required to assess an application against the three criteria detailed below in Table 2. A score should align with the category descriptors provided in Tables 3, 4, 5.

Category descriptors are designed to assist reviewers in deciding the most appropriate score for an assessment criterion. They are used to ensure consistency in scoring of applications by peer reviewers by providing keywords and phrases that describe the attributes of an application and help to differentiate scores from 1 to 7. When selecting a score, it is not essential that your assessment of the application meets all the phases in the category descriptors relating to a given score, it is based on the majority.

The CCR assessment criteria are equally weighted and are referenced below with the detailed category descriptors and some examples of scoring scenarios provided on the following pages.

CCR Assessment Criteria	Score
<p>1. Consumer and community involvement activities:</p> <p>The purpose of this section is to assess how the research team has involved consumers and the community in their research proposal with appropriate evidence of the involvement provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have the applicants consulted or involved consumers and/or the community in a meaningful and appropriate way in designing the research proposal?• Is there evidence of how ongoing community/consumer involvement will occur during the research?• Has the proposal outlined how the results of research will be communicated to consumers and/or community participants?	1-7
<p>2. Support for consumer and community involvement:</p> <p>The purpose of this section is to understand the level of experience the research team has with working with consumers and the community in previous research, as well as their involvement in governance and the budget is meaningful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the applicant team have previous experience in working with consumers and/or communities in research activities?• Are there governance arrangements in place to support consumers and/or the community to work with the research team (i.e. are there consumer members on advisory committees, planned engagement activities or specific roles on the research team for community members)?• Does the proposal adequately consider and detail the time and/or resources (financial, administrative, training) required to support the genuine involvement of consumer and community representatives in the research?	1-7

CCR Assessment Criteria	Score
<p>3. Relevance and research impact for consumers and community:</p> <p>The purpose of this section is to understand how the research team has demonstrated that the research will be translated to tangible improvements in a diverse population in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal address the objectives of the grant opportunity in a way that shows they understand the needs of consumers and/or community? • Does the proposal consider the needs of people from different and diverse cultural, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds and those who have poorer health or increased health needs? • Does the outcomes of research have the potential to improve health service delivery or health policy that will lead to better health outcomes for individuals? 	1-7

Table 2: CCR Assessment Criteria.

Assessment Criterion 1: Consumer and community involvement activities

This set of descriptors should be used to guide CCR assessment score on how the research team has involved consumers and/or the community in the design of the research proposal, including detail of what ongoing consumer/community involvement will occur during the research and methods for communication of results.

Score	Description
7 - Outstanding	The research proposal details outstanding consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
6 - Excellent	The research proposal details excellent consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
5 - Very Good	The research proposal details very good consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
4 - Good	The research proposal details a good level of consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
3 - Marginal	The research proposal details some level of consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
2 - Unsatisfactory	The research proposal details limited consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.
1 - Poor	The research proposal details no consumer and community involvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its design • the proposed research activities and • communicating the outcomes to the participants.

Table 3: CCR category descriptors for consumer and community involvement activities.

Assessment Criterion 2: Support for consumers and community involvement

This set of descriptors aims to guide the CCR assessment score for the research team's experience (track record) in working with consumers and the community in previous research activities and the structures and processes in place to support CCR involvement in the proposed research. Factors to be taken into consideration include, are there governance arrangements to support involvement (i.e. consumer input to advisory committees, planned activities or specific roles for community members) as well as adequate time and resourcing to involve and support the involvement of consumer and community representatives in the research.

Score	Description
7 - Outstanding	<p>The team has an outstanding track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides near flawless arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allocated budget• governance arrangements• administrative support• training available
6 - Excellent	<p>The team has an excellent track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides excellent arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allocated budget• governance arrangements• administrative support• training available
5 - Very Good	<p>The team has a very good track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides very good arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allocated budget• governance arrangements• administrative support• training available
4 - Good	<p>The team has a good track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides good arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allocated budget• governance arrangements• administrative support• training available

Score	Description
3 - Marginal	<p>The team has a limited track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides minimal arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocated budget • governance arrangements • administrative support • training available
2 - Unsatisfactory	<p>The team has an unsatisfactory track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides inadequate arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocated budget • governance arrangements • administrative support • training available
1 - Poor	<p>The team has no demonstrated track record in working with consumers and communities.</p> <p>The research proposal provides no arrangements and structures for coordinating consumer and community involvement in the research team, based on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocated budget • governance arrangements • administrative support • training available

Table 4: CCR category descriptors for support for consumers and community involvement.

Relevance and research impact for consumers and community

This set of descriptors aims to guide the CCR assessment score for the proposed research addresses the objectives of the call in a way that is relevant to the needs of consumers and the community and gives appropriate consideration to the needs of people from different and diverse cultural backgrounds or who have a higher disease burden or poorer health outcomes. Also, the proposed outcomes of research will make a difference by improving health services or health policy that will lead to improved health outcomes for individuals.

Score	Description
7 - Outstanding	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is highly relevant to the call objectives • is outstanding in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • will definitely lead to major and effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that will have a very high impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.
6 - Excellent	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is very relevant to the call objectives • is excellent in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • will lead to considerable and effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that will have a high impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.
5 - Very Good	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is very relevant to the call objectives • is excellent in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • will lead to effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that will have an impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.
4 - Good	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is somewhat relevant to the call objectives • is good in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • may lead to effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that may have an impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.

Score	Description
3 - Marginal	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not particularly relevant to the call objectives • is limited in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • may lead to limited health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that may have a moderate impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.
2 - Unsatisfactory	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not adequately relevant to the call objectives • is deficient in demonstrating how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • is unlikely to lead to effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that are unlikely to have an impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.
1 - Poor	<p>The research proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not relevant to the call objectives • does not demonstrate how the research and potential outcomes meet the diverse needs of consumers and the community with consideration to culture, ethnicity, language and health status/needs. • will not lead to effective health gains across a broad range of groups • has potential outcomes that will not have an impact on improving health outcomes through improved health services delivery or policy.

Table 5: CCR category descriptors for relevance and research impact for consumers and community.

Examples of CCRs scoring applications

Please note, all persons mentioned in these scenarios are fictional.

Scenario A

Application 2041975 - Improving Obesity in Australians aged 50 and above living in rural Australia.

Consumer and community involvement activities: Score 3

The proposed research activities in this application include some information on how people from rural and remote communities were involved in the design of the research. It was hard to tell if the researchers had engaged with people living in remote areas, and if they had understood the issues faced in remote areas compared to rural communities. This could impact on how accurate the information gained from the research can inform measures to address obesity in rural and remote communities. It was not clear how the outcomes of the research will be conveyed to participants and beyond.

Support for consumers and community involvement: Score 6

The research team described a number of projects where they had worked with consumers and community. The Chief Investigator A (CIA) has a lot of experience working with the community in designing and conducting research projects. Several other chief investigators also have experience working with consumers and the community on research projects. The role described for the consumer and community representative in the application seems to be meaningful and contributes to decision making in how the research will occur as they are included in advisory boards and regular research meetings. The proposal has thought about what kind of support consumer and community representatives would need, whether funds are allocated for their time, and the people assigned to support their involvement.

Relevance and research impact for consumers and community: Score 6

The research proposal appears to have an excellent understanding of the objectives of the TCR and the issues and the challenges people who are tackling obesity face when engaging with primary health care clinicians, such as their general practitioner. The proposed outcomes of this research proposal would have a high impact on creating better health service delivery for obesity services in rural areas of Australia.

Scenario B

Application 2041974 – Advancing participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programs amongst cultural, ethnic and linguistically diverse populations.

Consumer and community involvement activities: Score 5

The application described a very good process for understanding the barriers people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have in participating in bowel screening and how they can be involved in the proposed research. The communication strategy of how outcomes of the research will be delivered to the various communities who are participating in the research has a very good level of detail and appears feasible.

Support for consumers and community involvement: Score 4

There are two CIs who have a good track record of working with culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations in their previous research. The allocated budget for working with the community in phase 2 is adequate considering they are looking to recruit at least 25 community members to participate in the research. The governance arrangements detailed for managing consumer and community stakeholders and ensuring the research is completed in a timely manner are thorough. Some of the language used in how the research team are planning to prepare and implement training resources is slightly complex and could be confusing for those without a scientific or research background.

Relevance and research impact for consumers and community category: Score 4

The research proposal is somewhat relevant to the call objectives of improving the participation of people in cancer screening prevention programs. Members of the community are involved in small focus groups to provide feedback on the design of the accessible screening tool for bowel cancer testing kits. The team mentions how they will include diverse groups in the research, including providing translators and using culturally safe/accessible language and resources. Overall, the proposal has some strengths leading to potentially better outcomes for bowel cancer screening for culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse people but there are a few areas which are unclear.

Scenario C

Application 2059908 – Improving the nutrition and physical activity of those who live in rural and remote Australia.

Consumer and community involvement activities: Score 6

The CCR SP thought the research proposal included an excellent level of consumer and community involvement in the design of the proposal, noting the research team had specifically approached consumer and community organisations, two of which were specific to nutrition and cardiovascular health. Community members had provided input in the design of the proposal. Additionally, consumers and the community are involved in the participation and co-design of the project, however there is limited information on the ongoing involvement of the community and how any individual needs will be managed.

Support for consumers and community involvement: Score 2

The research team, besides CIA, had no previous experience in working with consumers and/or community organisations. There was an inadequate budget to support consumer activities in the proposal given the size of the project and there didn't appear to be a mechanism for consumers to provide feedback to the researchers on during the project. Additionally, there was inadequate training available and unsatisfactory arrangements for CCRs who have a limited scientific or research background.

Relevance and research impact for consumers and community: Score 1

The research proposal is not relevant to the call objectives and will not have an impact towards improving the nutrition or physical activity of people who live in rural or remote communities. The proposal does not demonstrate how it will include consumers and people in the community with consideration to culture and language. This proposal will not lead to effective health gains for a diverse group of individuals or the community as a whole or have an impact on improving the health outcomes through health services delivery or policy in rural or remote areas.

NHMRC funding approval process

NHMRC provides funding to the TCR scheme from the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) which receives an annual allocation in the Federal budget. Research Committee (RC) advises the CEO, through Council, on expenditure of the MREA, including on TCR grant opportunities.

Once the peer review panel has completed their assessment of research applications a ranked list is developed based on the overall combined scores. The top ranked applications are recommended for funding up to the limit of allocated funding for the scheme. The funding recommendations are considered by RC and Council to ensure due processes have been followed. On advice from RC and Council, the NHMRC Chief Executive Officer seeks approval from the Minister for Health and Aged Care to fund the recommended applications.

Once this process is completed, applicants are usually informed of the outcomes [under embargo](#) until a formal announcement is made by the Minister for Health and Aged Care.

Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017</i> (CGRGs)	The Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs) establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf
category descriptors	A seven-point scale description of what each assessment score may entail for peer reviewers to use as a reference guide when scoring applications. (see pages 10-14)
Consumer and Community Representative (CCR) peer reviewers	Peer review panel members who either have lived experience of a condition or state of health or care for someone who has lived experience of the condition or state of health, including using health care services. CCRs may also represent the views and interests of a consumer or community organisation or a patient advocacy group.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant opportunity guidelines	The grant opportunity guidelines outline the processes of the grant opportunity and all key information such as eligibility criteria, the application process and outcome processes once peer review is complete. Each TCR develops its own set of guidelines that will be provided to peer review members when they accept the invitation to participate in the TCR.
GrantConnect	GrantConnect is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at www.grants.gov.au Non-corporate Commonwealth entities (such as NHMRC) must publish grant opportunities on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs. Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.
Health and medical researcher (HMR)	HMR peer reviewers assess the scientific quality and relevance of each grant application. They are chosen based on their expertise and broad research area relevant to the TCR.
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	A 'Special Account' established under section 49 of the NHMRC Act, through which Government appropriated funds are used to pay NHMRC grants.
peer review guidelines	The peer review guidelines outline the process for peer review of the grant applications including the roles and responsibilities of CCR peer reviewers.
peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. NHMRC's Grant Program has more than one scheme associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Sapphire	NHMRC's electronic, secure system that allows research administrators, applicants, assessors, grant holders and NHMRC staff to manage all aspects of the grant lifecycle.

