



## Message from the heads of NHMRC, ARC and UA about the release of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018*

We are pleased to release the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#) (the 2018 Code) and the [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Code, 2018](#) (the Investigation Guide).

We are committed to ensuring that research conducted in Australia is of the highest quality and meets the utmost standards of integrity. The 2018 Code is a crucial part of the framework for the responsible conduct of research in Australia. The clearly articulated principles and responsibilities in the 2018 Code will promote greater consistency across the research sector and build upon the foundation laid by the 2007 Code. We are confident that the 2018 Code will help to ensure that Australian research continues to be held in the highest regard internationally, promotes international collaborations and provides all Australians with confidence in publicly-funded research.

The 2018 Code and Investigation Guide are the result of an extensive review and consultation process. The 2018 Code presents eight clear principles of responsible research and 29 key responsibilities for researchers and institutions. The Investigation Guide describes, in detail, processes for managing and investigating potential breaches of the 2018 Code that can be applied to the range of research contexts in Australia—from small medical research institutions to large universities and across all research disciplines. It aims to ensure procedural fairness to all parties.

We encourage the research sector to become familiar with the 2018 Code and Investigation Guide as soon as possible with the expectation that institutions will meet the requirements of the 2018 Code by 1 July 2019. Adoption of the 2018 Code and Investigation Guide will promote greater consistency across the sector in the management and investigation of potential breaches of the 2018 Code. In the long-term, improvements to investigation processes should also encourage the more efficient resolution of matters, with outcomes that are more readily accepted by the parties involved. Further information is available [here](#).

The importance of upholding research integrity for the research community in Australia was apparent from the large number of detailed and well considered submissions received during the multiple rounds of public and targeted consultation held during the review of the Code. These submissions helped shape the final documents and we thank the research community for their involvement in the process.

We would like to acknowledge the expert advice provided to us during the review of the 2007 Code from the Code Review Committee, chaired by Professor Mike Calford, and the Better Practice Guides working group, chaired by Dr Karolyn White. Further information on the development of the 2018 Code is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

The 2018 Code and Investigation Guide are only one part of the framework for ensuring research is conducted with integrity and the new Code will be complemented by revisions to NHMRC's and ARC's research integrity and misconduct policies, funding agreements and the Australian Research Integrity Committee Framework. NHMRC and the ARC will provide more information to the sector as these revisions progress.

Finally, in addition to the Investigation Guide, the 2018 Code will be supported by a number of other supplementary guidance documents. The documents will support implementation of the principles and responsibilities in the 2018 Code and – when published – will establish a robust and coherent framework for research integrity and quality in Australia.

The release of the 2018 Code and Investigation Guide renews and reinforces Australia's commitment to excellence in research. We encourage their widest adoption by all institutions engaged in research – whether publicly funded or not.

Yours sincerely



Professor Anne Kelso AO  
Chief Executive Officer of the  
National Health and Medical  
Research Council



Professor Sue Thomas  
Chief Executive Officer of the  
Australian Research Council



Ms Catriona Jackson  
Chief Executive-Designate of  
Universities Australia

14 June 2018