



Australian Government

National Health and Medical Research Council

## Relationship between NHMRC peer review and ethical review by institutional ethics committees

The purpose of this document is to outline the expectations of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) with respect to NHMRC funded research and to clarify the relationship between peer review conducted by NHMRC, and ethical review conducted by an institutional ethics committee.

NHMRC requires research involving human participants or animals to comply with the current edition of:

- *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*
- *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.*

These requirements are also embodied in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

Applications for NHMRC funding are subject to rigorous and high quality peer review by NHMRC consistent with the aims of the respective funding schemes.

1. If a funding application is deemed successful following NHMRC peer review, approvals (e.g. ethical clearances, biosafety) and other requirements that are needed for the research to commence, must be obtained. This may occur either before or after NHMRC's funding decision.
2. Review of the ethical aspects of a proposed project is the responsibility of the relevant institutional ethics committee (Human Research Ethics Committee or Animal Ethics Committee). This may occur either before or after NHMRC's funding decision.
3. NHMRC does not release funds until evidence of approval from the relevant ethics committee for the work described in that application has been endorsed by the Administering Institution and is advised to NHMRC.
4. If the ethics committee approval process results in a modification to the research plan that was originally peer reviewed by NHMRC, investigators are expected to comply with NHMRC policies and guidelines regarding grantee variations. Further information is available on NHMRC's website.<sup>1</sup> NHMRC's Research Help Centre provides support for researchers and administering institutions in relation to administration of grants, including grantee variations.<sup>2</sup>

**Professor Warwick Anderson**  
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 1/12/14

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/administering-grants/grantee-variations>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/research-help-centre>