



Australian Government

**Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs**

Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention

National Homelessness Research Guidelines

Foreword

The Government's The White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*, released by the Australian Government on 21 December 2008, outlines a plan for reducing homelessness in Australia by 2020. The Government announced the development of a National Homelessness Research Agenda as part of the White Paper.

The National Homelessness Research Agenda 2009-2013 responds to the Government's commitment to improve the evidence on which the response to homelessness is based. It reflects the strategic priorities and key research questions for the development of the evidence base that will drive change for the next four years.

The Australian Government has allocated \$11.4m over 4 years from 2009-10 to meet the priorities of the National Homelessness Research Agenda. The priorities were established on the basis of research gaps identified in the White Paper and a consultation process with key stakeholders, including a 2008 Researcher Roundtable. The Agenda identifies three main areas for funding:

- research and evaluation to inform and improve the service system and practice;
- research to increase our understanding of homelessness; and
- data development.

Funding will be allocated to address the priorities in the Agenda through a coordinated program of research. Collaboration and partnerships that leverage new resources, networks and skills will be encouraged through these investments. National Homelessness Research funding is not intended to replace the research efforts of the States and Territories.

National Homelessness Research will be delivered primarily through:

- Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements that are long term funding commitments with a small number of research organisations and focus on a cumulative Program of Research;
- Homelessness Research Projects that provide funding for projects of national significance proposed by researchers, service providers and other eligible organisations, including State and Territory Governments; and
- FaHCSIA commissioned projects that address the need for longitudinal data development and evaluation of the White Paper and other ad hoc projects.

National Homelessness Research sits under FaHCSIA's Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program component which aims to reduce the cost and increase the supply of housing and to prevent homelessness and reduce its impact, particularly on families and young people, through funding to support innovative prevention and early intervention initiatives.

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Preface

These guidelines are the framework for the implementation and administration of two of the National Homelessness Research funding elements: the Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements and the Homelessness Research Projects. The Guidelines provide the basis for the business relationship between the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA or the Department) and the funding recipient. They should be read in conjunction with the [Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

The Guidelines include:

- the purpose of National Homelessness Research incorporating the Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements and the Homelessness Research Projects;
- FaHCSIA's expectations of service providers including performance expectations;
- monitoring and funding arrangements including accountabilities and governance arrangements for FaHCSIA and the service provider; and
- other relevant information pertinent to the successful delivery of Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements and the Homelessness Research Projects.

FaHCSIA reserves the right to amend these guidelines from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

Part A – Information about National Homelessness Research

1 Overview

The intent of the National Homelessness Research is to improve the evidence on which the response to homelessness is based.

1.1 Outcomes

Each element of National Homelessness Research will contribute to a cohesive and cumulative body of research that addresses the research priorities identified in the National Homelessness Research Agenda 2009-13.

The following outcomes are expected from the research investment:

- a better understanding of the drivers of homelessness;
- improved understanding of the impacts of service design and social policy on homelessness within and across Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions;
- practice focussed research to improve service responses and evaluation of the effectiveness of programs;
- research that will impact on policy and the Government's broader social inclusion agenda;
- improved research capacity;
- research employing cross-disciplinary and collaborative approaches; and
- identification of emerging issues and innovative responses to inform policy and practice.

The evidence base will also be strengthened by the use of a mix of methods, cross-disciplinary approaches and by attracting a diverse range of skilled researchers to homelessness research.

1.2 Activity

The two elements of National Homelessness Research addressed through these guidelines are as follows:

- Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements are a substantial investment in multi-year agreements with a limited number of research organisations. The funding is provided to enable collaborative approaches to delivering a high quality and timely program of research. Agreements will build critical mass in homelessness research by using dedicated research teams and conducting projects that vary in length

and complexity. Organisations must have the capacity to undertake and manage a significant program of research (exceeding \$400,000 in value annually); and

- Homelessness Research Projects support a 'bottom up' approach to research and evaluation by enabling eligible organisations to submit funding proposals for research projects of national importance or relevance. Projects will be focussed on the priorities of the National Homelessness Research Agenda and can be short-term or long-term.

2 Responsibilities and accountabilities

2.1 FaHCSIA responsibilities and accountabilities

The Homelessness Research elements will be managed by the Homelessness Branch, FaHCSIA National Office.

FaHCSIA will be responsible for:

- providing advice on the Government's agenda, emerging priorities and strategic direction for the research activities. FaHCSIA will establish the Homelessness Research Reference Group to assist with this advice;
- assessment and selection of research proposals to address the priorities in the National Homelessness Research Agenda. The selection of proposals will take into account the need for a spread of projects across multi-site and multi-jurisdictional areas and projects that target vulnerable groups and locational disadvantage;
- ensuring proposals build on the current body of knowledge and do not duplicate existing research;
- entering into Funding Agreements with successful organisations;
- monitoring the performance of funded organisations against the Funding Agreement;
- establishing committees to oversee programs of research;
- payment of funding when milestones are met; and
- determining the process for release and distribution of completed research.

2.2 Service provider responsibilities and accountabilities

Funded providers are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement are met;
- the research services provided are credible, high quality, timely, effective, efficient and enhance the reputation of research funded through National Homelessness Research;

- the research is conducted in an ethical manner as set out in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, together with any institutional conditions such as University Ethics review boards and relevant codes. Where researchers are not affiliated with an organisational process, FaHCSIA will negotiate ethical considerations subsequent to application approval;
- research products are accessible to a wide audience and easily interpreted by non academic audiences;
- the research is held for the exclusive use of the Commonwealth unless otherwise agreed;
- the highest standards of duty of care are applied;
- research is conducted in line with, and complies with the requirements set out in all State and Territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations;
- data integrity, security and confidentiality provisions are maintained;
- early and timely advice is provided to the Department on potential risks to the research; and
- participate in committees as required by FaHCSIA.

3 Risk management strategy

FaHCSIA applies a risk based approach to reporting requirements and the management of funding agreements. The use of performance based funding agreements enables the Department to manage risk. This includes assessing the risk of the provider organisations as well as risks in the delivery of programs and services.

4 Performance management and evaluation

Performance will be managed on an ongoing basis through financial reporting and progress report requirements stipulated in Funding Agreements. Performance requirements may be changed through negotiation and agreement between FaHCSIA and providers, and through variation to Funding Agreements as required.

4.1 Performance framework and reporting

Providers will be required to provide regular updates against milestones as specified in the Funding Agreements. Key performance indicators for Homelessness Research are:

- proportion of projects which are satisfactorily completed within specified timeframes;

- proportion of projects assessed as contributing to further developments and/or improvements in the Department's policies, programs or services; and
- level of satisfaction of key stakeholders with the outcomes from Homelessness Research, including departmental executive and Ministers in particular.

4.2 Financial Reporting

The Homelessness Research elements will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles and the FaHCSIA Funding Agreement. Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided. Providers will be required to provide a financial statement detailing the expenditure of funds for the purposes set out under the Funding Agreement. Additional requirements for financial reporting will be detailed in the Funding Agreement in accordance with FaHCSIA's standard terms and conditions

4.3 Evaluation

A review will be conducted into the operation and delivery of homelessness research.

5 Contact information

Research and Information Section
Homelessness Branch
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 7576
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

Email: Homelessness.research@fahcsia.gov.au

6 Complaints

Complaints will be dealt with under the Department's Complaints Management Scheme. The Scheme ensures that any problems an applicant has with the Department's services, decisions or policies and those of the Department's funded service providers, are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

For Homelessness Research, the initial contact person is:

Manager
Homelessness Branch
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Athllon Drive
PO Box 7576
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

Email: homelessness.research@fahcsia.gov.au

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of this process and the issue of complaint has not been resolved, the applicant can then contact the Department's Complaints Officer on 1800 634 035 who will work with the applicant to resolve the complaint or suggest further action.

If an applicant is dissatisfied at any time with the Department's handling of the complaint, they can also contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

More information is available on the [Complaints Management Section](#) of the FaHCSIA website.

Part B – Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements

1 Activity and management details

These significant multi-year funding agreements will be with a small number of organisations selected through a competitive funding process. Service providers will be required to deliver a mutually agreed program of research in line with the priorities and key research questions identified in the National Homelessness Research Agenda. Assessment of capability of the organisation will include their capacity to connect with other relevant research, using their networks in order to enhance the conduct and results from the research program and influence others with the findings.

Funding for the Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements will take into account the funding principles outlined in the National Homelessness Research Agenda. Agreements might include, but are not limited to the following activities.

- Provide high level, strategic policy research investigating Australia's homelessness policy and services, disadvantage and emerging social and housing policy issues.
- Undertake survey questionnaire design, collection, data analysis and reporting.
- Undertake complex analysis of large longitudinal and unit record datasets.
- Evaluate a broad range of homelessness and related policy and service delivery initiatives.
- Deliver timely, high quality, professional, policy relevant research reports, presentations and advice and respond to Departmental feedback.
- Work with FaHCSIA in setting a mutually agreed Program of Research for each funding year.
- Participate on a Project Management Committee comprised of two representatives from the research provider and the Department for the duration Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements.
- Ensure that the research team is a dedicated resource from which appropriate personnel can be assigned to undertake the research program. This includes activities that encourage the development of new skills and capabilities in homelessness research.
- Provide performance reports and regularly communicate with FaHCSIA regarding the research services and manage projects to meet agreed outcomes and milestones.

- Undertake research projects that emphasize collaboration and leverage new resources, networks and skills.
- Present policy relevant research reports at seminars, roundtables, and workshops.
- Present peer reviewed papers at conferences and submit articles for publication in peer reviewed academic journals.
- Submit peer reviewed monograph for FaHCSIA Social Policy Research Paper series and respond to Departmental feedback.

The annual Program of Research will:

- address priority research questions outlined in the Agenda supplemented by advice from the Homelessness Research Reference Group;
- identify the research projects to be undertaken by the research provider, including research aims, methods, team membership, costs and timelines, a description of the outputs and the proposed milestones;
- be developed by FaHCSIA with input from Departmental program areas and the research provider and agreed by the joint Research Management Committee. The annual Research Program will be submitted to the Departmental Research and Evaluation Committee for final approval; and
- be monitored by a Project Management Committee.

1.1 Funding for the Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements

The amount of funding made available to each successful applicant will depend on the total number of Homelessness Research Partnership Agreement providers approved. It is expected that only a small number will be funded. A total amount of at least \$4 million will be available for the Homelessness Research Partnership Agreements until June 2013. The amount of funding will be negotiated with the successful applicants following the completion of the selection process.

1.1.1 Eligible and in-eligible activities

The funding must be used to undertake the agreed annual Program of Research and to manage the agreement. Funding can be used to meet the costs specified in the application guidelines. Organisations should seek Departmental approval for expenditure on any other activities.

1.2 Service provider eligibility

The following organisations are eligible under these guidelines to submit proposals for Homelessness Research:

- a) Incorporated Associations (incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc' in their legal name);
- b) Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have "Cooperative' in their legal name);
- c) Companies (incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 – may be not-for-profit or for-profit proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies);
- d) Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006 and administered by the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations).
- e) Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation (many public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc);
- f) Partnerships; and
- g) Trustees on behalf of a Trust.

2 Performance management and evaluation

Performance will be managed on an ongoing basis through financial reporting and progress report requirements stipulated in Funding Agreements. Performance requirements may be changed through negotiation and agreement between FaHCSIA and providers, and through variation to Funding Agreements as required.

2.1 Performance framework and reporting

The Research Provider will conduct the research to a high professional standard to the satisfaction of FaHCSIA. FaHCSIA will assess the Provider's performance of their obligation under the Agreement taking into account:

- performance against milestones for each research project; and
- any other performance indicators specified in the Program of Research.

During the term of the agreement, each Research Provider will provide FaHCSIA with progress reports detailing current status against the milestones for each research project as specified in the annual Program of Research quarterly.

The Project Management Committee will review and discuss the Research Provider's progress against the milestones for each research project.

2.2 Financial Reporting

Providers will be required to provide a financial statement detailing the expenditure of funds for the purposes set out under the Funding Agreement. Additional requirements for financial reporting will be detailed in the Funding Agreement in accordance with FaHCSIA's standard terms and conditions

3. Funding agreement

Funding will only be provided in accordance with an executed funding agreement. FaHCSIA uses standard Funding Agreements. In addition to complying with the Standard Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions, providers must also comply with the following Supplementary Condition relating to approval requirements for publication of research.

1. Approval must be obtained from FaHCSIA before publicly disclosing or publishing the results or findings of any research relating to the Activity.
2. However, FaHCSIA approval is not needed if disclosure or publication is requested by the responsible Minister or by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
3. FaHCSIA cannot unreasonably withhold our approval and public disclosure or publication may not be delayed for more than 12 months following finalisation of the relevant publication.
4. Once the research is published, with FaHCSIA approval, providers need not seek approval for further publications arising from the research.

Part C – Homelessness Research Projects

1 Activity and management details

The Homelessness Research Projects funding will support research proposals from a wide range of eligible organisations for funding of research that addresses one or more of the priorities and/or research questions identified in the National Homelessness Research Agenda. Funding will be directed to projects with the potential to deliver high quality evidence regarding the achievement of the White Paper outcomes and in response to the emerging needs of homelessness policy and program delivery.

Funding allocation for the Homelessness Research Projects will take into account the funding principles outlined in the National Homelessness Research Agenda. The selection process will ensure a balance of effort between the priorities for example, national versus local projects, disadvantaged group research versus population wide studies project and innovative versus knowledge-building projects. There will also be an emphasis on research that will provide early information on assessing progress towards the government's targets for responding to and preventing homelessness. Eligible organisations may apply for funding for one or more projects.

Funded projects might include, but are not limited to the following activities.

- Policy research investigating Australia's homelessness policy and services, disadvantage and emerging social and housing policy issues.
- Practice focussed research that will improve service responses and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.
- Innovative research that responds to emerging issues and informs policy and practice.
- Evaluation of a broad range of homelessness and related policy and service delivery initiatives.
- Research of national importance ranging from small scale qualitative studies to large scale projects or studies that are innovative.
- Complex analysis of large longitudinal and unit record datasets.
- Collaborative research that builds cross disciplinary approaches to homelessness related issues.
- Delivery of timely, high quality, professional, policy relevant research reports, in specified format/s (including publications);

- Provision of seminars, roundtables, and workshop presentations.
- Project management and regular communication with FaHCSIA regarding performance against agreed outcomes and milestones.

1.1 Funding for the program

An estimated \$1.5 million will be available for Homelessness Research Projects from 2009-10 to 2012-13. Funding for the Homelessness Research Projects will be provided through competitive funding rounds. The timing and number of funding rounds will be dependant on funding availability and research priorities. A maximum amount of \$100,000 will be available for each project (unless a compelling case is made to exceed this limit). Projects extending over more than one financial year will be considered.

Acceptance of a proposal will be subject to negotiation and execution of the Funding Agreement. FaHCSIA may accept the whole or part of the proposal offered. The final Project will be defined in negotiation with the successful applicants.

1.1.1 Eligible and in-eligible activities

Funding must be used for expenses directly related to the implementation of the Project and should be directly related to the agreed research work plan.

1.2 Service provider eligibility

The following organisations are eligible under these guidelines to submit proposals for Homelessness Research:

- a) Incorporated Associations (incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc' in their legal name);
- b) Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have "Cooperative' in their legal name);
- c) Companies (incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 – may be not-for-profit or for-profit proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies);
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- e) Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation (many public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc);
- f) Partnerships;
- g) Trustees on behalf of a Trust;
- h) Local Governments; and
- i) State and Territory governments.

2 Performance management and evaluation

The Research Provider will conduct the research to a high professional standard to the satisfaction of FaHCSIA. FaHCSIA will assess the Provider's performance against negotiated milestones for each research project as stipulated in the Funding Agreement.

2.1 Performance framework and reporting

Providers will be required to provide regular reports against the milestones. At a minimum, reports must be provided at six monthly intervals and at the completion of the Project in accordance with the Funding Agreement. The reports provide FaHCSIA with an opportunity to review, and comment on, the scope of the research, the methodology and research instruments being used, and to be alerted to any emerging issues, or risks to the timely completion or quality of research.

The Research Provider will conduct the research to a high professional standard to the satisfaction of FaHCSIA. Researchers may choose to submit their research outputs for peer review.

2.2 Financial Reporting

Providers will be required to provide a financial statement detailing the expenditure of funds for the purposes set out under the Funding Agreement. Additional requirements for financial reporting will be detailed in the Funding Agreement in accordance with FaHCSIA's standard terms and conditions.

3 Funding agreement

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4. Once the research is published, with FaHCSIA approval, providers need not seek approval for further publications arising from the research.