



## Research Policy

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### Supporting Document

Research Procedure

### Supporting Forms

Northcott Research Fund Application Form

Authority to Exchange Information Form

### Cross Reference

NHMRC, ARC and Universities Australia (2007). Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Canberra: NHMRC Publications.

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### Policy Statement

Northcott Disability Services is committed to supporting staff and clients to conduct research that is of a high quality, ethically sound and relevant to Northcott's practice and strategic priorities. Research at Northcott is to be conducted with integrity, in a way that is respectful of all involved. The rights and needs of participants are to be considered at every stage of the research.

In 2007 the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia jointly established a Code of Conduct for those undertaking research, and all research at Northcott is guided by this code. Required by this code of conduct, Northcott has a responsibility to provide a research governance framework that is equitable, rigorous, transparent and supportive of staff undertaking research. At Northcott this takes the form of a two tiered structure – the Northcott Research Committee and the Quality in Research Standing Committee. Operational detail of this framework can be found in the Northcott Research Procedure.

All data, findings and outcomes of research conducted at Northcott are the intellectual property of Northcott unless otherwise negotiated with funding bodies or research partners.

### Definitions

**Research:** “original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight.” (NHMRC, ARC and Universities Australia, 2007, p.1). Research includes work directly related to examining current practice, the trialing or study of new ideas as well as the use of existing knowledge in new or experimental ways. Research projects are structured tasks with the goal of learning or finding out new information.

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**National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC):** is Australia's leading expert body promoting the development and maintenance of public and individual health standards. The NHMRC is a statutory body responsible to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing. A primary function of the NHMRC is to provide research funding and develop advice, standards and guidelines relating to research undertaken throughout Australia.

**Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC):** an external group of experts responsible for the protection of welfare and rights of participants involved in research. A HREC reviews research proposals for research that involves humans, monitors the conduct of research, and responds to complaints arising from research. HRECS are usually established in large organisations, like universities, and are registered with the NHMRC.

### Responsibility

- **The Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for the final review and approval of this policy.
- **Northcott Research Committee** a small group of independent research and service delivery experts.

This committee meets quarterly and is chaired by Northcott Chief Executive Officer.

The role of the Research Committee is to:

- Develop a research strategy to determine which areas of research will be given priority, based upon which will be most useful to encourage practice improvement and improved managerial decision-making
- Review staff research proposals and research papers to assist staff to improve their research skills and profiles
- Advise Northcott on potential sources of research funding and assist in grant application
- Develop partnerships to enable high quality, strategically important and relevant research activities. (Current Terms of Reference)

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- provide consultation in relation to Northcott Research Policy, Procedure and NHMRC requirements, including external ethics approval requirements
- **Quality in Research Standing Committee (QiRSC):** is comprised of Northcott staff from various disciplines, along with one external member from the Research Committee. This committee meets quarterly and is responsible for promoting and maintaining quality research at Northcott. QiRSC provides support to research applicants from the inception of the research idea until project completion to foster high quality, ethically sound research that is relevant to Northcott's strategic plan and in keeping with Research Committee guidance.
- **All employees** are responsible for complying with this policy and related procedures

### Legislation & Standards Compliance

NHMRC, ARC and Universities Australia (2007). *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Canberra: NHMRC Publications.

NHMRC Act 1992.

NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998.

NHMRC (2007). *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (the National Statement)*. Canberra: NHMRC Publications.

NHMRC (2003). *Values Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research*. Canberra: NHMRC Publications

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (2002). *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*. Canberra, Australia: AIATSIS Publications.

NHMRC (2003). *When does quality assurance in health care require independent ethical review?: Advice to Institutions, Human Research Ethics Committees and Health Care Professionals*. Canberra: NHMRC Publications.

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NHMRC (undated) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and ethical review and research involving only low or negligible risk*. Canberra: NHMRC Publications.

### Equity and Access Considerations

Consideration needs to be given to the individual needs and preferences of all participants throughout the research process.

All participants have a right to withdraw from research at any stage of the project and may withdraw consent for the use of data collected.

For research participants with a disability every effort is to be made to ensure full participation in the project and consideration is to be given to individual needs in the project design.

### Cultural Diversity

When conducting research all staff involved should remain aware of individual preferences and cultural sensitivities.

When working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, researchers should consult ethical guidelines when working with participants from these cultural groups (see Legislation & Standards Compliance above).

### Review and Evaluation of Policy

This policy will be reviewed within the framework of Northcott's quality assurance and continuous improvement process. Process performance and policy effectiveness will be measured against Northcott's standards, objectives, and practices as part of a scheduled review of the policy and related documents based on the level of risk to clients and the organisation.

Policies and related documentation will be evaluated based on whether they are meeting the overarching standards of the organisation in regards to quality, best practice, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness affecting service provision and organisational capacity.

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## Research Policy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Stubbs".

**Authorised by:**.....  
Kerry Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer

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