



## Research Procedure

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### Supporting Documents:

Research Policy  
Northcott Complaints Grievance Procedure  
Complaints Grievance Procedure

### Supporting Forms

Northcott Research Fund Application  
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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### Overview and Description of the Procedure

This procedure outlines the process for Northcott staff and clients to follow if they wish to conduct research at Northcott.

The Northcott Research Procedure has been developed to support Northcott staff and clients to conduct research that is of a high quality, ethically sound and in keeping with Northcott's priorities. It is an expectation that research findings will be available to Northcott staff and clients in order to improve outcomes for people accessing Northcott's services.

All research at Northcott is governed by a Code of Conduct jointly established by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia (2007). In accordance with this code, a two tiered framework for research governance has been developed at Northcott. The two tiers are the Northcott Research Committee and Quality in Research Standing Committee (QiRSC).

In keeping with the Northcott Research Policy, the Northcott research framework as outlined in this procedure, has been designed to foster a collaborative approach to research and promote mutual cooperation, respect and exchange of information at all stages of the research process.

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### Responsibilities

**Northcott Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for the implementation of the Research Procedure underpinned by the principles outlined in the Research Policy.

**Northcott Research Committee** responsibilities are:

- 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;
- To review staff research proposals and research papers to assist staff to improve their research skills and profiles;
- To advise Northcott on potential sources of research funding and assist in external grant application;
- To develop partnerships to enable high quality, strategically important and relevant research activities;
- To provide consultation in relation to Northcott Research Policy, Procedure and NHMRC requirements, including requirements for external ethics approval.

**Quality in Research Standing Committee (QiRSC)** supports staff and clients wishing to undertake research from inception. It does this by appointing a mentor to work with the researcher. The mentor supports the researcher to prepare documentation for the Research Committee, assists decision making around ethical risk for the Research Committee's consideration, provides mentoring support throughout the research project and dissemination of results, and responds to any breaches of conduct under the Code of Conduct (2007). From time to time QiRSC will review the overall progress made by the researcher.

**Planning and Development Unit (PDU)** provides an initial contact point for clients wishing to pursue research and links prospective researchers to QiRSC support.

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**Manager** supports his/ her staff member in their research requests and enables all team members to take an active part in research where relevant and as is possible within team and budget priorities.

**Staff** are responsible for adherence to the Northcott Research Policy and Research procedure.

### Procedure Details (please refer to Appendix 1: Northcott Research Flow Chart)

#### Step 1: Discuss your research idea

- Read the Northcott Research Policy.
- Staff - discuss your research idea with your manager to assess whether the proposed research topic fits within both team and Northcott's strategic priorities
- Clients - contact the Manager of the Planning and Development Unit at Northcott who will help you to connect to QiRSC.
- Arrange a meeting between yourself, your Manager (if you are staff) and a representative from QiRSC.

#### Step 2: Meet with your Manager and QiRSC representative

- At the meeting between yourself, your Manager (if you are staff) and the QiRSC representative, discuss the research idea using the Northcott Research Fund Application as your agenda. This application will help you all to decide if the research idea fits the criteria set out in that application (please refer to Section 2, p. 2 of the Northcott Research Application Fund) .
- QiRSC representative to appoint a mentor who will assist you from now on.

#### Step 3: Prepare the Northcott Research Fund Application Form

- In consultation with your mentor, complete a draft of the Northcott Research Application form.
- Ensure you're aware of the possibility that your research may require ethics approval from a HREC (this will be decided for you by the Northcott Research Committee with advice from QiRSC – see Steps 4 and 5 below).
- Send the draft Northcott Research Fund Application to the QiRSC for review and feedback.

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### Step 4: Forward the draft to QiRSC for review

- A meeting of QiRSC will review your draft Northcott Research Fund Application form and make content recommendations where necessary.
- QiRSC will use the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and ethical review and research involving low or negligible risk” (undated) to make a recommendation about the proposed level of risk of the research. This recommendation will be used by the Northcott Research Committee (see Step 5) to decide whether ethics approval from a HREC will be required.
- Your QiRSC mentor will assist you to understand all the requirements of ethics approval if it has been recommended.
- When you have completed your application with the recommendations made by QiRSC, QiRSC will forward your finished Northcott Research Fund Application form to the Research Committee.

### Step 5: Final Northcott Research Fund Application submitted to the Research Committee

- A meeting of the Research Committee will review your Northcott Research Fund Application, make a decision about a) whether it will be accepted or requires further review, b) the proposed budget and c) whether the research will require ethics approval from a HREC.
- The Research Committee will convey its decisions to you via the QiRSC mentor.
- If your application is unsuccessful the reasons will be outlined in writing. Your mentor will discuss these reasons with you. Together you may decide to review your application and re-submit.

### Step 6: Referral to Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

**(if required- otherwise go to step 7)**

- Your QiRSC mentor will provide you with support to complete your application for ethics approval.



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### Step 7: Research Application approved

- Meet with your Manager to discuss logistical implications of the research in terms of your workload and the team's priorities.
- Meet with your QiRSC mentor to ensure you have addressed all issues reflected in the Code of Conduct (2007), paying particular attention to consent, risk, data collection and storage.
- Make a mentor support plan with your QiRSC mentor so you have regular mentor support throughout the research.
- If your research is to be conducted in conjunction with a university, make separate arrangements for feedback and supervision with that university. Your QiRSC mentor support plan will be in addition to that arrangement.

### Step 8: Project proceeds

- Throughout the duration of the project ensure you facilitate the ongoing dissemination of information to Northcott staff and clients.
- Ensure you keep within the timeframes presented in your Northcott Research Fund Application.
- If you are unable to adhere to any aspect of your Northcott Research Fund Application, discuss with your mentor and seek advice as to how you should proceed from QiRSC.
- Your QiRSC mentor will regularly feedback to QiRSC meetings. Where required QiRSC may request you attend a committee meeting to present your progress.
- If anybody has a complaint about any aspects of the research then ensure that the Northcott Complaints Grievance Procedure is followed.
- If anyone suspects that a breach of the Code of Conduct (2007) has occurred, ensure that QiRSC is notified immediately. Northcott has a responsibility to investigate these allegations as outlined in the NHMRC code.

### Step 9: Research project is completed

- Review your Northcott Research Fund Application form and ensure you've completed all the requirements.

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- Attend a QiRSC meeting to discuss the dissemination of results, implications for practice and any possible future research topics that have emerged from your research.
- In addition to any dissemination requirements outlined in your Northcott Research Fund Application form ensure your research findings are posted on NIGEL, and a copy of findings are posted in the Northcott library.
- Ensure all project data is stored as outlined in the Code of Conduct (2007).

### Related References

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

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.

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

### Review and Evaluation of Procedure

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

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Procedures 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.

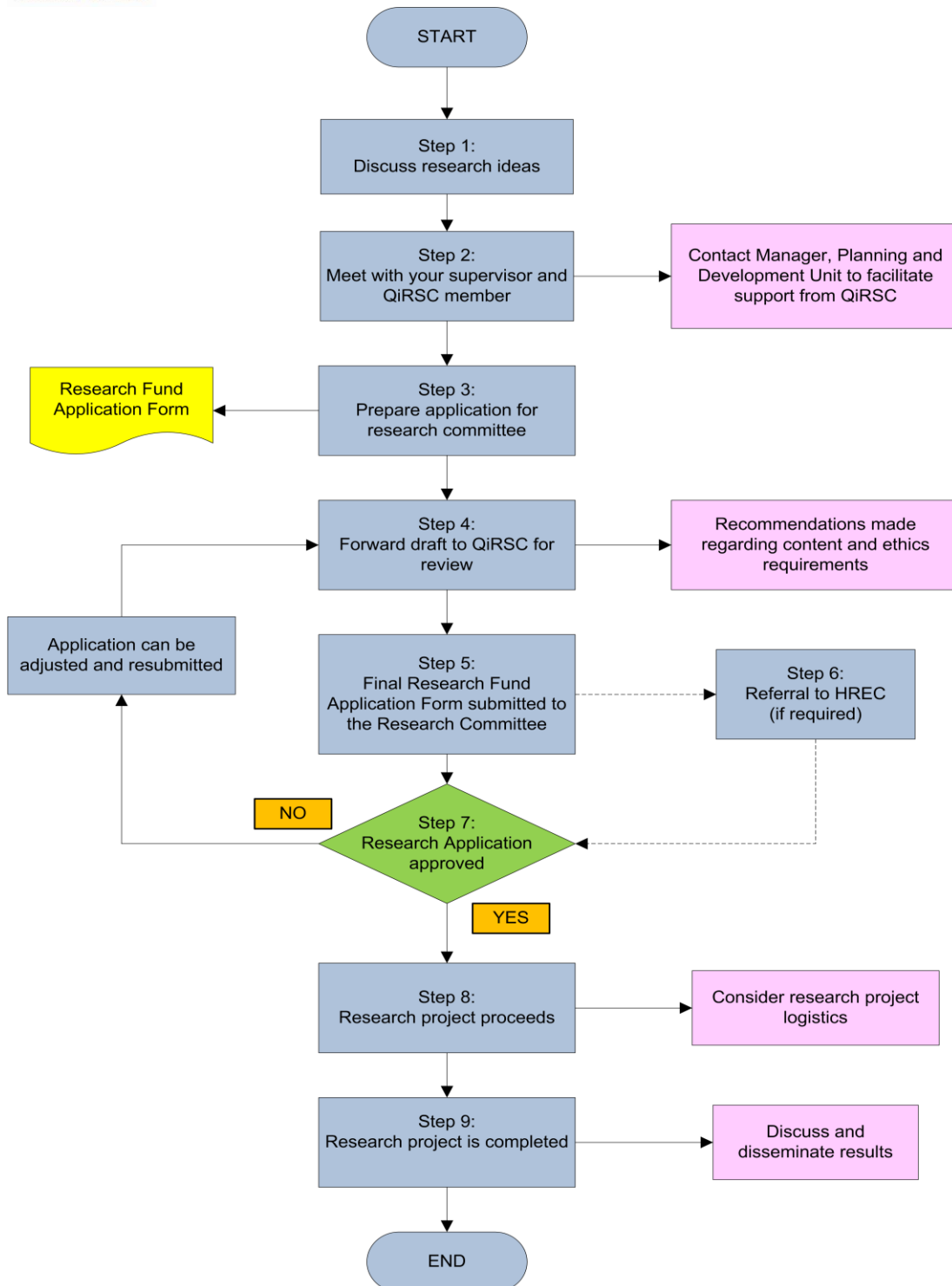
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Stubbs".

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

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