



**Australian Government**  
**National Health and Medical Research Council**



# Guidelines for producing NHMRC case studies

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## Introduction

NHMRC seeks to maximise the reporting of impacts arising from the research that it funds, and from its other activities, but it cannot undertake this reporting on its own. Partners are essential to impact reporting and these *Guidelines for producing NHMRC case studies* (the Guidelines) are intended to assist partner organisations to work with NHMRC to produce case studies.

Partnering with NHMRC to develop a case study provides benefits for both NHMRC and the partner.

By working with partners, NHMRC gains access to:

- specialist and expert knowledge that is vital to the identification of possible impacts and to describing the pathways that lead to them
- data and information that are not publicly available but are essential to creation of an impact narrative, and the provision of evidence for it.

Benefits for the partner include:

- verification of the impact story using NHMRC data
- quality assurance and validation by NHMRC of the partner's research translation activities and impacts
- NHMRC's branding applied to the partner's impact narrative
- promotion by NHMRC of the case study, and thus of the partner and its impacts.

## Development principles

In developing the case studies, NHMRC is guided by a number of principles, as set out below.

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### Principle 1: All NHMRC case studies must be approved by NHMRC

Only those case studies that have been formally approved by NHMRC may be published using NHMRC's template and logo. While NHMRC case studies are developed collaboratively, NHMRC retains final authority over whether or not, and in what form, they are published.

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### Principle 2: Each case study must involve NHMRC in some way

NHMRC recognises that few, if any, impacts arising from health and medical research will be the result of the work of a single individual or organisation. The development of any given impact will usually have been supported by funding from a number of different organisations. That said, NHMRC will only publish case studies on impacts whose underpinning research or other originating activities received some support from NHMRC.

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### **Principle 3: NHMRC will work closely with case study partners**

NHMRC's ability to work closely with its case study partners is vital to the successful and timely completion of the case studies themselves. In order to ensure the maintenance of close working relationships with partners, NHMRC:

- keeps partners informed throughout the development of each case study
- provides opportunities for partners to comment on drafts and layouts
- alerts partners ahead of the publication of each case study
- actively works with partners to cross-promote the case studies.

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### **Principle 4: All factual statements must be checked for accuracy**

NHMRC actively confirms the accuracy of all factual statements contained within each case study.

Using its own internal data and information sources, NHMRC verifies factual details about those NHMRC grants and investments that are featured in a case study.

For content contributed by or about partners, NHMRC asks the partner institution to confirm that this content is accurate, and to work with its own researchers to ensure that any statements made about them are accurate.

NHMRC regards partners as expert sources with respect to the claims that they make within their domains of expertise. That said, NHMRC may query claims made by partners and require evidence to support these claims. The decision to publish a claim will ultimately be made by NHMRC.

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### **Principle 5: Case study topics are carefully selected**

NHMRC takes the following considerations into account when selecting topics for case studies:

- the focal impact should be a significant and noteworthy change
- the attribution of the impact should be uncontested (refer below for further discussion of attribution)
- the partner organisation should have the capability necessary to assist NHMRC to complete the case study.

In addition to the above, NHMRC is particularly interested in developing case studies that:

- describe obstacles and barriers in the translation pathway and how these were overcome
- communicate research translations, outcomes and impacts that are not currently being effectively communicated through other channels
- relate to health and medical issues that have received significant or long-term NHMRC or other Australian Government funding, or that are (or were) strategic priorities for NHMRC and/or the Australian Government.

Topics will be selected to ensure that, collectively and over time, the case studies reflect the diversity of NHMRC-funded research.

## Note on attribution

One of the most challenging aspects of case study development is the correct attribution of impacts<sup>1</sup>. Each case study must include reference to those individuals and organisations that made the most significant contributions to generating the impact being described.

As any given impact will usually have resulted from the work of a range of individuals and organisations, and because of the limited space available within the NHMRC case study template, it may not be possible for a case study to refer to everyone who made a contribution to the impact. Those included will be selected on a number of criteria, including the degree and type of support that they received from NHMRC.

While NHMRC is not able to include every involved individual and organisation within any given case study, it can develop additional case studies within the same research or impact area. Please contact the case study development team if you are interested to pursue this option.

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## Principle 6: Case studies are drafted in plain English

NHMRC case studies strive to translate technical research and commercial language into plain English that can be easily understood by a non-academic audience. Consequently, some technical information and content provided by partners may be edited to simplify it and to align it with NHMRC's style guide. NHMRC retains final editorship of all case studies to ensure a consistent tone and style.

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## Principle 7: Case studies are intended to be used

NHMRC produces case studies so as to increase public awareness of the role that health and medical research has played, and continues to play, in building a healthier Australia. Because promotion is essential to ensuring that case studies reach their intended audiences, NHMRC actively seeks opportunities to cross-promote each case study with its partner organisation(s).

## Development stages

The process to develop a case study follows the stages set out below.

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### Stage 1: Planning the case study

A small team within NHMRC is responsible for leading the development of case studies. When an idea for a new case study has been provisionally agreed upon within NHMRC, the team undertakes background research to determine whether the case study idea is suitable for further development. Case study topics often require significant background research before NHMRC seeks a partner to collaborate with on their further development.

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed discussion of attribution may be found within [CSIRO's Impact Evaluation Guide](#).

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## Stage 2: Developing drafts

NHMRC staff work closely with partners to develop draft text for the case study that can be placed into the case study template, then prepared for approval by the partner and ultimately by NHMRC.

Partners have ongoing opportunities to review drafts and provide comments during this process.

The working relationship with partners is informed by [Principle 3](#) and [Principle 4](#).

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## Stage 3: Fact and integrity checking

Prior to being published, each case study must receive clearance both from the partner and from NHMRC.

Partners are asked to verify details mentioned in the case study, including such things as non-NHMRC funding, publications, patents, curriculum vitae details, timeline dates, conflict of interests and a range of other issues. Fact checking is undertaken consistent with [Principle 4](#).

Clearance within NHMRC includes ensuring that the case study:

- accurately describes the NHMRC grants received by profiled researchers
- accurately reflects NHMRC policy (insofar as this is relevant)
- does not include profiled researchers that have been the subject of findings of research misconduct or breaches of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

Final approval to publish must be granted by NHMRC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

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## Stage 4: Publishing

Subject to approval to publish by the CEO, NHMRC prepares the case study for uploading onto its website and develops any other supporting material. This process may include the development of a cross-promotion strategy with the partner. Partners are kept informed of the likely timing of publication.

## Questions

Any questions about the content and/or application of these Guidelines should be addressed to NHMRC's case study development team at [research.policy@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:research.policy@nhmrc.gov.au).

**Note:** These Guidelines are not intended to be used to guide the development of case studies for inclusion within NHMRC grant applications. Please follow the instructions within the relevant Grant Guidelines when applying for an NHMRC grant.