



Information Publication Scheme Plan

Office of the National Health and Medical Research Council

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Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Objectives	3
Establishing and administering the agency's IPS entry	4
Administering NHMRC's Information Publication Scheme	4
Roles, responsibilities and resources	4
FOI Disclosure log	5
Access charges	5
Structure of the IPS	6
Information required to be published under the IPS	6
Agency plan	6
Who we are	6
What we do	7
Our reports and responses to Parliament	7
Consultation arrangements	7
Routinely requested information under the FOI Act and FOI disclosure log	7
Contact details.....	7
Other information to be published	7
Our priorities.....	7
Information about the impact of NHMRC activities.....	7
Additional operational information.....	8
IPS compliance review	8
Feedback or complaints	8
Further information	8

Introduction

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is established under the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992*. It comprises the Chief Executive Officer, Council, Principal Committees and the Office of NHMRC.

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key agency for:

- managing investment in health and medical research
- developing evidence-based health advice for the Australian community, health professionals and government
- providing advice on ethical practice in health care and in the conduct of health and medical research.

NHMRC brings together these functions into a single national organisation, contributing to building a healthy Australia.

NHMRC has a policy of public consultation on individual and public health matters it is considering. It endeavours, through its activities and published information, to demonstrate to all Australians the benefits that result from health and medical research.

Purpose

The Information Publication Scheme (IPS) encourages Australian Government agencies to release information to the public proactively. It is intended to encourage greater openness and transparency in government and reflects the pro-disclosure goals of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that its operations are transparent and that it consults widely in the development of its advice and guidelines.

The Office of NHMRC has prepared this IPS Plan (the Plan) to:

- assist NHMRC in the administration of its IPS entry
- identify the information NHMRC proposes to publish and how it will be published, and
- fulfill its obligations under section 8(1) of the FOI Act.

Objectives

This Plan sets out our mechanisms and procedures to:

- a) identify and publish all information we are required to publish, including this Plan (FOI Act, s 8(2))
- b) identify and publish the additional information we will publish (FOI Act, s 8(4))
- c) ensure that information published under the IPS can be readily accessed and is understandable and useable by the reader, including that the format of online content conforms with the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (Version 2), and
- d) review NHMRC's IPS entry and Plan and information published under the IPS to ensure that it is accurate, up-to-date and complete (FOI Act, s 8B).

Establishing and administering the agency's IPS entry

To establish the IPS, NHMRC reviewed the information required to be published under the FOI Act and ensured this information is available on NHMRC website. It also identified what additional (other) information may be of use or interest to the public or stakeholders. What information we identify as 'Operational information' and 'other information' for the purposes of the IPS will be formally reviewed every five years.

The NHMRC IPS entry can be found at the [Information publication scheme page](#).

NHMRC generally releases publications to the public through its website. Printed hard copies are restricted to key corporate documents, such as Annual Reports.

NHMRC manages its information and data assets under *NHMRC's Information and Data Governance Framework*. It is also a data custodian under the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022* and has a well-established program of publishing datasets and data-sharing in response to data requests.

Administering NHMRC's Information Publication Scheme

To meet our obligations under the IPS, the Office of NHMRC:

- maintains the IPS entry and disclosure log pages on its website, ensuring they remain up-to-date, accurate and complete
- works to increase the accessibility of published information
- publishes details of any charges that may be levied subject to guidance from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), and
- reviews NHMRC's response to the IPS in conjunction with OAIC every five years.

Roles, responsibilities and resources

The General Manager of NHMRC has responsibility for establishing and maintaining the IPS. This role is supported by the FOI, information and technology management, and communications teams. The General Manager reports to the Executive Board, the senior governance forum for NHMRC, which is responsible for leadership and oversight of organisational performance.

All executive and managerial staff are responsible for ensuring that the information they publish, relevant to their programs, remains accurate and up to date. Staff include the management of information in accordance with NHMRC's information and records

management policies in their annual performance plans. In addition, NHMRC periodically reviews the information published on its website to ensure that it is up-to-date, accurate and complete. This includes a review of the IPS entry and the associated webpages which covers that:

- documents required to be published or identified as optional information are available on NHMRC's website and are up-to-date, accurate and complete, making revisions where necessary, and
- any feedback received from internal or external stakeholders on the operation of the IPS is considered, making improvements as needed.

Web content accessibility

NHMRC takes seriously the obligation to make the information on its website accessible to all Australians. Australian Government agencies are required to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG Level 2.1](#)). Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, agencies are also required to ensure information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory accessible manner. NHMRC will ensure, to the extent possible, that all documents available on its website conform to these guidelines. The majority of content will be published in HTML format to meet accessibility requirements. A small number of exceptions may apply, for example PDF documents with complex charts, tables and forms, or documents that are out of date but retained for historical reference. Where a person requires an alternative accessible format of a document, it will be made available on request via email, if possible.

NHMRC is part of the Commonwealth Library Deposit and Free Issue Scheme. NHMRC will deposit a digital version of all our publications and corporate documents with the National Library of Australia, through the [National edeposit service website](#).

FOI Disclosure log

Under the FOI Act, NHMRC is required to publish a disclosure log, which provides public access to information that has been released in response to an FOI request. This requirement does not apply to certain information, such as where the release would involve the unreasonable disclosure of personal or business information (FOI Act, s 11C). Our Disclosure Log is available from our website through our FOI page. Where there are technical constraints on our capacity to provide the information directly, through downloading it from our website, we will provide details about the information we have released and how it can be accessed.

Access charges

NHMRC is committed to providing appropriate access to our information. For this reason, NHMRC does not intend to impose charges for accessing IPS information which is not available on our website. However, should there be considerable reproduction costs or other specific incidental costs incurred in giving access, NHMRC may decide to impose charges to cover the reimbursement of these costs (FOI Act, s 8D). Any charges applied would represent the lowest reasonable cost and would be consistent with charges in the [Freedom of Information \(Charges\) Regulations 2019](#) (noting that IPS access charges are

separate from the charges that may be imposed for processing FOI requests under Part III of the FOI Act). Information about charges is included in NHMRC's [IPS entry](#).

Structure of the IPS

This IPS Plan, and the information required to be published under the IPS, is linked from our IPS entry. The IPS entry can be found on the NHMRC website through our FOI page. It is reviewed from time to time.

The IPS entry is published under the following headings:

Required information

- 1) Agency plan (s 8(2)(a))
- 2) Who we are (ss 8(2)(b) and 8(2)(d))
- 3) What we do (ss 8(2)(c) and 8(2)(j))
- 4) Our reports and responses to Parliament (ss 8(2)(e) and 8(2)(h))
- 5) Consultation arrangements (s 8(2)(f))
- 6) Routinely requested information under the FOI Act and FOI disclosure log (s 8(2)(g))
- 7) Contact details, including for FOIs (s 8(2)(i))

Other information (s 8(4))

- 8) Our priorities
- 9) Information about the impact of NHMRC activities
- 10) Our finances
- 11) Additional operational information

The information provided under these headings primarily links to the pages of NHMRC's website where the identified information is published.

Information required to be published under the IPS

NHMRC has identified the following information to be published in accordance with section 8(2) of the FOI Act:

Agency plan

This Plan and any revisions of it.

Who we are

This will include details of the structure of the NHMRC (an organisational chart). It will have links to information about the senior executive and leadership team and the location of offices and contact information.

This will also include information about statutory appointments under the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* and the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*, including NHMRC's Chief Executive Officer, members of the Council and Principal Committees of NHMRC and the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints.

What we do

This will outline NHMRC's establishing and governing legislation, its functions and role and provide links to NHMRC's operational information, including:

- NHMRC Corporate Plan
- deadlines for applications for research grant funding
- research grant application kits, including funding and peer review policies
- guidelines for organisations seeking NHMRC approval of a third-party guideline
- guidelines relating to other NHMRC programs and practices that may impact external parties, including the Complaints Policy and NHMRC-published codes for the conduct of research.

Our reports and responses to Parliament

NHMRC reports its Corporate Plan, Annual Report and the Embryo Research Licensing Committee's biannual reports to the Parliament of Australia. This section also links to information routinely provided to the Parliament in response to requests and orders from the Parliament, including Senate orders 12 (Harradine report), 13 (Murray motion) and 16 (Minchin motion).

Consultation arrangements

This includes information about NHMRC's public consultation procedures and details of how the community can comment on specific issues.

Routinely requested information under the FOI Act and FOI disclosure log

This includes a link to NHMRC's disclosure log, which provides information about documents to which NHMRC gives access under the FOI Act.

Contact details

This provides the contact details of NHMRC's Freedom of Information Officer, who can be contacted about access to the agency's information or documents under the FOI Act, including for information about the IPS. It also includes how to contact NHMRC, including how to make complaints about the IPS.

Other information to be published

NHMRC has identified the following additional information, that may be helpful to the community, to be published in accordance with section 8(4):

Our priorities

This includes the priorities identified in the NHMRC Corporate Plan.

Information about the impact of NHMRC activities

This includes:

- datasets of funded research
- case studies that report the impact arising from research that NHMRC funds
- NHMRC publications, including NHMRC-produced guidelines

- media releases about NHMRC's activities.

Our finances

This includes:

- Portfolio Budget Statements relevant to NHMRC, setting out NHMRC's resources, outcomes and planned performance for the financial year
- other financial information, including expenditure on legal services in accordance with Legal Services Directions 2005 and NHMRC's Annual Procurement Plan.

Additional operational information

This includes:

- corporate policies not otherwise listed, including NHMRC's Privacy Policy
- the NHMRC Enterprise Agreement and associated determinations.

IPS compliance review

NHMRC will review this Plan annually, with the General Manager reporting on any changes to the Executive Board.

In accordance with the FOI Act (s9), NHMRC will review NHMRC's response to the IPS in conjunction with the Information Commissioner at least every five years.

Feedback or complaints

NHMRC values feedback on any aspect of our operations, including on our IPS entry. Comments or feedback can be provided via the [Contact us](#) page of our website.

Complaints about any aspect of NHMRC's work, including NHMRC's IPS entry or Plan, can be made under [NHMRC's Complaints Policy](#).

Further information

More information about NHMRC's FOI processes is available from the FOI Coordinator at foi@nhmrc.gov.au or on the FOI page on [NHMRC's website](#).

Further information about the IPS can be found on the [OAIC website](#).