



CSIRO Human Research Ethics Committees Terms of Reference

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1. Purpose

CSIRO maintains two Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs):

- the CSIRO Health and Medical Human Research Ethics Committee (CHMHREC); and
- the CSIRO Social and Interdisciplinary Science Human Research Ethics Committee (CSSHREC).

The HRECs are established to review the ethical acceptability of human research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2025, the National Statement) and applicable CSIRO policies and procedures.

2. Scope of Responsibilities

The HRECs are responsible for the ethics review of research involving human participants, human data, human tissue, and other human-derived materials, and that is conducted by, or under the responsibility of, CSIRO.

The CHMHREC primarily reviews health and medical research (including research on human nutrition, human and population health, human genetics, clinical interventions, medical technologies, health focused data analytics, food and consumer food choice).

The CSSHREC reviews all other types of human research. This research typically involves engagement with individuals and communities, both within Australia and overseas, to explore the connections between natural, agricultural, industrial and urban ecosystems, and social and economic processes. It also includes research to understand stakeholder perspectives on climate change, future scenarios regarding emerging energy technologies, and studying human and technology interactions for the purpose of developing new information technology tools and communication platforms.

In accordance with the National Statement and CSIRO policies and procedures, the HRECs will review proposals submitted to the Committee and may provide feedback on or approve, approve with conditions, seek revisions to, or reject these submissions. In conjunction with organisational management, they will also monitor research they have approved and provide guidance on any issues or complaints that arise during the conduct of research. The HRECs may also provide advice

to CSIRO and its researchers on ethical practice in human research and provide recommendations to the organisation when needed.

3. Relationship to other processes of review of research

Each HREC is supported by the Committee's Executive (the Executive), which is made up of the Chairperson of the Committee and the Committee's Human Research Ethics Coordinator (the Coordinator). The Executive operates as a sub-committee of the HREC and considers lower-risk and reciprocal ethics submissions, changes to approved projects that do not increase the level of risk to participants or require expansion or modification to the scope of ethical approval provided by the Committee, initial responses to complaints, incidents, and breaches related to human ethics approvals, and resubmitted submissions delegated to it by the Committee after it has conducted an initial review. Other committee members may be invited to participate in Executive meetings where it is identified that additional expertise is required to review a submission. The Executive reports on its activities to the Committee.

The Coordinators provide secretariat support to the Committee, including the receipt, pre-review, and processing of submissions, administrative arrangements for meetings, correspondence with researchers regarding decisions of the Committee, and support with the monitoring of projects it approves. On behalf of the Executive and the Committee, minor amendments with no significant ethical impact (e.g. short extensions of less than six months, typographical corrections in documents) and other submissions delegated by the Executive or the Committee may also be considered by the Coordinators alone.

Where research has been reviewed by another appropriately constituted Human Research Ethics Committee (or an international equivalent), the HRECs may recognise or rely on that review in accordance with applicable agreements, the National Statement, and CSIRO procedures.

4. Review of Applications from researchers not affiliated with CSIRO

The HRECs do not review submissions from researchers who are not affiliated with CSIRO. They only consider projects for review that are led by CSIRO or have CSIRO researchers as members of the project team. Other projects should undergo ethics review via an institution involved in the project or one that makes their ethics review process available to external parties.

5. Mechanisms for Accountability and Reporting

The HRECs are accountable to the CSIRO Director, Integrity (the Director) and, with support from the Coordinators, they report annually on their activities and decisions to the Director and the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

6. HREC Membership

Members of the HRECs are appointed by the Director with a minimum membership in accordance with the categories listed in the National Statement (Item 5.1.30):

- **Chairperson:** A chairperson with suitable experience, including previous membership of an HREC, whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement.
- **Community/Consumer:** Two people who bring a broader community or consumer perspective and who have no paid affiliation with the institution (Item 5.1.30 (b) National Statement).
- **Professional Care/Counselling:** A person with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care or treatment of people; for example, a nurse, counsellor or allied health professional.
- **Pastoral Care:** A person who performs a pastoral care role in a community including, but not limited to, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander elder or community leader, a chaplain or a minister of religion or other religious leader.
- **Lawyer:** A qualified lawyer, who may or may not be currently practising and, where possible, is not engaged to advise the institution on research-related or any other matters.
- **Research Experience:** Two people with current research experience that is relevant to research proposals to be considered at the meetings they attend.
- **Additional Members:** In accordance with Items 5.1.33 and 5.1.35 of the National Statement, the HRECs may have additional members who have experience in reflecting on and analysing ethical decision-making, as well as additional members in the above categories beyond the minimum membership required by the National Statement.

As far as practicable, membership at each meeting reflects diversity, including gender diversity, and the majority of members are external to CSIRO.

HREC members are initially appointed for a term of two years, with potential for renewal.

7. Details of Remuneration

Members of the HRECs, who are not CSIRO officers or full-time officers of the Australian Public Service, are remunerated in accordance with CSIRO's human and animal ethics committee special daily rates, with payments made twice per year.

HREC members are indemnified by CSIRO.

8. Schedule of fees

The HRECs do not charge any fees for the review of submissions.