

CMHDARN RESEARCH ETHICS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Background

The Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Research Network (CMHDARN) was established in 2010 to broaden involvement of the community mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors in practice-based research and to promote the value of research and the translation of research evidence into practice. Its overall aim is to improve the quality of service delivery and correspondingly, the outcomes for consumers / clients of community managed services, their families and carers.

Purpose of the RECC

- To encourage researchers to participate in a process of review regarding ethical practice in mental health and alcohol and other drugs research
- To build the capacity of community managed alcohol and other drugs and mental health organisations to both demonstrate and implement ethical research practices
- To provide expertise on ethical considerations for research projects specifically targeting mental health and alcohol and other drugs consumers / clients and workers in the field

Role of the RECC

- To review the ethical considerations of research project proposals in the MH and AOD sectors
- To provide ethical review for CMHDARN and partner-organisation research projects that do not require ethical approval from other institutions (e.g. a Human Research Ethics Committee) to ensure that the research meets the ethical requirements stipulated in the 'CMHDARN Best Practice Guidelines'
- To provide guidance and advice on engagement with consumers / clients and use of their feedback in research data and publications
- To provide approval for CMHDARN / NADA / MHCC to support, participate in or promote a research project
- To provide information about ethical standards and ethical practice guidelines appropriate to conducting research in the AOD and MH sectors
- To provide advice and support for Human Research Ethics Committee applications for research projects working within the MH and AOD sectors
- To provide guidance to make a decision about whether research should be reviewed by a Human Research Ethics Committee
- To review all research, from an ethical perspective, that seeks to gain access to data from clients / consumers of services represented by NADA and/or MHCC

Please note: CMHDARN support for, or involvement in, research projects

CMHDARN RECC support does not imply any formal assistance or endorsement from CMHDARN. However, CMHDARN will generally only provide formal assistance to research projects that have RECC support.

Who should request RECC ethics consultations?

- Anyone who is conducting research relating to clients / consumers who receive services from MHCC and NADA member organisations
- NADA member organisations who wish to access data from the NADAbase
- Academic researchers who wish to conduct research in and with the MH and AOD sectors
- Service delivery organisations in the MH and AOD sectors who are conducting an internal evaluation
- Service delivery organisations in the MH and AOD who want to publish research / evaluation results
- Researchers who want CMHDARN / NADA / MHCC to support, promote or participate in their research in the MH and AOD sectors*

Applicants do not need to be a member of NADA / MHCC but do need to be a member of CMHDARN to seek guidance from the RECC

Process for the request for RECC consultation

1. Complete a *'Request for Ethical Research Consultation'* form and submit it to info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au including specified attachments
2. The CMHDARN Coordinator will circulate the *'Request'* to the RECC reviewers for feedback
3. Feedback is returned to the applicant, via email within *four* weeks of application, with one of the following outcomes:

Supported	The proposal is supported as submitted
Supported after amendments	The proposal is supported subject to the incorporation of the amendments into the proposal. Amendments are to be submitted to the Chairs of the RECC for review
Deferred	The proposal is not supported as submitted but it can be reassessed by the RECC after revision to address the reasons for deferment
Declined	The proposal is not supported as submitted

4. If the outcome of the *'Request'* is:
 - a. *"Supported"* – the applicant will receive some feedback, however, the RECC considers the information provided to be sufficient to meet the thresholds set out in the *'Criteria for evaluation'*.
 - b. *"Supported after amendments"* – the applicant must resubmit the documentation within two weeks of receipt. The Chairs of the RECC will then assess the changes and either support the application or recommend further amendments.
 - c. *"Deferred"* – for further consideration of the RECC, the applicant must resubmit all documentation with significant revision within 4 weeks of receipt. The RECC will then reconsider the *'Request'* and feedback will be sent via email to the applicant within 3 weeks of receipt.
 - d. *"Declined"* – the RECC will offer recommendations for change and will reconsider the application only after significant change to the proposal has been demonstrated. The applicant will need to re-apply.
5. The CMHDARN Coordinator will maintain contact with the primary researcher throughout the research project, including an invitation to submit an article for the CMHDARN Connect.

Criteria for evaluation

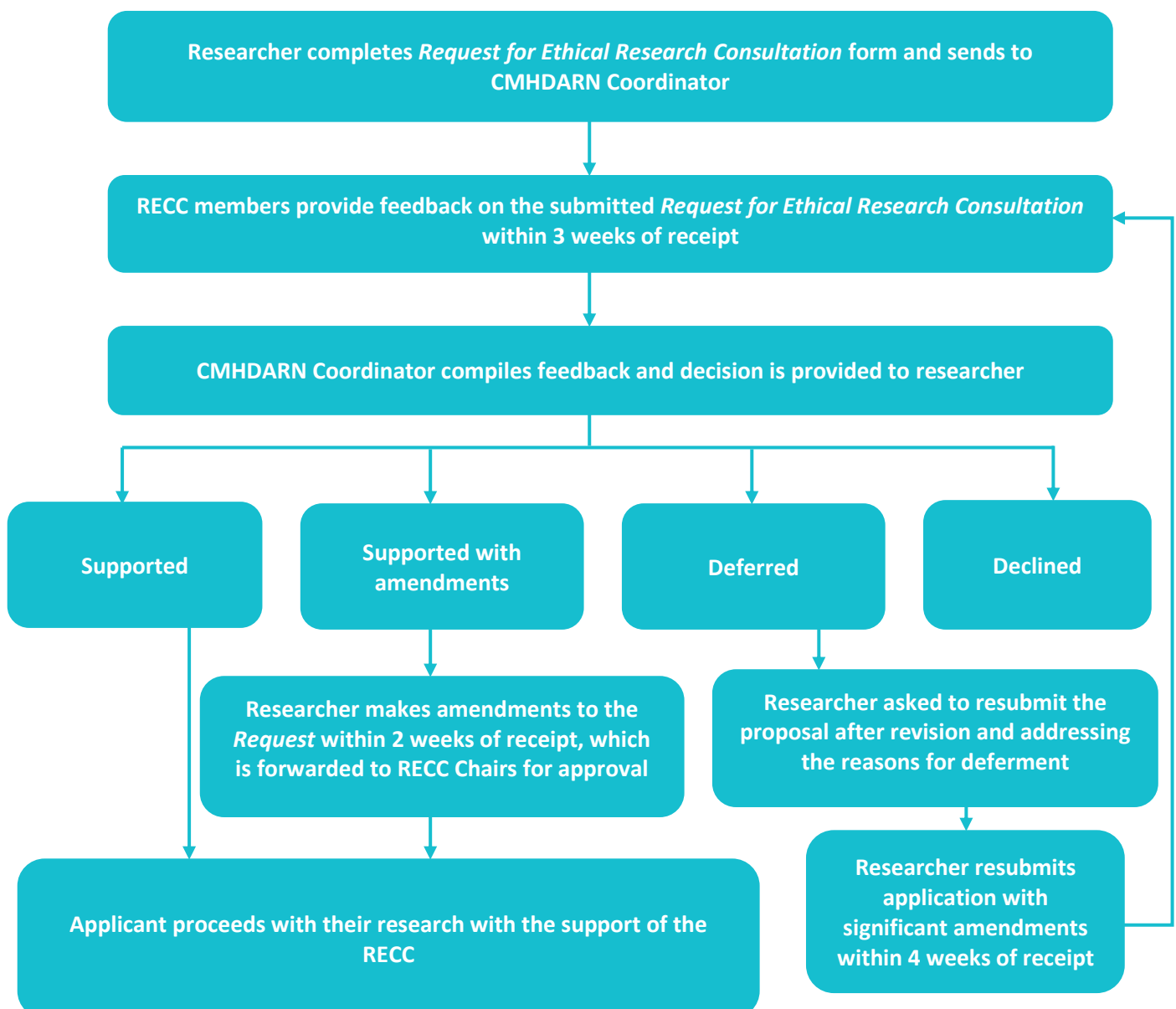
Threshold criteria: Applications that do not meet these will not be supported.

- Demonstrated consideration of and adherence to [NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical conduct in Human Research \(2018\)](#)
- Evidence of informed consent process / privacy / confidentiality
- Evidence of due consideration to consent issues if utilising data from a centralised database (if applicable)
- Evidence of considered risk assessment
- Clearance / approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee or evidence of approval being sought (if applicable)

Essential criteria:

- Demonstration of appropriate research methodology and procedures
- Demonstration of degree of impact / relevance to community and research participants
- Evidence of appropriate community consultation processes in the development of the research proposal
- Evidence of processes to contribute to knowledge / evidence base

Flowchart of process for Request for Ethical Consideration:



Process for Review – if applicant disagrees with RECC decision

If an applicant disagrees with the outcome from the RECC, they must submit a letter with substantiating documents to the CMHDARN Coordinator within four weeks of receipt of the RECC decision. The RECC will reconsider on a case by-case basis.

***Please note: Waiver for RECC requirement**

The requirement for CMHDARN RECC support may be waived in the following circumstances:

1. Where the research has received support from another institution's HREC, and either
 - a. The research is an extension or further development of research that has previously been supported by the CMHDARN RECC, or
 - b. Participation in the study by CMHDARN's communities would be of benefit to CMHDARN's communities and work (e.g. large general population cohort studies that are inclusive of CMHDARN's communities), but where the researchers are unable or where it is highly impractical to submit an application specifically to CMHDARN and where the request for support is limited to support for recruitment into the study.

Waiver decisions will be made by the Chairs of the RECC, except where a conflict of interest exists. In this event, the NADA CEO and MHCC CEO will deliberate to make the decision.
