

Policy Title - Application Process for Research Funding

Version: 2	Approved by: Chief Executive Officer
Effective Date: 1 st April 2016	
Review Date: 1 st April 2018	
	Administered by: Program Manager - Research

1. Purpose

- WaterRA's vision is 'Research solutions through collaboration'. To support this, WaterRA will lead the water industry in providing technical capability and ready access to knowledge and R&D results that deliver water industry outcomes with measurable value, and that appropriately inform policy and regulation, through:
 - Collaboration enhanced by strong industry, research, consultancy and regulator networks;
 - Leading the proactive identification and delivery of R&D that supports the strategic needs of the water industry;
 - Direct access for research institutions to drive innovation and take advantage of water industry opportunities;
 - A broad range of R&D programs driven by industry needs that provide value to all members;
 - Effectively leveraging members' investments in R&D projects by facilitating multiple sources of funding contributions;
 - Demonstrated performance in consistently ensuring robust and independent scientific rigour underpins all products and R&D outcomes;
 - Providing a unique education program that recognises and represents industry needs in proactively enhancing tertiary training and actively supporting the development of highly skilled water industry professionals; and
 - Providing ready access to trusted expertise, knowledge and advice through WaterRA's networks.
- This document outlines WaterRA's policy approach to attracting relevant and high quality research.

2. Scope

- This policy applies to the calling for and assessing of applications for research funding under WaterRA's Research Programs.

3. Exclusions

- This policy does not apply to:
 - proposals received under the Education Program, and
 - CorporateProjects.

4. Objectives

- The objectives of this policy are to:

- optimise WaterRA resources in attracting high quality research proposals of national significance for consideration;
 - provide clarity, consistency and transparency to WaterRA members and other stakeholders on the approach to initiating projects and the funding call process, and
 - provide a framework for training of WaterRA personnel through documentation of policies and procedures.
- WaterRA aims to achieve a balanced portfolio of short, medium and long term research. Our research engagement is national and covers urban, regional and remote water issues.

5. Policy

- All WaterRA research activities will be carried out through projects. Research projects will be identified through a proposal process consistent with the WaterRA Constitution and the Members' Agreement.
- WaterRA will consider applications that are either solicited and unsolicited proposals.
- Solicited proposals may include either:
 - Proposals responding to a request by WaterRA for proposals in regard to a problem statement developed from the WaterRA Community of Interest process¹, or
 - Expressions of Interest for WaterRA support for applications made under the Nationally Competitive Grant Schemes process.
- Unsolicited proposals may include:
 - proposals seeking WaterRA participation on a pay for use basis, and
 - proposals seeking WaterRA participation or endorsement on an in-kind only basis.
- Unsolicited proposals for submission to Nationally Competitive Grant Schemes will not be considered.
- In calling for proposals to meet research objectives, WaterRA will provide:
 - guidelines and templates for applicants which will be made available in electronic format via the WaterRA website (www.waterra.com.au);
 - any indicative funding to be provided by industry collaborators, and
 - a problem statement with which the proposal must align, if applicable.
- Applicants can view WaterRA guidelines for the following information:
 - eligibility criteria for applicants,
 - any multiplier that can be applied by the applicant in preparing the proposal budget,
 - requirements for industry support if applicable,
 - any limitations to geographical representation,
 - the application process,
 - the proposal evaluation selection criteria, and
 - process for appeal.
- **Attachment 1** outlines the strategies for commissioning WaterRA research projects.
- WaterRA guidelines will also inform applicants of:
 - any critical dates² associated with the application process;

¹ The Community of Interest may recommend targeting funding through the NCGS process.

² Timing of the applications will be established in accordance with the external agency research funding calendar recognising internal deadlines of member organisations and external funding agency deadlines.

- the assessment criteria³ for evaluating proposals;
 - any template document required for the submission of proposals, and
 - any other available information or documents necessary to applicants.
- Proposals must:
 - have the support of the applicant's agency, including legal review of the WaterRA Research Agreement⁴;
 - be submitted in the appropriate template and comply with instructions for completing the template, and
 - comply with any submission or review dates determined by WaterRA.

Advice may be sought from WaterRA during the preparation of project proposals to ensure that the proposal addresses the assessment criteria prior to submission.

- All proposals will be reviewed by the Project Review Team (PRT) who will:
 - assess each project proposal against the WaterRA Project Selection Criteria (RES INS 02), and
 - make a recommendation to the WaterRA CEO and/or Board, as per Attachment 1, regarding the suitability of the proposal based on their assessment against the Project Selection Criteria and committee discussion.
- Research projects may not commence unless:
 - the project has been reviewed and recommended by the Project Review Team (PRT);
 - the project has all relevant approvals from the WaterRA CEO and/or Board;
 - project details have been agreed in writing by all project members;
 - where necessary, the project has ethics approval from an ethics committee as required by law, and
 - project contracts have been properly executed.

6. Communications strategy for this policy

- This policy provides a basis for communicating to stakeholders on the approach to initiating projects, calling for funding proposals and executing projects.
- Member engagement of both industry and researchers is critical in the planning and design of the WaterRA research portfolio.

7. Abbreviations / Definitions

- WaterRA means Water Research Australia Limited ABN 32 127 974 261.
- RFP means Request for Proposal(s).
- NHMRC means National Health & Medical Research Council, operating under the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act).
- ARC means the Australian Research Council, as established under the Australian Research Council Act 2001.
- Corporate Projects refer to internal WaterRA projects such as the 'website development project' and the 'project management system project' and does not refer to WaterRA research projects.
- Research & Development: Systematic activity utilising basic and/or applied research, and aimed at discovering solutions to problems or creating new products and/or knowledge.

8. Governance framework

- Water Research Australia Limited Constitution – latest amendment

³ Criteria used to select proposals can include administrative and scientific criteria

⁴ Generic template available from www.waterra.com.au or by contacting Research Programs Manager

- Members' Agreement – latest amendment

9. Related documents

- RES PRO 01 WaterRA Procedure – Application process for research funding: Nationally Competitive Grant Schemes
- RES PRO 03 WaterRA Procedure – Appeal process for research funding applications
- RES FOR 01 WaterRA Form – Part A Core WaterRA Projects Template
- RES FOR 02 WaterRA Form – Part B Core WaterRA Projects Template
- RES FOR 03 WaterRA Form – Nationally Competitive Grant Scheme Proposals Template
- RES FOR 13 WaterRA Form – Request for Funding Template
- Project Review Team (PRT) – Terms of Reference

10. Attachments

- Attachment 1: Strategies for Commissioning WaterRA Research

11. Legislation

Corporations Act 2001

Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012

Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission (Consequential and Transition) Act 2012.

12. Policy Approval History

This policy replaces the following policies and process documents:

RES POL 01 – Application process for research funding V1.3

Approved

Paul Pretto

Date 1 April 2016

Chief Executive Office

Attachment 1 - Strategies for commissioning WaterRA Research

Strategy	Solicited Proposals	Solicited Proposals Nationally Competitive Grants Scheme	Unsolicited Proposals
Description	Proposals developed from the Community of Interest process	Support for WaterRA Research Members for projects that have a strong industry relevance	Proposals developed outside of WaterRA processes
Research Alignment	Aligns with RFP (as assessed by the PRT)	Clear industry benefit (as assessed by the PRT)	Clear industry benefit (as assessed by the PRT)
Eligibility to apply	Member or non-member led as recommended through the Community of Interest process	Lead University must be a member	Member or non-member
Internal (core) WaterRA funding	Nil Cash Possible in-kind in support	10% of the cash budget, up to \$50,000, whichever is the lesser	Nil Cash Possible in-kind in support
Is this a Pay for use activity attracting a Management Fee?	Yes Member rate and non-member rate.	No.	Yes Member rate and non-member rate.
WaterRA Funding assistance	WaterRA will actively pursue funding opportunities with Australian Water Industry. Cost will be incorporated into the management fee applied to the project.	WaterRA, if requested, will provide basic assistance to promote the proposal for the purposes of seeking funding.	<u>Member led project</u> WaterRA will provide basic assistance to promote the proposal within its membership <u>Non-member led project</u> Upfront fee for WaterRA to provide assistance to pursue funding opportunities if PRT endorse application As appropriate, WaterRA will actively pursue funding opportunities with Australian Water Industry. Cost will be incorporated into the management fee applied to the project.
Multiplier	1.8 cash salary multiplier (members, where not included in annual member fees) 2.5 cash salary multiplier (non-members, as appropriate) 2.9 in-kind salary All other cash expenditure is at cost incurred	1.3 cash salary multiplier 2.9 in-kind salary All other cash expenditure is at cost incurred	1.8 cash salary multiplier (members, where not included in annual member fees) 2.5 cash salary multiplier (non-members, as appropriate) 2.9 in-kind salary All other cash expenditure is at cost incurred
Spatial Focus	International, National or Local	National	International, National or Local
Application Process	RFP developed from the Community of Interest Process. At the discretion of the COI whether the project is competitively tendered or sole sourced.	Call for expressions of interest from Membership for WaterRA funding consideration. Full ARC linkage proposals subject to consistency check (i.e. against EOIs) by WaterRA.	Expression of Interest made in WaterRA template.
Review Process	PRT with representation from the Community of Interest will review submissions against WaterRA criteria outlined in RES INS 01.	PRT to review against WaterRA criteria outlined in RES PRO 01, technical review of full proposal through ARC process.	PRT will review the submissions, against WaterRA criteria outlined in RES INS 01.
Approval Process	WaterRA CEO and/or Board	WaterRA Board and NCGS	WaterRA CEO and/or Board
Appeal process	Only on the basis of administrative process issues, lodged formally by the applicant or their research organisation in regard to their own application within 60 days of receiving advice on the outcome of the CEO's consideration. WaterRA research members also have a dispute resolution process identified in the Members' Agreement if not satisfied with the outcome of an appeals process.		