CANCER COUNCIL NSW PROGRAM GRANTS
PEER REVIEW GUIDELINES

For funding commencing in 2016

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INTRODUCTION
This document is provided to assist the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grant Selection Committee, and peer review assessors of applications to this funding scheme, in the assessment of these applications.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grants Information for Applicants, available on the Cancer Council NSW website.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research stipulates that participants in peer review should:

- be fair and timely in their review;
- act in confidence and not disclose the content or outcome of any process in which they are involved;
- declare all conflicts of interest, not permit personal prejudice to influence the peer review process and not introduce considerations that are not relevant to the review process;
- not take undue or calculated advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process;
- ensure that they are informed about, and comply with, the criteria to be applied;
- not agree to participate in peer review outside their area of expertise; and
- give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking.

REVIEW PROCESS
Assessment of applications to the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grant funding scheme involves two simultaneous review processes. Please see the summary of key steps below for further details on the review process and timings.

1. Cancer Council NSW applicants submit their applications to the Research Strategy Unit Project Officer via email, adhering to the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grant Policy and Conditions of Award, and the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grant Information for Applicants (all of these documents are available on the Cancer Council NSW website). Applications will be assessed for eligibility, and those deemed eligible will be sent to at least two peer review assessors for scientific review.

2. Cancer Council NSW’s 2016 Program Grant Consumer Review Panel assesses the eligible applications against Cancer Council NSW’s established consumer review criteria. The Consumer Review Panel ranks applications with respect to the manner in which they address the consumer review criteria, more detail about which is provided in the Cancer Council NSW 2016 Program Grant Consumer Review Guidelines, available on the Cancer Council NSW website. Consumers are not provided with the peer review assessor scientific scores during the review process, and will score applications solely on the basis of applicants’ responses to Part E of the application form.

The peer review scientific scores and the Consumer Review Panel scores will be combined to derive the final overall score and merit ranking for each application. The
scientific score will comprise 80%, and the consumer review score 20%, of the final overall score. The final scores and rankings will be considered by the 2016 Program Grant Selection Committee, who will formulate funding recommendations for the consideration of the Cancer Council NSW Cancer Research Committee. This Committee will subsequently formulate research funding recommendations for the consideration of the Cancer Council NSW Board.

Summary of key steps in the award of 2016 Program Grant funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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| March  | Establish 2016 Program Grant Selection Committee  
|        | Establish 2016 Grant Consumer Review Panel |
| April  | Applications due  
| May    | Program Grant Selection Committee nominate peer reviewers  
|        | Peer reviewers receive peer review documents  
|        | Consumer Review Panel receive consumer review documents |
| June   | Peer review and Consumer review  
| July   | Consumer Review Panel meet to rank applications  
|        | Peer reviews due  
|        | Peer review comments and questions sent to Chief Investigator  
|        | Chief Investigator responses to peer review due |
| August | Program Grant Selection Committee meet to rank applications  
|        | Funding recommendation report finalised and submitted to CCNSW Cancer Research Committee  
| September | CCNSW Cancer Research Committee considers funding recommendations and prepares funding recommendations for CCNSW Board |
| October | CCNSW Board considers CCNSW Cancer Research Committee recommendations and makes final decision regarding funding of 2016 Program Grants  
|        | Chief Investigators notified of funding outcomes and contracts sent to successful Chief Investigators |
| December | Contracts executed |
| January | Successful 2016 Program Grants begin |
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
To select the Programs of the highest scientific merit, peer review of the applications must be consistent with the aims and philosophy of the Program Grants Scheme. The assessment criteria and weightings have therefore been designed to reflect the nature and intent of Program Grant funding.

Applications for Program Grant funding will be scored on the basis of the quality and impact of the Chief Investigators’ Research Achievements; the proposal’s Research Strategy; and the potential for Collaborative Gain.

The assessment criteria and their weightings are specified below:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Research Strategy</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Collaborative Gain</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Research Achievements</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tbody>
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Maximum Score 100

Research Strategy
The 30 points of the application’s total possible score allocated to Research Strategy will be based on the quality of the strategy outlined in Part B of the application.

The Research Strategy should describe research that is broadly based, multidisciplinary and collaborative by nature; and the way in which scientific opportunities provided by the collaborations will be exploited. The Research Strategy should:

- demonstrate relevance and/or significance with respect to the field/s of research and/or health outcomes;
- demonstrate potential for significant contribution to knowledge;
- describe research that is at the cutting edge of its field and based on highly innovative ideas and approaches;
- describe research of the highest scientific merit, as demonstrated by the quality of the design and methods, and employing the best technology/methodology available for the problem under investigation;
- demonstrate national and international competitiveness; and
- demonstrate feasibility given the budget requested and the resources otherwise available (as outlined in the Budget section).

Collaborative Gain
The 20 points of the application’s total possible score allocated to Collaborative Gain will take into account the following elements from Part C of the application:

- significant productivity gains and the pursuit and achievement of goals permitted by the synergy of the Program’s research activities, which would not be possible were the Program components to be pursued as separate projects.
- evidence of existing effective collaborations among Chief Investigators, and a description of working strategies employed previously, or appropriateness of proposed new collaborative arrangements, including:
• how the team will operate and coordinate, including meeting, planning, decision making, sharing of financial and other resources, team skills, and the way in which the team components will combine into a broad theme.
• plans for collaborating across geographical distances.
• likely effectiveness of working collaborations and intellectual exchange.
• for new teams, an explanation as to why they have not collaborated previously and explanation of how they will ensure the cohesive running of the grant, including evidence of proposed meeting and work plans, establishment of advisory panels, and measure of accountability

- the extent and quality of proposed multidisciplinary and multi-institutional collaboration and its prospects for adding value to the research proposed.
- the contribution of each Chief Investigator to the program and the feasibility of the proposed program of research given their expertise and experience.
- the track record of each Chief Investigator in providing research training, career development and mentoring; and opportunities for these activities to be undertaken within the proposed Program, including the training and mentoring strategies that will be adopted.

**Research Achievements**

Program Grants are awarded on the basis that recent research achievements are the best indicator of future performance, with Research Achievements providing the largest contribution (50 points) to the final scientific score assigned to applications for 2016 program Grant funding. Therefore, the most recent five years of research achievements are a focus for peer review. However in the case of career disruptions that may have occurred in the most recent five years, applicants are permitted to highlight relevant achievements over a longer time frame for the consideration of reviewers.

The team as a whole can be awarded up to 50 points for Research Achievements. This score will be derived by assigning each Chief Investigator a score of up to 50 points for their individual Research Achievements, with the team’s Research Achievements score calculated as the average of the individual Chief Investigators’ scores.

Research Achievements will be interpreted broadly, and judged by peer review assessors with particular regard to factors most relevant to the applicants’ field(s) of research, and focusing primarily on the most recent five years. It is recognised that some applicants will have high levels of achievement, but with track records that have unusual features, including career disruptions.

The 50 points available for each Chief Investigator’s Research Achievements score will be distributed across two parts: Academic Recognition (35 points), Research Application (10 points), and Community Engagement (5 points).

**Academic Recognition (35 points)**

The 35 points for Academic Recognition will be distributed across the following three elements:

1. 20 points for publications and/or high quality technical reports
These may include, without being limited to, for example: publications that contribute in a major way to knowledge in the specific field; objective evidence of paradigm shift/methodological advances; enduring scientific contributions or technical reports that shape research enquiry; biomedical publications that contribute to major advances in knowledge; clinical publications that corroborate or extend previous insights to make a unique contribution to Australian knowledge; technical reports describing new approaches to data collection, surveillance, analysis or utilisation in public health or health services research.

2. **10 points for research support**
   This may include major international and national grants from specialist agencies.

3. **5 points for invitations/prizes/awards**
   These may include, without being limited to, for example: invitations to speak at plenary sessions or as an invited speaker at international meetings; chair or invited member of international policy groups; editor or associated editor of international publications; major general or specialist international prizes.

**Research Application (10 points)**

The **10 points for Research Application** will be allocated to examples of research application such as:

1. Commercialisation - the development of intellectual property in collaboration with the biotechnology or pharmaceutical industries, founding a start-up, or the development and granting of patents.

   **AND/OR**

2. Clinical Application - this may include, without being limited to, for example: being a leader of seminal clinical trials; being a crucial advocate for changes in clinical practice based on evidence; being an initiator, through to implementation, of clinical practice guidelines; being an initiator, through to completion, of change to evaluation of clinical practice; making other recognised national contributions to policy and cancer development, etc.

   **AND/OR**

3. Public Health Application - this may include, without being limited to, for example: holding a leadership role in the design, conduct, publication and advocacy for policy and practice of seminal research; having key responsibility for changes in concept, practice or priority of research implications; being an initiator, through to implementation, of a new system of data collection and organisational feedback e.g., population-based data collections; making other recognised national contributions to policy and public health practice; being a constructive and effective change agent in public health discipline, etc.

Applicants must indicate their specific contributions to any activities identified in the Research Application section. Each example of a commercialisation, clinical application or public health application will be assigned a score of up to 10 points. The Chief Investigator’s
Research Application score will be calculated as the average of the individual scores assigned to each example of research application.

Community Engagement (5 points)
The 5 points for community engagement will take into account the track record of each Chief Investigator in involving consumers in their research.