



Cancer Research Committee Charter

advocacy



support



prevention



research



1. OVERVIEW

Cancer Council NSW's (Cancer Council) objective is to conduct and fund world-class research which reduces the impact of cancer. Cancer Council is one of the largest funders of cancer research in the not-for-profit sector in Australia and its public profile depends in significant measure on its conducting, funding and promoting high quality research.

2. PURPOSE

The Board has established the Cancer Research Committee (Committee) to provide recommendations and guidance for decisions by the Board on extra-mural cancer research policy, projects and programs.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Board has delegated the responsibilities listed in Section 4 below to the Cancer Research Committee in accordance with clause 12.11 of Cancer Council's Constitution. The following principles will guide Cancer Council's funding of research and the decision-making of the Cancer Research Committee:

- Funding allocation decisions should ensure that Cancer Council achieves its objective to support research of the highest scientific merit and of value to the community that it serves and represents.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Board must be provided with expert advice on the strategic directions and performance of the organisation's extra-mural research portfolio, and its alignment with community and consumer priorities and Cancer Council's Values.
- Procedures for allocating research funding and monitoring research progress and outputs must be rigorous, transparent and systematic and must conform to the highest standards of accountability and strict governance.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Cancer Research Committee has the following responsibilities:

- providing expert advice to the CEO and Board to assist Cancer Council to develop and implement its extra-mural research strategy
- issuing guidelines to assist applicants in their preparation of applications for external research funding
- ensuring external research funding applications are reviewed on the basis of both scientific and consumer review and formulating recommendations for research grant funding for the consideration of the Board
- ensuring the effective and economical conduct of funded research grants by monitoring progress and reviewing significant variations, recommending suspension or withdrawal of funding to the Board if progress is not satisfactory or where a grant is not being conducted in accordance with approved protocols
- considering significant variations to approved grants
- considering complaints regarding the conduct of research, and
- promote appropriate recognition of Cancer Council in research projects.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The Cancer Research Committee will consist of no fewer than ten members:

- a Chair, to be appointed by the Board from among Committee members
- at least one Board Director

- the CEO
- At least eight ordinary members, one of whom shall be appointed Deputy Chair by the Board
- These ordinary members shall collectively have relevant expertise, including:
At least two members with expertise in public health, epidemiology, health services or health economics
- At least three members with different areas of expertise within the broad research specialties of any of the following;
 - basic science, including genetic, biochemical, molecular biological and cellular biological research
 - experimental therapeutics and clinical research, or
 - behavioural, psychosocial and supportive care research
 - At least two consumer representatives
 - At least one practising clinician involved in cancer care.

5.2 Other than the Chair and consumer representatives, a member may fulfil the Committee's expertise requirements in more than one of the above categories. For example, the Board Director may also be a clinician in cancer care.

5.3 To ensure the Committee has access to expertise to conduct its business, it should be able to seek expert advice.

5.4 When appointing the members of the Cancer Research Committee, the Board shall use its best endeavours to ensure that the Committee collectively possesses the following experience and expertise:

- experience in the assessment and funding of research
- experience in the translation of research into viable applications to policy and practice
- experience in business or research management
- experience in health policy
- demonstrated expertise in the strategic development of research programs and a visionary approach to research, and
- capacity to represent the interests of consumers affected by cancer.

5.5 Members are appointed as individuals for their expertise rather than in a representative capacity.

5.6 In accordance with clause 12.12 of the Constitution of the Company, the Board appoints members of the Cancer Research Committee. The Board may terminate the appointment of a member at any time.

6 APPOINTMENT AND TENURE

6.1 Members, including the Chair, are appointed for a term of three years and may serve two consecutive terms. A former Committee member may be re-appointed to the Committee provided two years have elapsed since they were last a member of the Committee. The Board may approve an extension to a member's tenure to ensure continuity of expertise on the Committee, if appropriate.

6.2 Membership of the Committee will lapse if a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee, unless exceptional circumstances exist. The member will be notified in writing by the Chair of a lapse of membership.

6.3 Members are not offered remuneration but will be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in attending Committee meetings, such as parking expenses.

6.4 Members will treat as and keep confidential all information and documents which relate to business considered by the Committee. Members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement on their initial appointment to the Committee.

7 SUB-COMMITTEES

7.1 Members may be asked to participate in relevant specialised sub-committees from time-to-time.

7.2 The Committee may from time-to-time delegate the responsibility for developing preliminary funding recommendations to a sub-committee for approval by the whole Committee.

7.3 The Committee may also, after the initial review of an issue under the Committee's consideration, delegate to the Chair or to a sub-committee of nominated members the authority to make a decision on the issue between meetings. This does not include the authority to make a final decision on recommendation of funding proposals.

8 PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

8.1 The Director, Cancer Research will appoint a staff member of the Cancer Research Division as Secretariat of the Committee. The Secretariat will keep minutes of meetings of the Committee and shall circulate the minutes of the meetings of the Committee to the Chair no later than 10 working days following the date of the meeting.

8.2 The Committee reports to the Board of Cancer Council. Minutes should be distributed to all Committee members and the Board, after preliminary approval has been given by the Committee Chair. Minutes, agenda and supporting papers will be made available to any Board Director upon request to the Secretariat, providing no conflict of interest exists.

8.3 The Secretariat will maintain written records of the Committee's activities, including agendas and minutes of all meetings of the Committee. The Secretariat will also maintain records of all applications for research funding – see section 8.16.

Meetings

8.4 The Committee will meet face-to-face at least twice in a calendar year, in March and in November.

8.5 Three additional meetings, in May, July and September, will be tentatively scheduled. Approximately two weeks before each tentatively scheduled date and based on the nature of the issues to be considered at the meeting, the Chair of the Committee, the CEO or their delegate and the Manager of the Research Grants Team will determine whether a formal meeting is required or whether communication via email or teleconference is sufficient.

8.6 The Chair may convene additional meetings of the Committee if, in their opinion, such additional meetings are necessary.

8.7 Other than in exceptional circumstances, Committee members will be provided with at least ten business days' notice of meetings.

8.8 The CEO and Director, Cancer Research Division will attend Committee meetings. However, the Committee may exclude those officers from any part of a meeting, if it deems that exclusion to be appropriate.

8.9 The Committee may invite such other persons to its meetings, as it deems necessary. Members of management who are in attendance at meetings of the Committee may be asked by the Chair to absent themselves from all or any part of any meeting.

Agenda

8.10 The agenda and associated meeting papers will be distributed by the Secretariat to all members of the Committee no later than nine working days prior to the meeting.

Attendance

8.11 Attendance at a meeting should ideally be in person. Members are permitted to participate in meetings of the Committee via telephone or other appropriate technology.

8.12 Members who are unable to attend a meeting may contribute prior to the meeting through written or oral submissions to the Manager, Research Grants Team or to the Chair.

Quorum

8.13 A quorum will be at least half the number of members appointed to the Committee.

8.14 Where declared conflicts of interest preclude members from participating, and in conjunction with absentees, cause the number of members entitled to participate to fall below the number required for a quorum, the Chair will have discretion to:

- decide whether a matter should proceed to the Board for decision, or
- arrange a vote by email of absent members who are not conflicted, or
- defer the matter to the next meeting.

Voting

8.15 The Committee will endeavour to reach a decision concerning the research program and recommendations for funding by unanimous agreement. Where a unanimous decision is not reached, the resolution will be carried if a majority of members present or by proxy, who are not conflicted, vote in favour of the resolution. If requested by a dissenting member, any dissenting view shall be noted in the minutes. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have the second or casting vote.

Records

8.16 The Secretariat will prepare and maintain a file for each application for external research funding which will include the application, the scientific and consumer reviews of the application, and all correspondence between the applicant and the Committee, including the Funding Agreement, the Annual Progress Reports and the Financial Statements. In cases where a Funding Agreement is managed by another agency, such as Cancer Australia, the Secretariat will maintain project files which include all information provided by that agency. Files will be kept securely. The retention and disposal of files and the management of all personal information will be in accordance with Cancer Council policy. Committee documents will be stored electronically on password protected secure file servers.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

9.1. Any member of the Committee who has an interest, financial or otherwise, in a proposal or other related matter considered by the Committee, should as soon as practicable declare such interest to the Secretariat, who shall advise the Committee Chair.

9.2. Members must also declare any conflict of interest relevant to the meeting agenda at the beginning of each meeting.

9.3. The conflicted member will not participate in the discussions and will not be entitled to vote in the decision with respect to that matter. The conflicted member will withdraw from the meeting until the Committee has completed its consideration of the relevant matter.

- 9.4. All conflicts of interest will be noted in the minutes. The minutes will also reflect when a Committee member leaves and re-enters the room.
- 9.5. The Committee may, at its discretion, request such information as it deems fit in relation to the conflict from conflicted member(s).

10.COMPLAINTS

Complaints of bias or impropriety

- 10.1 Complaints of bias or impropriety on the part of a Committee member can be made directly to the Board.

Complaints concerning the conduct of a project

- 10.2 A person with a complaint about the conduct of a project should bring the complaint to the attention of the Chair of the Committee via the Secretariat, detailing the grounds of the complaint. The Committee must be notified of any complaint.
- 10.3 The Committee Chair will investigate the complaint and make a recommendation to the Committee on the appropriate course of action. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Committee's investigation, then they can refer the complaint to the Board Chair.
- 10.4 The Committee Chair will report all complaints received by them about the conduct of a project to the Board.

Complaints concerning the Committee's review process

- 10.5 A person with a complaint about the Committee's review process should bring the complaint to the attention of the Chair of the Committee via the Secretariat, detailing the grounds of the complaint.
- 10.6 The Chair will investigate the complaint and its validity, and make a recommendation to the Committee on the appropriate course of action. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the preliminary investigation, then they can refer the complaint to the Board Chair.
- 10.7 The Committee Chair will report all complaints received by them about the Committee's review process to the Board.

11.REVIEW

- 11.1 The Committee will facilitate scientific peer review of research for Cancer Council if other scientific review is not in place, for example, through NHMRC or Cancer Institute NSW.
- 11.2 The Committee will oversight arrangements for scientific peer review of proposals to use data or bio-specimens for which Cancer Council is the custodian.