



RESEARCH COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

STATEMENT

The Motor Neurone Disease Research Institute of Australia (MNDRIA) Research Committee reviews MNDRIA funding applications to ensure that donations and bequests fund only the best research that will have the greatest chance of making a difference for people with motor neurone disease (MND).

MNDRIA recognises the following forms of classical MND for funding: Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, progressive bulbar palsy, pseudobulbar palsy, progressive muscular atrophy and primary lateral sclerosis. Spinal muscular atrophy and Kennedy's disease will be considered for MNDRIA funding if a case can be made for the potential benefit to the classical forms of MND (see [Definition of MND document](#)).

The objectives of the MNDRIA Research Committee are to:

- Advise the MND Australia Board on matters relating to health and medical research, and specifically MND research
- Review funding applications in good faith in the best interests of MND Australia and the research community, and in accordance with MND Australia policy.

The current MNDRIA constitution sets out the following procedures:

4.2 Research Committee

Establishment of Research Committee

4.2.1 The medical/scientific members of the Institute who have been approved by the National Health & Medical Research Council will constitute a Research Committee to assess proposals eligible to receive research grants. The Research Committee is to be administered in accordance with this Constitution, including paragraph 2.7 and this paragraph 4.2.

4.2.2 The Research Committee will determine those proposals which will receive research grants from the available funds. The available funds will be determined by MND Australia as principal member and advised to the Research Committee.

Membership of Research Committee

4.2.3 Membership of the Research Committee will be for a two-year period, subject to being extended in writing by the Chairperson of the Research Committee and consented to by the relevant member.

4.2.4 A member of the Research Committee of the Institute must also consent to act as a member of the research committee of MND Australia.

Chairperson of Research Committee

4.2.5 The members of the Research Committee must elect one of their number to preside as Chairperson of the Research Committee and its meetings.

4.2.6 The members of the Research Committee may remove the Chairperson of the Research Committee by resolution from time to time.

4.2.7 The Chairperson of the Research Committee has the casting vote in addition to the Chairperson's vote as a member of the Research Committee.

4.2.8 The Chairperson of the Research Committee must also consent to act as the chairperson of the research committee of MND Australia.

Meetings of the Research Committee

4.2.9 The Research Committee shall meet as frequently as necessary at such place, such times and in such manner as the Research Committee may determine. For the avoidance of doubt, a meeting of the Research Committee may be held by contemporaneously linking together members of that Committee by way of instantaneous communication devices (e.g. Skype, instant messenger etc) through which all persons participating in the meeting are able to communicate with all other members attending the meeting.

4.2.10 Fourteen days' notice shall be given to all members of the Research Committee of any meeting specifying the general nature of the business to be transacted. Such notice is to be provided by the Chairperson of the Research Committee.

4.2.11 In accordance with the constitution At a Research Committee meeting a quorum will be four (4) members of that Committee.

4.2.12 Should within half an hour of the time set down for a meeting of the Research Committee to commence, a quorum be not present, then the meeting will be adjourned to the same time and place seven days later OR to a place and to a time within one month of the date of such

meeting, to be determined thereat. If at such adjourned meeting a quorum be not present, then those members attending will be deemed to be a quorum, provided the number of such members is not less than three (3).

4.2.13 Each member will be entitled to appoint another member of the Research Committee as proxy by notice given to the Secretary no later than 48 hours before the time of the meeting in respect of which the proxy is appointed.

4.2.14 All questions and resolutions arising at a meeting of the Research Committee are to be decided by a majority of votes of the members present and voting and each member of the Research Committee has one vote.

The Executive Director Research (EDR) is an ex-officio member of the Research Committee and has no voting rights.

Research Committee members will have expertise in at least one of the following areas:

- Animal models
- Cell biology
- Clinical trials
- Epidemiology
- Genetics
- Healthcare
- Neurology.

Committee members will cease to be a member of the Research Committee if they:

- Are expelled in accordance with Clause 18 of the MNDRIA constitution
- Resign from the committee
- Fail to attend two consecutive Grants Allocation Meetings (GAMs)
- Fail to meet the grant applications scoring deadline on two consecutive occasions
- Breach confidentiality.

PROCEDURES

Meetings and Attendance

The Research Committee meets annually at the GAM in person or by teleconference. Additional meetings may be held as the work of the Committee demands.

A quorum of members must be present at the GAM before a meeting can proceed.

The Chairperson will call a committee meeting if so requested by any member of the Committee or by the President of the MND Australia Board.

The Chairperson shall invite the EDR and may invite members of Management and/or other external advisors to be present at Committee meetings to provide advice and assistance where necessary. They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Chairperson.

Proceedings of all Research Committee meetings are minuted and signed as approved by the Chairperson. Minutes of Research Committee meetings are tabled at the MND Australia Board Meetings for noting.

The Research Committee will report to the MND Australia Board on matters dealt with by the Committee through the Research Committee Chairperson.

The Peer Review Process

1. EDR assigns no less than three reviewers with relevant expertise to each application.
2. EDR seeks declaration of interests from reviewers and these are recorded in the MNDRIA conflicts of interest (Col) Register. Reviewers do not review applications for which they have a significant Col.
3. Reviewers provide scores for each application to EDR independently of each other.
4. EDR collates scores of each applicant and ranks accordingly.
5. Collated scores are provided to the Chairperson prior to the GAM.
6. Applications are discussed at GAM. The Chairperson invites reviewers with disparate scores to justify their scores. Members will have an opportunity to change scores if they choose.
7. Scores are finalised for each application and a final ranked list produced.
8. Recommendations of the Research Committee are approved by the MND Australia Board.
9. Cols are managed in accordance with MNDRIA's Col Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The EDR is responsible for nominating Research Committee members, after consultation with the Research Committee Chairperson, for approval by the MND Australia Board.
- The EDR is responsible for scheduling meetings, organising agenda items and notifying committee members of relevant issues.
- The EDR oversees the peer review process as outlined above.
- The EDR also works with the Research Committee Chairperson to ensure that conflicts of interest (Cols) are managed during the grant applications process.

The responsibilities of the Research Committee Chairperson include:

- Ensuring all meeting discussion items end with a decision or outcome
- Managing Cols in accordance with the [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#)*
- Reviewing and approving the draft minutes before distribution
- Reporting to the MND Australia Board on matters related to research.

*When the Committee considers that the advice of key experts who have had to leave the room due to conflicts is essential, the Chairperson may request those experts to return to the room to answer technical questions, but absent themselves before scoring takes place.

All Research Committee members are required to provide impartial and fair advice as part of a transparent, competitive peer review process. All members must follow MNDRIA's Col policy.

20 October 2016

Revised 22 May 2017

Endorsed by the MND Australia board on 25 May 2017

Signed by David Ali (President)