



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

NH|M|R|C

Promoting research integrity in Australia: a funding agency perspective

Jillian Barr
Director, Ethics and Governance

| WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA |

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

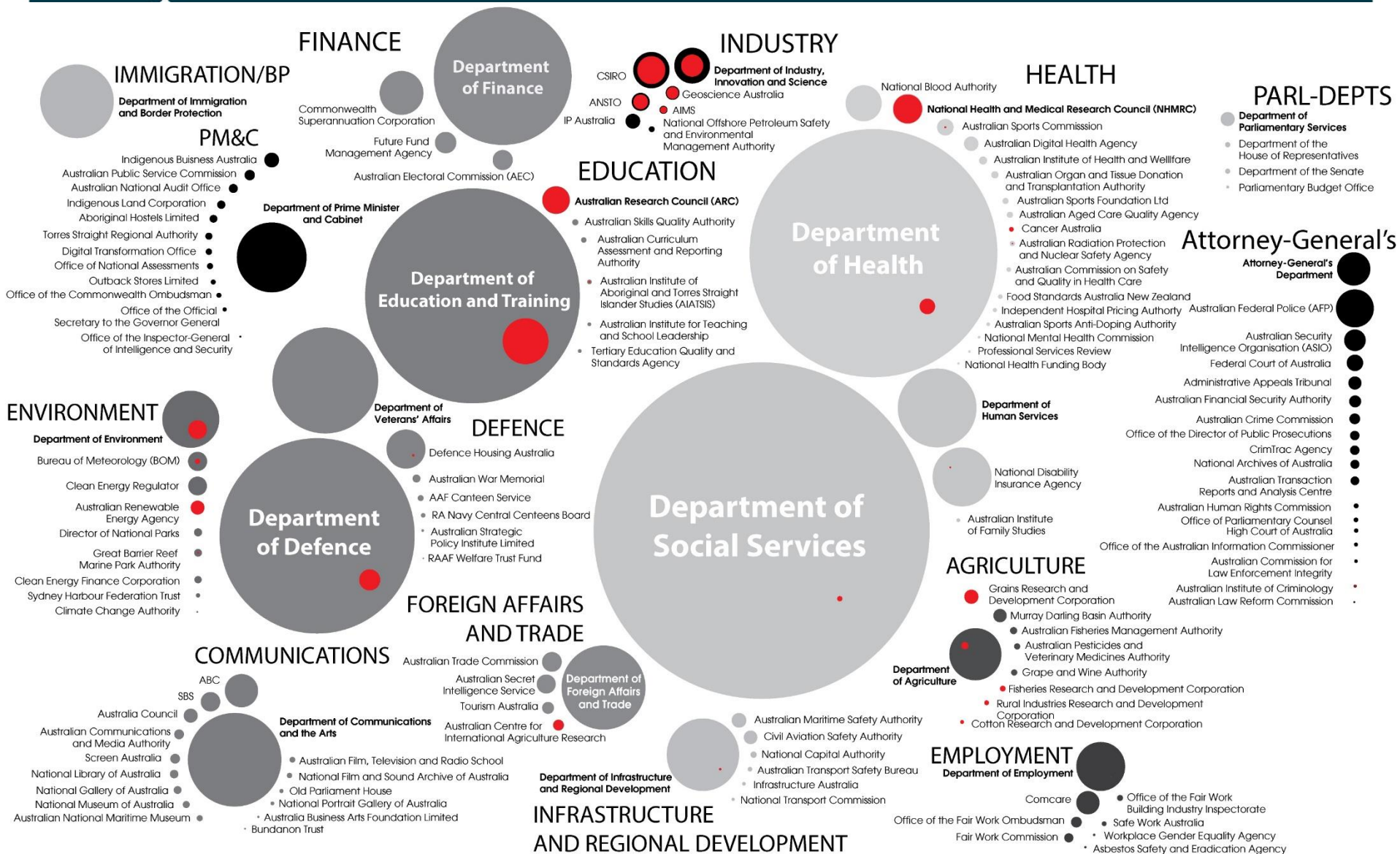
NHMRC is Australia's leading expert body for:

- Supporting health and medical research
- Developing health advice for the Australian community, health professionals and governments
- Providing advice on ethical behaviour in health care and in the conduct of health and medical research.

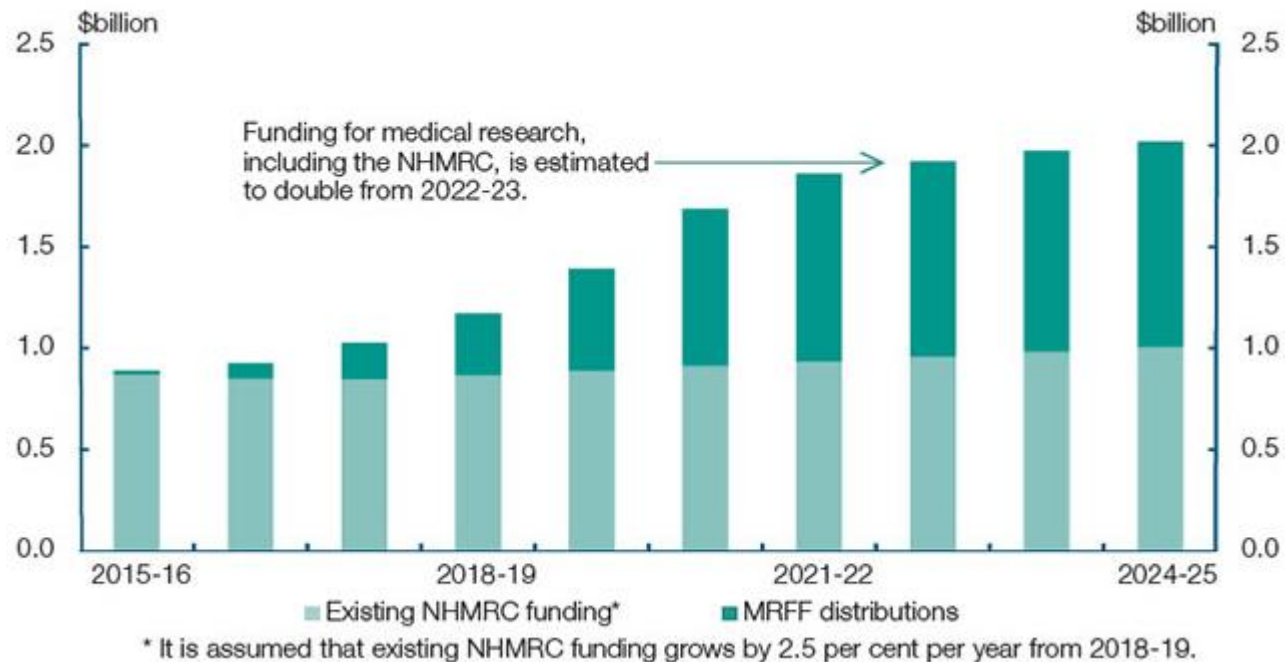
Australia's framework for research integrity



2016–17 Federal Budget—R&D \$10.1 billion



A strong research integrity framework is particularly important for health and medical research

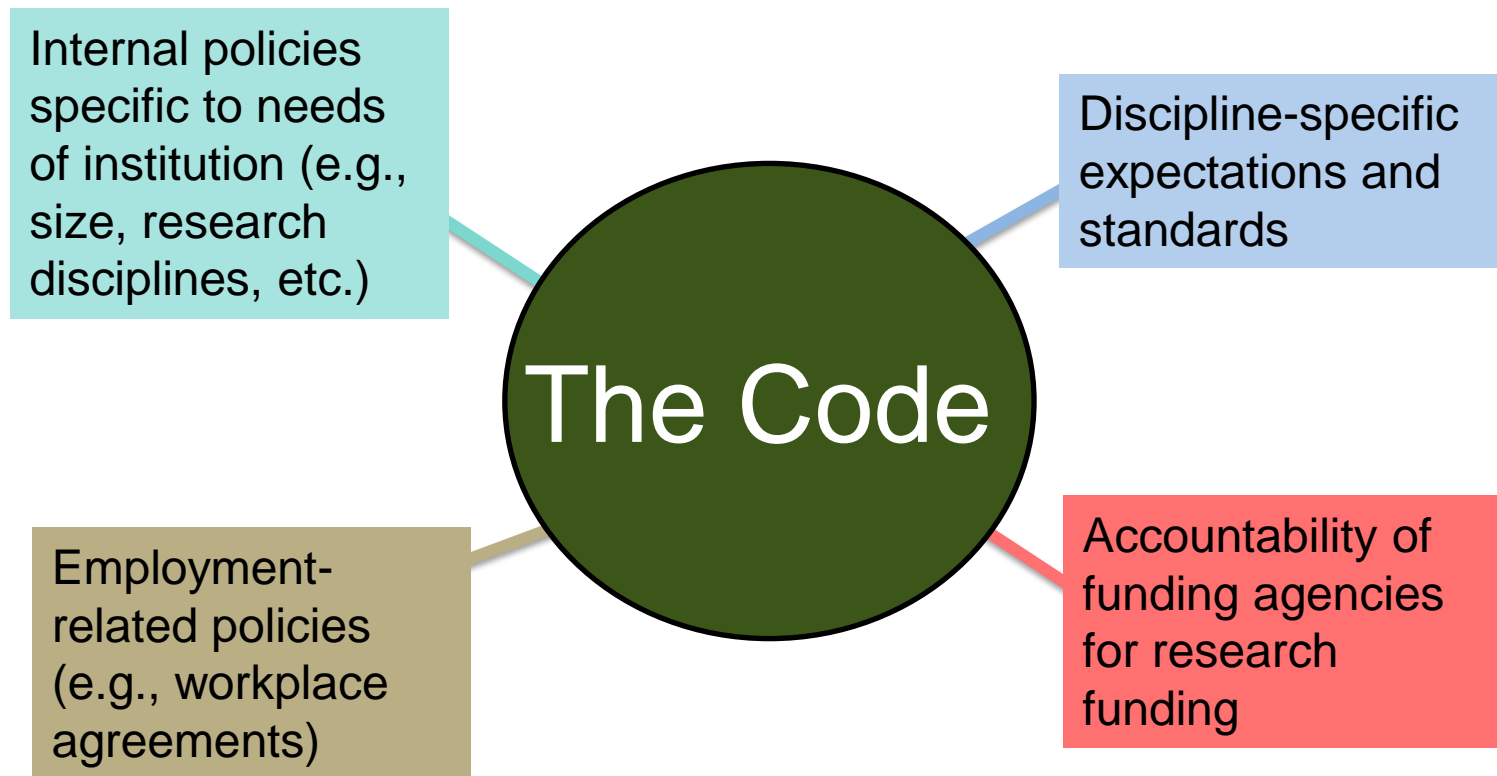


- Medical research funding is increasing by ~\$1b from 2022–23* as a result of the Medical Research Future Fund

Research integrity making headlines in Australia

- 'Academic loses battle over fraud allegations' (2009)
- 'Cancer drug trial suspended as misconduct allegations fly' (2013)
- 'High-profile researcher admits fabricating scientific results published in major journals' (2015)
- 'Australian neuroscientist....nearly went to jail for making up data' (2016)
- 'Tougher action needed in the fight against scientific fraud' (2016)

Governance of research integrity matters is challenging and the Code must take account of many complexities



The new approach

- Recognises that the research integrity environment has matured since 2007.
- Aims to solve the difficulties with applying the current Code that may detract from the main aim of improving research integrity.
- The draft Code has been streamlined into a principles-based document consisting of **eight principles** and **28 responsibilities** for institutions and researchers.
- Guidance on specific topics will be provided in supporting guides.
- The first guide is on **investigating and managing potential breaches of the Code**.
- This guide recognises the difficulty of the nexus of the Code with misconduct under Enterprise Agreements and the draft proposed removal of the term '**research misconduct**'.

How the new approach has been received ?

- 90 submissions to the public consultation process
- These were from universities, medical research institutes, peak bodies, such as the academies
- Overall, broad support for the principles based approach and the development of detailed guides
- Consideration of the proposal to remove the term 'research misconduct'

Definition of research misconduct

A complaint or allegation relates to research misconduct if it involves **all of the following**:

- **an alleged breach of the Code**
- **intent and deliberation, recklessness or gross and persistent negligence**
- **serious consequences, such as false information on the public record, or adverse effects on research participants, animals or the environment.**

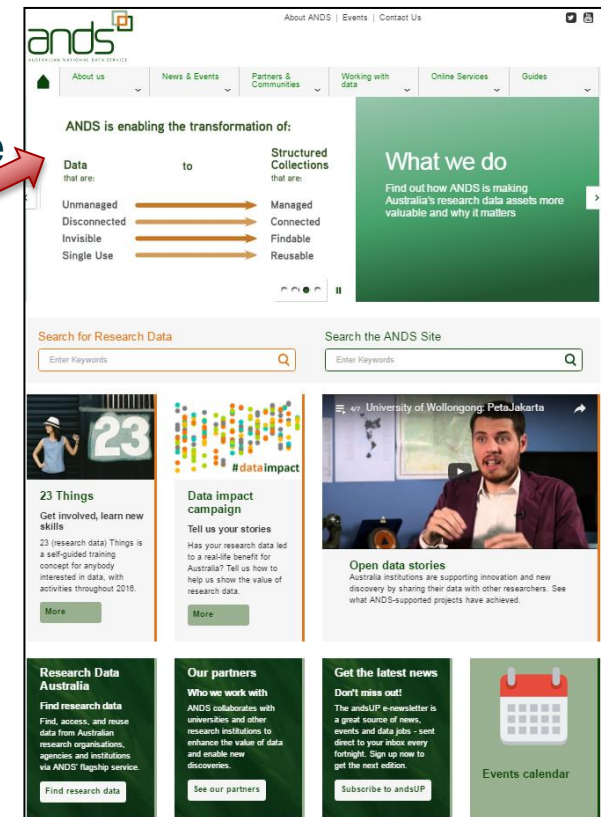


Research misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception proposing, carrying out or reporting the results...

Repeated or continuing breaches of this Code may also constitute research misconduct....

Development of additional supporting documents/other guides

- The BPG Working Group will provide advice on the format and content of the other supporting documents
- NHMRC will partner with other organisations who have expertise in the relevant subject area, such as the Australian National Data Service
- Possible topics for these supporting documents are:
 - Authorship and dissemination
 - Management and storage of research data and primary materials
 - Implementation of the Code
 - Supervision of research students and trainees
 - Disclosure and management of interests
 - Peer review
 - Collaborative research
 - The role of research integrity advisers
 - Training/education/encouraging compliance



Funding agency perspective

- Need to promote consistency and transparency within the sector
- Provide broad principles that can be understood and applied by everyone
- Develop detailed guides so that everyone is clear about expectations for good research practices and in conducting investigations



Further information:

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research:

www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/r39

The review of the Code (****recently updated****):

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/responsible-conduct-research/review-australian-code-responsible-conduct-research>



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

NH|MRC

Jillian Barr

Director

Ethics and Governance

jillian.barr@nhmrc.gov.au

Code Review team

code.review@nhmrc.gov.au

WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA