

# HMRI

## Code of Conduct Policy

### 1. Introduction

HMRI upholds the highest standards in relation to its research activities and philanthropic endeavours. Accordingly, all individuals who are directly associated with HMRI (staff members, volunteers, Board Directors, Research Council members and Foundation members) are expected to uphold these high standards.

The HMRI Code of Conduct provides a framework to the underlying principles that govern the high standards under which it operates. It can be used as an ethical guide in decision making and day to day activities.

It is noted that the existing policies of partner organisations, the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health (HNEH), in relation to Code of Conduct and Intellectual Property must be complied with where required.

### 2. Personal and Professional Behaviour

In the performance of their duties, all individuals who are directly associated with HMRI are required to:

1. Strive to keep up to date with advances and changes in the body of knowledge and the professional and ethical standards relevant to their area of expertise;
2. Comply with any relevant legislative, industrial or administrative requirements;
3. Maintain adequate documentation to support any decisions made;
4. Treat members of the public, staff, volunteers and researchers with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights and provide all necessary and appropriate assistance;
5. Strive to obtain value for public money and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of public resources;
6. Comply with legal and community obligations in relation to environmental responsibility;
7. Not take or seek to take improper advantage of any official information gained in the course of employment;
8. Not allow personal political views and affiliations or other personal interests to influence the performance of their duties or exercise of responsibilities.

All individuals who are directly associated with HMRI will not harass or discriminate against others on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex, pregnancy or marital status; age; disability; religion; sexual preference; membership of a trade union activity; or some other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.

### 3. Conflicts of Interest

All individuals who are directly associated with HMRI are expected to avoid conflicts of interest – situations where private interests conflict, or even appear to conflict, with the interest of HMRI.

Conflicts of interest, or the appearance of conflicts, can arise in many common areas. Most conflict issues, however, can generally be resolved by promptly notifying the company.

In the case of Directors and officers of HMRI, it should be noted that specific compliance with the HMRI Conflict of Interest Policy and the Corporations Act is required.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Public comment includes official or other statements in the name of HMRI by way of public speaking engagements, comments in the media (including electronic media) and expressions of view in letters to the newspapers or in books, journals or notices or where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comment will spread to the community at large.

Statements in the name of HMRI must be authorised by the HMRI Director and / or the HMRI Board Chair.

All statements to the media must be made with reference to the HMRI Communications Protocol.

#### **5. Use of Official Information**

All individuals who are directly associated with HMRI have a duty to maintain confidentiality, integrity and security of official information for which they are responsible and to not misuse official information.

Misuse of official information includes:

- Unauthorised use or disclosure;
- Speculative personal or business investments made on the basis of confidential information about the affairs of HMRI;
- Seeking to take advantage of information held about another person, organisation or research finding held in official records or data;
- Providing or trading confidential information about the affairs of HMRI for use by other individuals, organisations or researchers;
- Gossiping on the basis of personal, organisational or research information held in official records.

#### **6. Intellectual Property**

The term 'intellectual property' is the legally recognised outcome of a creative effort and economic investment in creative effort. It includes scientific discoveries, industrial designs, trademarks, service marks, commercial names and designations, inventions in all fields of human endeavour and all other rights resulting from activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields.

All individuals associated with HMRI must ensure that they understand and respect the ownership of intellectual property and to not disclose information that may compromise the value of this intellectual property. Researchers employed by other organisations are to be guided by their respective organisation's policies in relation to Intellectual Property.

#### **7. Private Use of Official Resources**

Official resources refer to HMRI funds, facilities, equipment and materials. Some examples of resources include, but are not limited to, telephones, facsimiles, email, internet, photocopiers, scanners, typing facilities, computers, motor vehicles, office stationery and general stock inventory. Official resources are not to be used for private purposes, except when official permission has been granted.

## 8. Occupational Health and Safety

HMRI has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment in the workplace. All individuals who are directly associated with HMRI are required to abide by all occupational health and safety policies and safe working procedures and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of people working for or visiting HMRI.

Please refer to the HMRI Occupational Health and Safety Policy for further information.

## 9. Employment Matters

HMRI will undertake probity screening of all staff and volunteers working in any capacity at HMRI. Probity checks, or criminal record checks, are conducted in respect of the following convictions:

- Serious offences involving a threat or injury to another person (including sexual offences);
- Other serious offences, but only where directly relevant to the duties or the positions (eg embezzlement / larceny for financial positions); and
- Working with Children check, but only where the position involves direct contact with children.

As outlined in the Health Service Act 1997 and the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2000, all HNEH staff must report any charges and convictions relating to serious sexual or violent offences in writing to the Chief Executive of HNEH with 7 days of the charge being laid or the conviction.

Any staff member who is charged with an offence under section 91H of the Crimes Act (production, dissemination or possession of child pornography) should be suspended from duty until those criminal proceedings are finalised.

HMRI will apply Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles to all appointments and dealings with staff and volunteers.

Conflicts of interest can arise where staff have an official role in more than one organisation. In these situations it may be difficult for staff to keep the roles separate and this can lead to poor performance of one of the roles, or at the worst, unlawful or improper decision making.

Approval for other employment will not be unreasonably withheld. However, if there is any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest the duties of HMRI must come first or an agreement reached on action to resolve the conflict.

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>HMRI Board</b>
<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>10 April 2008</b>
<b>Date for Review:</b>	<b>April 2009</b>
<b>Policy Contact Position:</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>
<b>Amendment History:</b>	<b>Original approved 10 April 2008</b>