



Guidelines for peer reviewers

OCTOBER 2020

ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

Introduction

The *Guidelines for Peer Reviewers* outline the key features of peer review at ANROWS. Peer reviewers are expected to engage in all ANROWS peer review activities in accordance with these guidelines.

Peer review refers to “the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or a related field”.¹ The peer review process contributes to ensuring the quality of ANROWS’s research, products and services. Peer reviewers are selected because of their high level of expertise and leadership in the field of violence against women and their children. ANROWS gratefully acknowledges peer reviewers’ generous contribution of time, expertise, and professional and personal commitment.

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia. (2019). *Peer review: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. NHMRC: Canberra.

Principles

ANROWS is committed to supporting research integrity and to promoting public trust in its operations. The core principles of the ANROWS peer review process are:

1. **Expertise.** Commissioned research and publications will be reviewed by experts in the field of violence against women.
2. **Fairness.** Publications and other resources will be reviewed on standard criteria.
3. **Transparency.** ANROWS publishes details of the peer review process and guidelines for peer reviewers (including conflicts of interest requirements) on its website.
4. **Impartiality.** To ensure impartial peer review, and prevent reviews from being influenced by bias or prejudice, reviews are conducted by two or more peer reviewers. Peer reviewers are required to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest. The declarations are managed by ANROWS staff as appropriate.
5. **Confidentiality.** Information provided by peer reviewers throughout the peer review process will only be disclosed to the research team.
6. **Ethics.** Peer reviewers will be bound by a Code of Conduct. ANROWS has procedures for handling complaints about misconduct, bias or prejudice.
7. **Quality.** ANROWS only releases publications and other resources which are of a high quality.
8. **Efficiency.** Peer review of publications and resources will be efficient, timely and meet advertised and/or agreed dates with ANROWS.

Review of publications and resources

Most of ANROWS's publications and resources are peer-reviewed to ensure they are of high quality. ANROWS maintains a single blind peer review process to ensure impartiality; that is, authors are not advised of the identity of reviewers. Generally, two peer reviewers with relevant academic expertise review each publication. Additional reviewers may be engaged when specific expertise is required. Additionally, senior federal and state government officials are asked to provide advice on the accuracy of the information in ANROWS's research reports during the peer review period.

Peer reviewers should ensure that any feedback provided is consistent with the principles set out in the Committee on Publication Ethics Council's *Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers* (2017).² Peer reviewers are asked to complete their review in a maximum of four weeks. If peer reviewers wish to provide ANROWS with any confidential advice on the report, they should indicate this clearly.

All comments by peer reviewers will be de-identified before they are provided to authors. Peer review feedback will be collated and provided to authors along with any feedback from government officials and ANROWS staff. Authors are asked to respond to all feedback provided by peer reviewers, and provide clear justification where they have not accepted the suggested changes.

² Committee on Publication Ethics Council. (2017). *Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers*. https://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical_Guidelines_For_Peer_Reviewers_2.pdf

Code of conduct

ANROWS's research integrity is enhanced and supported by peer reviewers' evaluation and recommendations about publications. Peer reviewers have a responsibility to:

- be familiar with ANROWS's publication requirements
- complete the review of publications in a timely manner
- declare if they are unable to review due to insufficient subject matter expertise or any other reason
- declare all conflicts of interest which may become evident at any time during the review process
- review publications with consideration to the stipulated criteria
- ensure that their review is not influenced (positively or negatively) by any personal, financial or other conflicting considerations, or by intellectual bias
- keep all details of the peer review and publication confidential until the report is published
- not delegate to colleagues or ask others to assist with a review without the permission of ANROWS staff
- not make contact with any of the publication's authors without prior agreement from the ANROWS Director, Research Program
- not take advantage of knowledge obtained during the peer review process, or use information from publications under review
- avoid personal prejudice influencing the process. Peer reviewers should be aware of how their own biases (conscious or unconscious) could affect the peer review process, including in relation to gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional employer and research discipline.³

Responsible conduct when conducting peer review

Peer reviewers must engage in peer review appropriately and respectfully, and must not use the peer review process to disparage other researchers. Peer reviewers have the responsibility to:

- participate in peer review in a way that is fair, rigorous and timely
- maintain professionalism in the tone of their comments, ensuring that peer reviews are as constructive as possible
- give proper consideration to research that challenges or changes accepted ways of thinking, which may include innovative, interdisciplinary or collaborative research.⁴

³ Adapted from the Committee on Publication Ethics Council's *Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers* (2017) and National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia's *Peer review: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2019).

⁴ National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia. (2019). *Peer review: A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. NHMRC: Canberra.

Confidentiality and information accountability

The following guidelines have been developed to ensure transparency and integrity of the process, and that review processes reflect national and international standards.

1. **Confidentiality:** Activities of ANROWS peer reviewers are not to be disclosed to anyone outside of ANROWS without prior permission of ANROWS's CEO or Director, Research Program.
2. **Information accountability:** All records of the assessments undertaken by peer reviewers will be stored electronically by ANROWS for a period of seven years following the release of a publication.

Conflicts of interest

The integrity of ANROWS's peer review process depends on a consistent and transparent response to actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest arises in any situation in which a peer reviewer has an interest which may influence, or be perceived to influence, the proper performance of their responsibilities to ANROWS. This interest can be negative or positive, so may include situations where peer reviewers:

- are employees of authors' organisations or sit on the board of management of authors' organisations
- mentor or are a mentee of one of the authors
- have co-researched or published with one of the authors in the last three years
- are partners or business associates of one of the authors, or a person with whom they have had a professional, business or financial involvement
- sit on the advisory group or steering committee of the project
- are relatives, friends or other personal associates of one of the authors
- have personal, political, ideological, academic or intellectual competing interests or disputes with the authors which are relevant to the publication.

Managing conflicts of interest

Peer reviewers should declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to ANROWS at the earliest opportunity, preferably at the beginning of a review process, or as soon as they become apparent. A conflict of interest does not automatically exclude a peer reviewer from participation in the proposed activity. The ANROWS Director, Research Program will assess the nature of the conflict and, if substantial, involve the ANROWS CEO in the matter for a decision. ANROWS manages conflicts of interest in line with the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, and Universities Australia's [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2018).⁵

⁵ National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia. (2018). *Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research*. NHMRC: Canberra.

Fees and reimbursement of expenses

ANROWS peer reviewers who undertake this work outside the course of their ordinary paid employment may be offered an honorarium for their time.

Further information

For further information about any aspect of ANROWS's peer review, please contact ANROWS at research@anrows.org.au

ANROWS acknowledgement

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Acknowledgement of Country

ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present, and future, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, honouring the truths set out in the [Warawarni-gu Guma Statement](#).

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of these guidelines.
Please check the online version at www.anrows.org.au for any amendment.

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