NSW Police Force

Policy for Research

People and Capability Command

OFFICIAL

Policy for Research

This policy governs internal and external research conducted with the NSW Police Force (NSWPF). Its purpose is to detail the governance and processes required when conducting research and publishing findings.

Essential Summary

The NSWPF undertakes research with internal and external stakeholders for the purpose of advancing knowledge on the existing and emerging issues that impact on policing, and the evaluation and improvement of current and future policing strategies, policies, and practices.

The NSWPF is committed to engaging in high quality and ethical research which complies with the '*National Statement for Ethical Conduct in Human Research*', the '*Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*' and aligns with the organisation's strategic priorities.

This policy:

- applies to all internal and external researchers wishing to conduct research with NSWPF personnel and/or resources
- defines research as a project requiring primary and/or secondary data collection/extraction for research purposes
- outlines the processes and procedures for conducting research with the NSWPF
- states the criteria by which research applications are assessed
- clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of both NSWPF staff and external researchers when collaborating on a research project.

Document Control Sheet

Title	Policy for Research
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Version #	Version / approval date	Author/Position	Summary of changes
1.0	January 2019	Dr. Christie Wallace	
1.1	February 2019	Dr. Christie Wallace	Consultation with FETS, minor change to wording in section 4.4
1,2	August 2021	Sgt Amanda Clarke	Update document to remove references to Lessons learned Unit to be replaced with Research and Policing Practice Unit (RaPP).
1.3	March 2023	Ed Zelma Manager Strategy, Research & Improvement Manager Sgt Joel Eckford, People Strategy & Engagement Nerolie Gebels, People Strategy & Engagement	Updated document establishing processes for external and internal research applicants
1.4	May 2023	Ch Insp Justine Thompson Sgt Bronwyn Nakhla Dr Natasha Magson Strategy Research & Improvement Unit	Updated document establishing processes for external and internal research applicants

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to potential internal and external researchers wanting to conduct research with the NSW Police Force (NSWPF).

2. Scope

This document applies to all internal and external projects requiring access to NSWPF resources for research purposes either independently or in partnership with NSWPF. It does not apply to those wishing to revise or develop new workshop course or program curriculum delivered by NSWPF staff.

3. Procedures

3.1 Context

The principle focus of NSWPF research is; evidence to action. The purpose of research is to:

- contribute to the knowledge on policing
- evaluate policies, strategies, and practices
- inform and shape new policies, strategies, and practices; and
- find solutions to existing and emerging issues which impact on policing.

3.2 What is Research?

The NSWPF defines 'research' as an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge, understanding and insight, in accordance with the 'National Statement for Ethical Conduct in Human Research' and the *'Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research'*. For the purposes of this policy, 'research' includes projects such as research, review, and evaluation projects where there is a need for primary or secondary data collection and/or extraction of data for research purposes.

Research includes both 'business as usual' research, that is research which is internally driven and conducted exclusively within NSWPF and 'external research', that is research which is conducted independently or semi-independently of the NSWPF.

Independent research may include research undertaken by universities, other government departments, and non-government organisations, while semi-independent research may include research undertaken by NSWPF members for professional development attributable to accredited qualifications, and research partnerships between NSWPF and external agencies.

3.3 Types of Research

The following activities are classified as research for the purposes of this policy:

- Research by external honours or postgraduate level students focussing on policing or seeking access to NSWPF staff as participants. NSWPF staff, who are undertaking research projects associated with university courses, are classified as external researchers for the purposes of this policy.
- Projects conducted by external researchers not requiring a financial or significant in-kind contribution by the NSWPF, and which may be funded by a university, the Australian Research Council (ARC), Criminology Research Council (CRC), a government agency, or a private sponsor.
- Research carried out in collaboration between a university and the NSWPF, and possibly other agencies or organisations, and subject to funding by the NSWPF, the ARC, the CRC program, or other sources.
- Contract research carried out by an external company or academic contractors on behalf of the NSWPF.
- Research supported by region commanders/corporate sponsors undertaken solely by NSWPF employees.

The following activities are NOT covered by this policy.

- Curriculum development or renewal of curriculum for workshops, courses or programs delivered by the NSWPF People & Capability Command (PPC) or other commands.
- Consultancies: A consultant is a person or organisation engaged under contract on a temporary basis to provide recommendations or high-level specialist or professional advice to assist decision making by management. Generally, it is the advisory nature of the work that differentiates a consultant from other contractors. Consultancies are managed under the *NSW Government Guidelines for the Engagement and Use of Consultants*.
- Gathering and analysis of published reports and academic papers, or analysis of corporate data for the purpose of the production of management information reports, routine policy development or internal course/program development or evaluation.
- Data or evidence collection for the purposes of conducting an investigation or developing intelligence reports, including collection and analysis of forensic samples, tissue, or materials for a lawful purpose.

- Analysis of public domain publications, data, newspaper reports, academic articles or other archival sources that are freely available, this includes crime data available from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

4. Research Assessment Criteria

The NSWPF will consider the merits of each submission through consideration of the following criteria:

- aligns to the NSWPF Strategic Plan
- represents a corporately identified research topic
- informs future NSWPF policy, practice, and performance with measurable outcomes
- the level and type of risk to the NSWPF
- provides a sound return on the NSWPF's investment, including the development and use of intellectual property
- supports business review and improvement
- operates in a methodologically acceptable and rigorous manner; and
- identification of a NSWPF host command to support the research partnership.

4.1 Who can apply to do research?

Research proposals are invited from undergraduate (honours) and postgraduate students, academics, tertiary institutions and other research entities and appropriate persons from relevant agencies. NSWPF employees who are undertaking postgraduate research must follow the External Partnership Workflow (see Appendix 1).

NSWPF employees undertaking research on behalf of their command will follow the Internal Partnership Workflow (see Appendix 2). Where required, the researcher must notify the Strategy, Research, and Improvement Unit (SRIU). In consultation with the host command, these projects will be assessed on feasibility, research qualifications, benefit to the NSWPF, and any duplication of existing research.

NSWPF employees can undertake research, however, they must be aware of potential conflicts of interest and have the research endorsed by their Assistant Commissioner/Corporate Sponsor.

5. Research Governance

The Strategy, Research, and Improvement Unit (SRIU) will maintain oversight of all research projects conducted in collaboration with the NSWPF. The SRIU is responsible for the administration of all stages of the research process including the initial evaluation of the proposed research, completion of the applicant's research deed, progress reporting, receipt of final reports, and approval of publication/s. Where required, issues arising from internal or external research projects that cannot be resolved by the SRIU will be escalated to the People and Capability Command (PCC) People Committee for determination.

5.1 Functions of the Strategy, Research, and Improvement Unit (SRIU)

The SRIU is responsible for the following.

- Collating and disseminating priority research topics from Subject Matter Experts (SME's) across the organisation every 12 months (June of each year).
- Liaising with internal and/or external stakeholders
- Receiving and evaluating research proposals.
- Providing advice to internal stakeholders on research design, methodology and evaluation.
- Creating and updating all internal and external research application documentation.
- Providing recommendations to SME's on the relevance of applications.
- Liaising with the NSWPF OGC for formal research agreements and/or MOUs as required.
- Monitoring progress of approved research projects by maintaining a contemporary register of all NSWPF research.
- In collaboration with SME's, review and approve/reject proposed publications/theses resulting from research with the NSWPF.

5.2 Forensic Evidence and Technical Services

The Forensic Evidence and Technical Services (FETS) command, initiates and manages internal and external research for the advancement of scientific and technical support to criminal and coronial investigations. This is managed by the FETS Research Coordinator in compliance with the Command's established research policy and procedures. To avoid duplication of effort, the FETS Research Coordinator and the Strategy, Research & Improvement Unit Manager may co-review proposals and overall coordination responsibilities.

5.3 Ethics

NSWPF does not have a formal Human Research Ethics Committee. All research involving human participants conducted by external researchers (including NSWPF employees enrolled in degrees with a research component) must comply with the *National Statement for Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (updated 2018) issued by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* issued by Universities Australia.

Researchers from other agencies may also be bound by their own agency's code of conduct and/or *The Code of Ethics and Conduct* under the NSW Government Sector Employment Act 1994.

Prior to final approval of research projects, the NSWPF will require proof that the project has been approved by an institutional ethics committee established under the provisions of the *National Statement*. For ethically sensitive projects, the NSWPF will review institutional ethics committee documentation to verify that the committee was completely aware of the ethical dimensions of the research design, and may ask for the execution of confidentiality agreements, restrictions on the publication of certain information, or other protections in addition to the conditions imposed by the institutional ethics committee.

External institutional ethics approval does not automatically lead to NSWPF approval of the research.

5.4 Privacy Obligations

The NSWPF prefers to release data in aggregate summary form, or as de-identified unit record data, that contains no potentially identifying information.

Where a research project involves access to personal information as defined by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, documentation supplied to the institutional ethics committee will be reviewed by the NSWPF. This review will ensure that the ethics committee has been adequately informed about the potential sensitivity of data or information requested, and that sufficient safeguards will be put in place against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification, or disclosure, and against all other misuse of any data released to the researchers.

In such cases, the NSWPF may require the execution of a confidentiality agreement by the researcher and all colleagues who will have access to the data. Approval of such projects will be given with reference to the *NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 – Sec 27B.*

6. Research Applications

Research applications will be processed as either:

a) **External Research** (Refer to *External Research Workflow*, Appendix 1)
Or
b) **Internal Research** (Refer to *Internal Research Workflow*, Appendix 2)

Applications should contain as much information as possible to be fairly assessed. Failing to supply all required documentation may result in applications being delayed or rejected.

Note. Research projects initiated or proposed by the NSWPF and carried out by external providers such as academic institutions, other government agencies or not-for-profit agencies are to follow the *Internal Research Partnership* workflow in Appendix 2.

All application documents must be emailed to: pcc-research@police.nsw.gov.au

6.1 Data Requests

NSWPF will not provide data that is already publicly available (e.g., BOCSAR). Requests for NSWPF data must include required fields, date ranges, groupings, totals, and the preferred format for presentation to the researchers (e.g., Excel spreadsheets, .csv files and .txt files).

Depending on the nature of the project, for example those requiring access to NSWPF systems, researchers may have to obtain a National Police Check and base line security vetting. Access is dependent on approval by the local business unit and/or facility manager.

In relation to crime data, specific offence types must be listed. Research applications must clearly state what the data will be used for to allow the most relevant data option to be considered. Data requests for research purposes may take three to six months to action due to the operational support commitments of the business area. These timeframes should be considered during the proposal development stage. Requests for data from systems not managed by the NSWPF should be made directly to the relevant department as custodians of the data.

6.2 Approval Timeframes

Before approving a research application, the NSWPF will undertake a consultation process with internal and external stakeholders as needed. This means that researchers should allow up to 4 weeks for the approval of a basic project that does not raise significant ethical issues or does not involve the allocation of funds or significant in-kind support.

Projects that raise significant ethical or privacy issues, have the potential to impact on operational activities, or require allocation of funds or a significant in-kind contribution by the NSWPF will take considerably longer.

Students undertaking honours degrees should approach the NSWPF regarding their projects no later than March in their honour's year.

6.3 Projects Involving a Significant Investment of Funds or In-Kind Support

The NSWPF has been successful in securing funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and other funding bodies in the past. Grants such as ARC Linkage programs offer potential for funding from the NSWPF and other agencies to be matched by a contribution from the Commonwealth Government.

As the timelines of ARC and other funding bodies often fall outside normal budget time frames, it may take some time to identify the source of funds required in the event of a successful application. Researchers wishing to invite the NSWPF to participate in a grant application requiring a financial contribution from the NSWPF must commence the process at least 12 months prior to the final grant submission date to allow sufficient time to define the research scope and prepare the application. The assessment process will involve an examination of the potential value of the research, balanced against the cost of participation and the impact of methodology on NSWPF activities. Researchers will need to follow the process relating to *External Research Workflow* (refer to Appendix 1)

Researchers who are considering applying for ARC discovery funding, or for other grants that do not require a financial or significant in-kind contribution from the NSWPF, are advised to seek support prior to finalisation of the grant application. The NSWPF will be under no obligation to participate in such a project if there was no consultation and in principle support given prior to the determination of the grant application.

Under no circumstances, regardless of scheme, will the NSWPF agree to commit to last minute grant applications to the ARC or other funding bodies, even if no cash contribution is sought from the NSWPF.

6.4 Notifications

Applicants will be advised by the SRIU as to the outcome of their research application via email. If conditionally approved, proposed amendments, if relevant, will be also provided at this time. Applicants will be required to resubmit amended research proposals within four weeks for reconsideration. Those resubmitted outside of the four-week timeframe will be treated as a new application.

6.5 Formal Deed Agreement and Research Contracts

If approved and prior to commencing research, the Principal Researcher will be required to sign and return a formal *Deed of Agreement* or if required *Research Contract/Memorandum of Understanding* developed by the NSWPF Office of General Council. By signing, the Principal Researcher is agreeing to abide by all conditions of approval attached to the research.

7. Progress Reporting

If the research is not finalised within six months of approval, a progress report must be provided to the SRIU by email every six -months until the research is finalised. If progress reporting is not complied with, NSWPF may consider terminating the research and no further data or resources will be provided. It is the responsibility of the principal researcher to ensure all contact details remain up to date and that progress reports are emailed to pcc-research@police.nsw.gov.au by the due date.

7.1 Request for Amendments

If the research requires any modification after receiving approval, an amendment to the original application must be sought from the SRIU by completing the Request for Amendment Form. In cases where the requested amendment is considered by the SRIU to alter the original objectives and/or expected outcomes of the project, the SRIU may inform the researcher that a new research application is required. The new or amended components of the research cannot commence/continue until the SIRU has reviewed and approved the changes.

7.2 Publication

An electronic copy of the final version of the thesis, manuscript, or research report with an executive summary in plain language, is to be submitted to the SRIU within three months of completion of the project. While recommendations are welcome, the NSWPF is under no obligation to implement them. Publications include, but are not limited to, material being

made public, conference papers, presentations and dissertations, copies of reports, documents, graphics/dashboards.

Any publication or presentation of the research requires final approval from the NSWPF. The SRIU will screen the final version of the publication to ensure that the paper does not:

- identify any NSWPF employees,
- contain obvious inaccuracies,
- pose a security or other clear risk to NSWPF and/or
- contain unprofessional or emotive language when discussing or describing NSWPF.

All publications will be reviewed in a timely manner and all final approved documentation will be forwarded to the relevant host command.

Any NSWPF employees wishing to present a paper or poster at a conference must comply with the NSWPF *Policy for Speaking at or Attending Conferences*

7.3 Publication Acknowledgement

Upon publication, the assistance of the NSWPF is to be acknowledged without purporting to be expressing views of the NSWPF and in acknowledgement that any errors of omission or commission are the responsibility of the author/s. It is requested that the following disclaimers be used:

a) *"The author/s wish to acknowledge the support and assistance from the NSWPF in undertaking this research. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the NSWPF and any errors of omission or commission are the responsibility of the author/s."*

or, where the NSWPF is de-identified.

b) *"The author/s wish to acknowledge the support and assistance from an Australian policing agency in undertaking this research. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Australian Policing Agency and any errors of omission or commission are the responsibility of the author/s."*

8. Termination of Research and Evaluations

Research can be terminated at any time by the NSWPF. The NSWPF also reserves the right to call on researchers to show cause why their research approval should not be

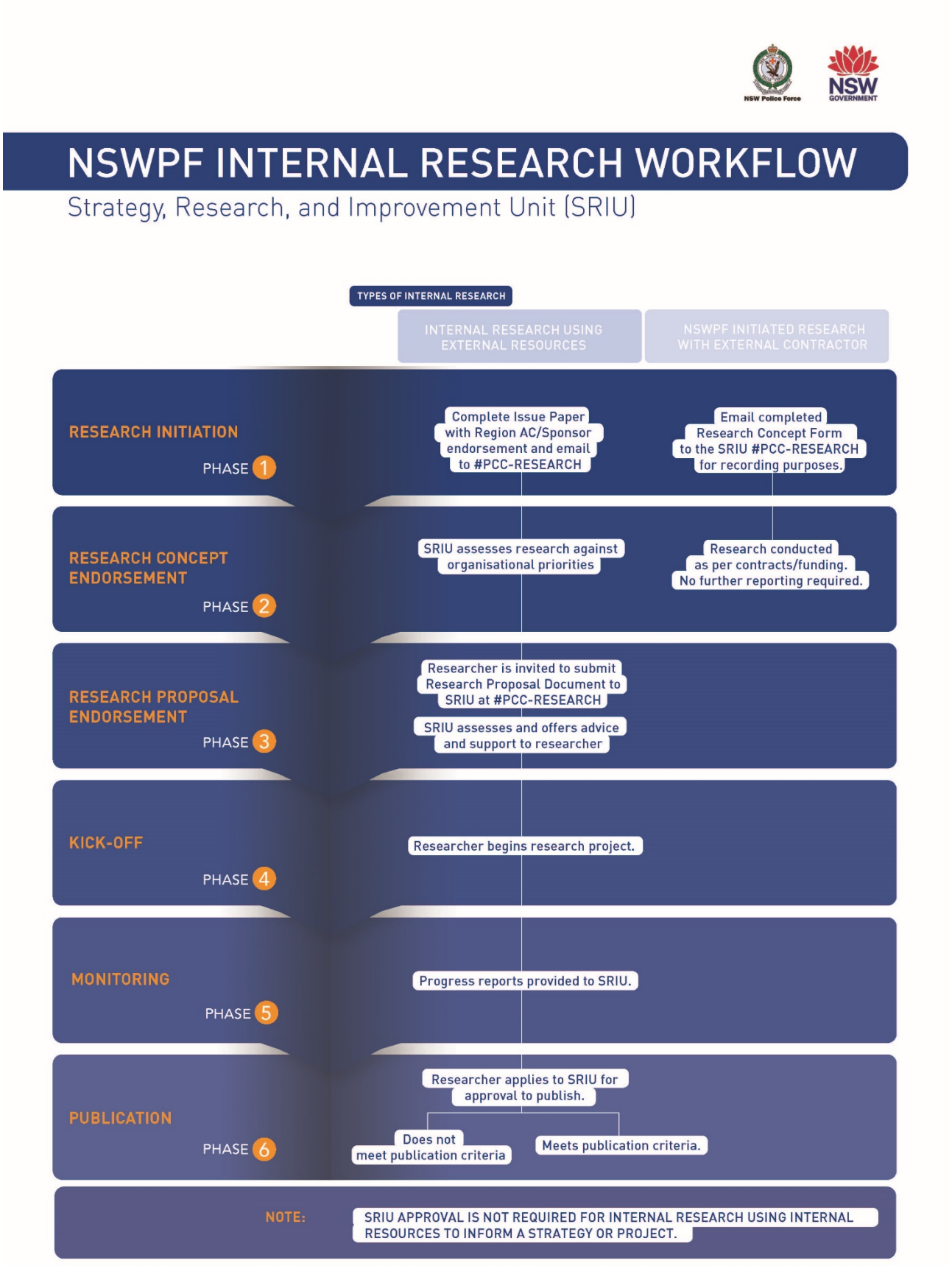
rescinded through failure to comply with the Formal Deed of Agreement, or due to operational requirements. This includes noncompliance in progress reporting.

9. Appendices

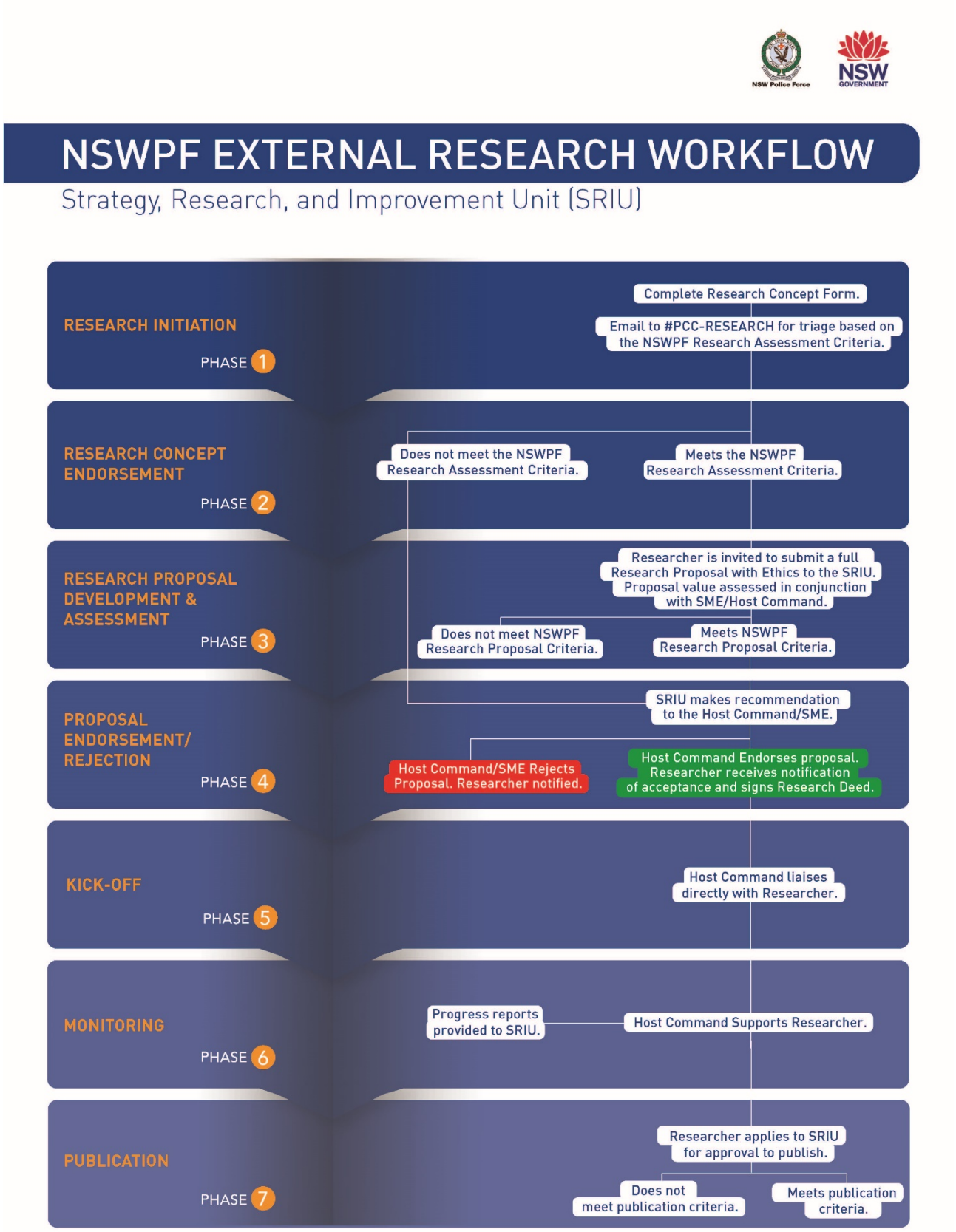
Appendix 1- External Research Partnership Workflow

Appendix 2 - Internal Research Partnership Workflow

Appendix 1


NSW Police Force
NSW GOVERNMENT
NSWPF INTERNAL RESEARCH WORKFLOW
Strategy, Research, and Improvement Unit (SRIU)
TYPES OF INTERNAL RESEARCH
INTERNAL RESEARCH USING EXTERNAL RESOURCES
NSWPF INITIATED RESEARCH WITH EXTERNAL CONTRACTOR
RESEARCH INITIATION
PHASE 1
Complete Issue Paper with Region AC/Sponsor endorsement and email to #PCC-RESEARCH
Email completed Research Concept Form to the SRIU #PCC-RESEARCH for recording purposes.
RESEARCH CONCEPT ENDORSEMENT
PHASE 2
SRIU assesses research against organisational priorities
Research conducted as per contracts/funding. No further reporting required.
RESEARCH PROPOSAL ENDORSEMENT
PHASE 3
Researcher is invited to submit Research Proposal Document to SRIU at #PCC-RESEARCH
SRIU assesses and offers advice and support to researcher
KICK-OFF
PHASE 4
Researcher begins research project.
MONITORING
PHASE 5
Progress reports provided to SRIU.
PUBLICATION
PHASE 6
Researcher applies to SRIU for approval to publish.
Does not meet publication criteria
Meets publication criteria.
NOTE:
SRIU APPROVAL IS NOT REQUIRED FOR INTERNAL RESEARCH USING INTERNAL RESOURCES TO INFORM A STRATEGY OR PROJECT.

Appendix 2


NSW Police Force
NSW GOVERNMENT
NSWPF EXTERNAL RESEARCH WORKFLOW
Strategy, Research, and Improvement Unit (SRIU)
RESEARCH INITIATION
PHASE 1
Complete Research Concept Form.
Email to #PCC-RESEARCH for triage based on the NSWPF Research Assessment Criteria.
RESEARCH CONCEPT ENDORSEMENT
PHASE 2
Does not meet the NSWPF Research Assessment Criteria.
Meets the NSWPF Research Assessment Criteria.
RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT
PHASE 3
Researcher is invited to submit a full Research Proposal with Ethics to the SRIU. Proposal value assessed in conjunction with SME/Host Command.
Does not meet NSWPF Research Proposal Criteria.
Meets NSWPF Research Proposal Criteria.
PROPOSAL ENDORSEMENT/ REJECTION
PHASE 4
SRIU makes recommendation to the Host Command/SME.
Host Command/SME Rejects Proposal. Researcher notified.
Host Command Endorses proposal. Researcher receives notification of acceptance and signs Research Deed.
KICK-OFF
PHASE 5
Host Command liaises directly with Researcher.
MONITORING
PHASE 6
Progress reports provided to SRIU.
Host Command Supports Researcher.
PUBLICATION
PHASE 7
Researcher applies to SRIU for approval to publish.
Does not meet publication criteria.
Meets publication criteria.