Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand

Request for quotations for a study of the current state of Health Services Research in Australian and New Zealand

A. Background

There are numerous definitions of health services research; generally the field is considered to encompass the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of service delivery; it can focus on organisation and management, financing, workforce, utilisation and evaluation; it will include health services delivery and health system development. Both the NHMRC and the HRC require applications to be assessed against significance, defined as the extent to which the proposed research will directly lead to improved health outcomes. As a result of this narrow frame of reference, successful applications are much more likely to be focussed on improvements in service delivery at the clinical interface. Contributions to how the health system is financed and organised, the inherent incentives in that, and the evaluation of system level policy are often overlooked. Yet this focus on health systems research is also crucial. According to WHO, this broader level and focus of research is “the brains of the health system”. WHO has called for major investment in developing capacity to develop and evaluate health system policy, simply because more return will be realised from strengthening health systems through research and evaluation than higher investment in the discovery and development of new interventions. Each country should have earmarked funding, and focussed organisations for learning from health system development.

The Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand (HSRAANZ)

HSRAANZ began in December 2001, when a general meeting was held within the Health Services Research and Policy Conference in Wellington, New Zealand. The objects of the Association are to encourage and promote the development and conduct of health services research, in order to promote improved health services delivery and improved health; and in particular to:

- Promote the development of sustainable capacity in the field of health services research;
- Facilitate and promote communication and collegiality among researchers engaged in health services research;
Facilitate and promote the regular exchange of views across researchers and policymakers, managers, clinicians and other interested parties;
Promote the education and development of researchers and others working in health services research;
Encourage the development of strategically important research;
Promote excellence in health services research;
Advocate for appropriate levels of funding for health services research in Australia and New Zealand.

Statement of Requirements

B1. Description of Requirement

The HSRAANZ is the peak body for HSR in Australian and New Zealand and has a major role in assisting health services researchers and policy makers to meet the challenges facing the health system in the 21st Century. In order to inform the Association’s strategy over the next decade we are commissioning a study to provide a clearer picture of the current state of health services research in Australia and New Zealand.

B2. Key Objectives

The key deliverables of the study are to identify:

- Who is doing what health services research in Australia and New Zealand?
- How that research is being funded?
- How that research is being used – by whom and how?
- What real world impact is that research having?

B3. Key Design Considerations

The findings from the following three tasks should be reported in separate chapters within a report up to 20 pages long, including Title page, 1 page summary, Figures and Tables. References can be listed separately.

The described approaches are suggestions and alternative approaches to achieve the project objectives are invited.

What health services research is being funded?

What HSR has been funded by the NHMRC, HRC, ARC, National and Regional governments, Health Boards and Networks, Research Foundations (e.g. the HCF and BUPA) and Advocacy Groups (e.g. Heart Foundation, Cancer Council) over the last five years?
• Excluding basic science applications, review titles, then abstracts of awarded NHMRC and HRC grants (include NHMRC project and partnership project grants) over the last five years
  o An Exec Member will double review a sample of titles and abstracts
• Review all NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in HSR awards over the last five years.
• Review ARC, National and Regional government, Research Foundation and Advocacy Group funding of HSR, possibly via website reviews and direct contact with relevant persons
• Review the ANZCTR for HSR trials.

The findings should be analysed to describe trends in funding, e.g. numbers of projects, size and sources of funding. An attempt should be made to categorise funded HSR, e.g. what types of research questions and methods are being funded?

**What health services research is being published?**

Selected health services researchers could be asked to nominate their best HSR papers over the last five years. Targeted searches could be undertaken, key journals could be searched.

In the report, describe the type of HSR that is being published and where? What impact is it having (e.g. cites and altmetrics)?

**What is the real world impact of HSR?**

Selected health services researchers and relevant persons in government and the health services could be surveyed regarding impact of the research e.g. direct changes to policy, practice, attraction of funding for successful programs, interventions, withdrawal of ineffectual services, research cited by government over the last five years.

The findings to this question might take the form of a qualitative analysis, providing examples of reported impacts.

**B4. Skills and Knowledge Required**

• Knowledge of the health system in Australia and New Zealand.
• Experience in health services research.
• Demonstrated ability to review and write-up results.

If you feel confident to review the state of HSR in either Australia or New Zealand, but not both, please contact Sarah Green, who will try to facilitate partnerships between Australian and New Zealand health services researchers for the purposes of tendering for this project.
B5. Outputs and Timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An interim report on the state of HSR in Australia to be presented at the HSRAANZ AGM in Canberra*</td>
<td>2 December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A final report to the HSRAANZ</td>
<td>30 January 2017</td>
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* the analyst will not be expected to present the report themselves

B6. Performance standards

All services and key deliverables will be delivered according to prescribed timeframes and all written material will be delivered in a high quality, publishable format.

The criteria that will be used to evaluate the Request for Quote provided by the tenderer include:

- Ability to deliver the services required within the timeframes;
- Value for money; and
- The methodology proposed for the delivery of services.

B7. Budget and Research Timeframe

As an indication the Association anticipates that the project will take 4 to 6 weeks FTE to complete.

B8. Application Process

Please provide a one-page application describing how you will address the defined tasks and providing evidence to demonstrate you have the required skills and knowledge. On a separate page, please itemize the anticipated time to be spent on different aspects of the project and associated costs.

Proposals to conduct this research project should be submitted not later than September 19, 2016 to:

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1 World Health Organization, 2009, Scaling up research and learning for health systems: now is the time.