Enhancing SIRA's research program

Consultation Paper

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NSW GOVERNMENT
State Insurance Regulatory Authority

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List of Terms

Knowledge Translation: SIRA defines this as 'the synthesis, exchange, and application of knowledge', within the NSW personal injury schemes, with a goal to accelerate the capture of the benefits of research activities

Mobilisation of Knowledge: this addresses how external knowledge generated outside of SIRA is identified and combined with internal knowledge specific to the regulation of the personal injury schemes to inform SIRA's regulatory approach

Logic Model of Impact: an adapted logic model impact developed by Research Impact Academy 2020, this can be viewed on page 9

1. Purpose

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) is the government organisation responsible for regulating and administering workers compensation (WC), motor accidents compulsory third party (CTP) insurance and home building compensation insurance in New South Wales (NSW).

SIRA's research program aims to facilitate evidence-informed policy, scheme design and supervision activities that supports high-quality health and return to work outcomes for injured people receiving care under the NSW workers compensation (WC) and compulsory third party (CTP) schemes (personal injury schemes).

The purpose of this consultation paper is to seek feedback to enhance SIRA's research program by informing how SIRA can best generate and facilitate greater collaboration across all facets of our research approach.

1.1 SIRA's research role

SIRA was created under part 3 of the *State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015* (SICG Act), which sets out SIRA's objectives and regulatory role.

Additional functions, including "to provide support and funding for research and education in connection with those services that will assist effective injury management" are set out under the *Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017* [Div 10.1 (2)(c)].

Section 23(1)(a) of the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* specifies that SIRA is to initiate and encourage research to identify efficient and effective strategies for the prevention and management of work injury and for the rehabilitation of injured workers. Further, section 23(1)(b) states SIRA is to ensure the availability of high-quality education and training in such prevention, management and rehabilitation.

SIRA's investment in research and education is funded from levies collected from workers compensation policies and compulsory third party polices. Research is at the core of SIRA's strategic framework, underpinning the key function of innovating and engaging others to ensure our customers have optimal recovery and health outcomes.

In recent years, SIRA has invested in a range of research activities and educational campaigns and programs directly aligned to current and emerging customer needs.

1.2 The Research Program review

SIRA engaged Professor Niki Ellis[1] to undertake a comprehensive review of the SIRA research program. The review confirmed that the program was funding research that is relevant to the challenges of the sector; and that impact was being felt.

The review identified that impact could be further enhanced by:

- implementing a more strategic approach to setting and defining research priorities
- increased focus and translation of findings to key stakeholders
- planning for and effectively evaluating impact
- facilitating opportunities for research collaboration and co-design across the sector.

[1] Professor Niki Ellis. [online] Available at: http://www.nikiellis.com.au/

2. SIRA's regulatory responsibility

2.1 SIRA's organisation goals

As the Regulator for the NSW personal injury schemes, SIRA aims to ensure the schemes are fair, affordable, customer centric, and able to deliver optimal health outcomes for the people of NSW.

SIRA's work is guided by the following organisational goals:

- financially sustainable schemes
- affordable premiums
- optimal outcomes for injured people
- positive customer experience
- public trust in SIRA and the schemes it regulates.

SIRA's research objectives and approach will directly contribute to the achievement of SIRA's organisational goals. Refer to section 7.1 for more information.

2.2 SIRA's research priorities

SIRA is currently engaging with key stakeholders to refine SIRA's research priorities (Figure 1 below) to maximise impact and return on investment for the people of NSW.

Facilitated by The George Institute for Global Health, the purpose of this work is to focus SIRA's research investment on addressing gaps in knowledge generation, translation, and evaluation.

Focussed consultation with research partners, academics, government agencies, industry and representatives, healthcare providers, insurers, end-users and other personal injury sector thought leaders commenced in 2020 and we thank them for their contributions to date.

While this work is being undertaken SIRA continues to invest in research and translation activities aligned to existing priority areas.

Figure 1

Question 1

Do you have any comments on SIRA's current research priorities? Can they be improved, and if so how?

2.3 SIRA's research objectives

SIRA's proposed research objectives are to:

- facilitate a collaborative approach to knowledge generation and translation to improve care, recovery and return to work outcomes for injured people
- invest in research and translation activities to address current, novel, and emerging challenges for the schemes
- activate knowledge translation across the sector through collaborative partnerships
- facilitate mobilisation of knowledge within SIRA by applying new knowledge to existing organisational insights.

Question 2

Do you have any comments on SIRA's proposed research objectives? Can they be improved, and if so how?

2.4 Guiding principles

The review of the SIRA research program indicated a need to find balance between addressing the present challenges, evidence gaps, and sector needs that require immediate research investment, and the future and emerging issues for the schemes.

The review also confirmed the importance of the program being applicable to both schemes noting the high degree of crossover in the treatment, recovery and return to work processes for injured people, irrespective of the scheme they are in.

As a result, SIRA developed a set of guiding principles to underpin the future direction of the program. The principles require SIRA's future research and translation activities to be:

- customer focussed
- co-designed with customers and scheme participants
- applicable to multiple injury types
- applicable to both CTP and WC schemes
- leveraged on existing evidence
- focussed on delivering long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

Question 3

Do you have any comments on SIRA's research guiding principles? Can they be improved, and if so, how?

3. SIRA's approach to research

3.1 Identifying opportunities and areas of need

To maximise the impact of its' research program, SIRA is committed to engaging with scheme participants, stakeholders, and the community to identify opportunities and areas of need through active consultation, workshops, and symposiums.

This component and all other elements of SIRA's approach to research are represented in Figure 2 below and detailed on the following pages.

Figure 2

3.2 Engaging key stakeholders and forming partnerships

SIRA acknowledges that collaboration and co-design must be at the centre of our research approach.

SIRA has long-term strategic partnerships with the John Walsh Centre for Rehabilitation Research and Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety.

SIRA is also an active member of several state and national research collaborative partnerships including:

- Australia and New Zealand Work Health and Safety research collaboration
- SafeWork Australia evidence reference group
- NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Steering Committee
- National Road Safety Partnership Project Steering Committee
- NSW Centre for Work Health and Safety research Foundation.

The review of the SIRA Research Program proposed a model for the establishment of a research community of practice that would formalise opportunities for collaboration and co-design whilst helping to address duplication of effort and investment in research across the sector.

SIRA is considering a more agile model of collaboration that would activate partnerships from inside and outside the personal injury sector on a need and/or topic specific basis. Through our partnership with the George Institute for Global Health, a comprehensive evidence gap mapping exercise is underway to identify existing and potential strategic partnerships for SIRA to consider. SIRA recognises the need for suitable infrastructure to support these collaborations and seeks to provide opportunities for collaboration at all phases of the research process.

Question 4

How effective do you think a research community of practice would be? Please comment on what you see as the key benefits and key challenges of a research community of practice.

Another idea is to adopt a model of collaboration on a need and/or topic specific basis.

Question 5

How effective do you think a collaborative model would be? Please comment on what you see as the key benefits, and the key challenges, of a need and/or topic collaborative model?

3.3 Aligning research priorities

SIRA is committed to ensuring that its' decisions within the research context are transparent and consistent with the identified priorities aligned with SIRA's organisational goals and research objectives (as outlined in above section 2).

SIRA proposes to implement a collaborative approach to prioritising new research opportunities as they arise. Together with key stakeholders, we will determine the likely level of impact and prioritise the research opportunity in line with the needs of injured workers, the NSW community, industry bodies and the broader NSW government sector.

SIRA will ensure that the ongoing alignment of research priorities as well as the conduct of all research and translation activities follow the identified guiding principles to deliver an outcome driven, evidence based, human centred approach to research.

Question 6

How can SIRA effectively collaborate with stakeholders to prioritise new research opportunities as they arise?

Question 7

Apart from the guiding principles, are there any other factors that SIRA should consider when determining research priorities and if so, what are they?

3.4 Co-designing research with customers and key stakeholders

SIRA is committed to actively engaging with stakeholders to deliver end-to-end research using co-design methodology.

SIRA will actively seek stakeholder participation to design and develop knowledge that is better aligned with scheme outcomes and user needs. This includes but not limited to bringing people with lived experience to guide the personal injury research agenda and share insights into how services can best help users. It is hoped this participatory process will strengthen engagement with key stakeholders across the NSW personal injury schemes.

Question 8

How might SIRA best involve people with lived experience in designing, translating and evaluating research?

3.5 Generating knowledge

Generating knowledge builds upon conceptual understandings of research, whereby knowledge is created through theories, critical thinking, synthesising previous research, and designing new concepts and methodologies.

Our research focuses on generating:

- engagement with our scheme
- enhancing transparency, and
- co-creating knowledge.

3.6 Translating knowledge

SIRA's current research program prioritises rigorous evidence and knowledge translation to ensure high quality research evidence is available to guide the care and recovery of injured workers and road users.

SIRA plays an active and lead role in ensuring research outputs are effectively translated and made available to scheme stakeholders.

SIRA works closely with strategic partners and stakeholders to develop and share a range of materials to meet information needs and preferences including:

- infographics
- digital training modules
- web pages
- webinars
- podcasts
- lunch and learns
- conference presentations.

In the future, SIRA proposes to strengthen its' research output by following a collaborative approach through all phases including:

- identification of research priorities
- partnering on knowledge synthesis, generation, translation, and evaluation
- shared responsibility for knowledge translation across the sector, and
- improved transparency of program activities.

3.7 Implementing knowledge

Implementing knowledge can occur through various mechanisms, led by either the researcher or decision maker. The goal is to ensure the research is easily accessible and disseminated to all relevant audiences through ongoing collaboration with stakeholders.

Question 9

How might SIRA strengthen the effectiveness of its knowledge implementation and translation activities?

3.8 Impact & Evaluation

SIRA acknowledges there is potential for significant impact arising from research activities/programs it invests in; and that sometimes these impacts have flow-on effects for the people of NSW. Effectively planning for research impact is a critical component of SIRA's research program.

Prior to the commencement of any research project, SIRA will apply the Logic Model of Impact (Figure 3) to ensure impact elements are identified and considered. We will develop a pathway to impact and embed strategies to measure those impacts by building a comprehensive plan for knowledge translation.

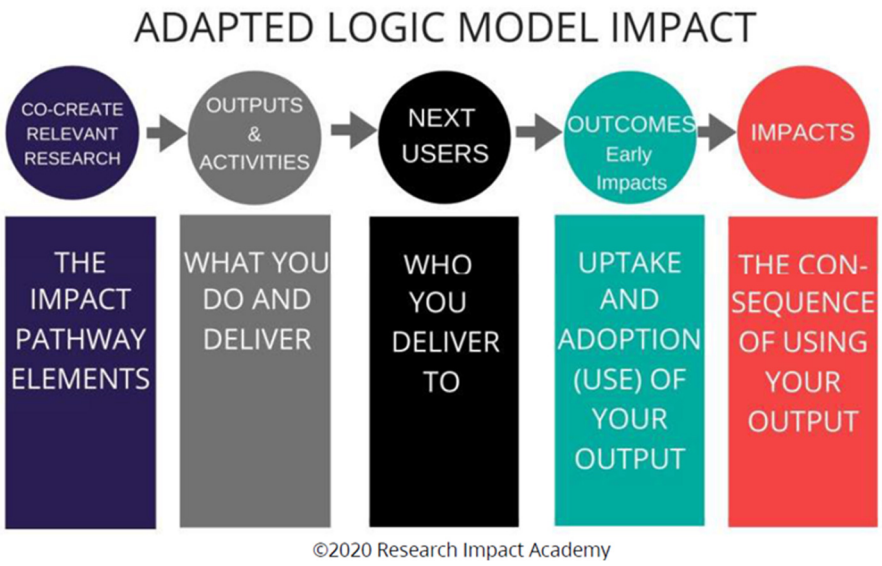

Figure 3

Identified impacts will be categorised under the following themes:

- knowledge
- health
- economic
- social
- environmental.

All research activities will undergo a robust evaluation. SIRA will employ inter-and transdisciplinary approaches and aims to determine whether the insights gained from research are translated into practical outcomes for the benefit of injured people.

At the conclusion of a research project, an evaluation of uptake and adoption of the outputs will be completed to capture early impacts. For research that may take multiple years to demonstrate sustainable effects on final beneficiaries, SIRA will apply a framework to ensure long-term impacts are appropriately tracked, captured, and communicated to stakeholders.

Question 10

Do you have suggestions to improve SIRA's proposed approach to planning for and responding to research impact?

Question 11

What evaluation tactics would be valuable in this context and why?

3.9 Success Measures

Four overarching success indicators will be used by SIRA to measure the impact of its research program.

Success measures	Impact areas	Alignment with SIRA organisational goals
Generate knowledge collaboratively to improve care, recovery and return to work outcomes for injured people	• Improved recovery and return to work outcomes for injured people in the schemes. • Stronger strategic partnerships linked to research priority areas. • Increased co-creation with scheme stakeholders. • Robust research governance process that facilitates timely and evidence-informed decision making.	• Optimal outcomes for injured people. • Positive customer experience. • Financially sustainable schemes. • Affordable premiums. • Public trust in SIRA and the schemes it regulates
Invest in research and translation activities to address current, novel and emerging challenges for the schemes	• Shared set of research priorities designed in collaboration with strategic partners and key stakeholders. • Increased strategic utilisation of claims data and creation of meaningful data linkages across the sector to identify current and emerging trends and research needs.	• Optimal outcomes for injured people • Financially sustainable schemes. • Public trust in SIRA and the schemes it regulates.
Collaborate to effectively deliver knowledge translation across the sector	• Key stakeholders across the sector skilled in the fundamentals of knowledge translation. • Increased utilisation of research outputs. • Increased evidence-informed decision making. • Improved collaboration among research funders, academics, insurers, employers, and public on translation activities.	• Optimal outcomes for injured people. • Positive customer experience. • Financially sustainable schemes. • Affordable premiums. • Public trust in SIRA and the schemes it regulates.
Apply new knowledge to existing and unique organisational insights within SIRA	• Formalised method of linking new knowledge with existing organisational insights and monitoring effectiveness.	• Positive customer experience. • Public trust in SIRA and the schemes it regulates

Figure 4.

Question 12

Do you think SIRA's proposed success measures can be improved, or are there are other success measures that should be included?

Question 13

How would you like to see each measure benchmarked?

4. Consultation questions

4.1 Have your say

1. Do you have any comments on SIRA's current research priorities? Can they be improved, and if so, how?
2. Do you have any comments on SIRA's proposed research objectives? Can they be improved, and if so, how?
3. Do you have any comments on SIRA's research guiding principles? Can they be improved, and if so, how?
4. How effective do you think a research community of practice would be? Please comment on what you see as the key benefits and key challenges of a research community of practice?
5. How effective do you think a collaborative model would be? Please comment on what you see as the key benefits, and the key challenges, of a need and/or topic collaborative model?
6. How can SIRA effectively collaborate with stakeholders to prioritise new research opportunities as they arise?
7. Apart from the guiding principles, are there any other factors that SIRA should consider when determining research priorities and if so, what are they?
8. How might SIRA best involve people with lived experience in designing, translating and evaluating research?
9. How might SIRA strengthen the effectiveness of its knowledge implementation and translation activities?
10. Do you have suggestions to improve SIRA's proposed approach to planning for and responding to research impact?
11. What evaluation tactics would be valuable in this context and why?
12. Do you think SIRA's proposed success measures can be improved, or are there are other success measures that should be included?
13. How would you like to see each measure benchmarked?

4.2 How to have your say

You can have your say about enhancing SIRA's research program by:

- submitting a formal response
- completing all or part of our online survey
- emailing us at siraresearch@sira.nsw.gov.au

The consultation period opens on 31 May and ends at 5pm on 9 July 2021.

For more information visit www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/sira-research

Disclaimer

This publication may contain information that relates to the regulation of workers compensation insurance, motor accident compulsory third party (CTP) insurance and home building compensation in NSW. It may include details of some of your obligations under the various schemes that the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) administers.

However to ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation as currently in force. Up to date legislation can be found at the NSW Legislation website legislation.nsw.gov.au

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals, or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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