

# Enhancing SIRA's Research Program

Public consultation summary

November  
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# 1. Background

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)].

The *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* [Ch 2, Part 2, 23 (1) (a)] 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" and "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 policies. 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.

SIRA invests in a range of research activities, educational campaigns and programs directly aligned to current and emerging scheme needs.

## 1.1. Purpose of the consultation

In May 2021, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) commenced a public consultation process.

The purpose of the consultation was to elicit feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, to inform how SIRA can best generate and facilitate strategic partnerships to deliver greater collaboration, co-design, and transparency across all facets of its research approach.

The consultation paper was published on the NSW Government *Have Your Say* online public consultation platform (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say>) on 31 May 2021. The platform offers various mechanisms through which can provide feedback on the issues raised. SIRA's consultation process utilised four engagement mechanisms:

- single question quick poll
- detailed survey
- traditional long form submission response
- email.

Stakeholders were invited to participate via a range of channels including direct email, the SIRA website, SIRA Bulletin and LinkedIn. The consultation process generated 77 quick poll responses, 80 survey responses and 10 traditional long form submission responses.

Long form submissions were provided by academic institutions, Insurance groups allied health peak bodies, not-for-profit organisations and individuals.

A high-level summary of the responses is provided below. Further feedback was provided in relation to matters outside the scope of this consultation. Feedback of that nature is being considered by SIRA but has not been outlined in this summary paper.

## **2. What we heard**

### **2.1. Research priorities**

There was broad agreement with the research priorities outlined in the consultation paper. The priority areas of return to work and mental health were queried by some respondents who felt further consideration of these matters in the policy context was needed before they could be endorsed as research priorities. Respondents also sought greater clarity of SIRA's specific research activities.

Respondents provided additional priority areas for SIRA's consideration. These included:

- Ongoing care
- Knowledge translation
- Impact evaluation
- Collaboration and co-design.

### **2.2. Research objectives**

There was strong agreement that the objectives align with addressing the current challenges and research needs, whilst also reviewing the evidence gaps.

Respondents indicated the need for the objectives to drive more direct engagement with injured people at all stages of the research process and linked this to improved transparency and participation.

Inclusivity was also a common theme, with a particular focus on improved engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders, indigenous stakeholders, and other populations with a high level of representation among the injured people in the personal injury schemes.

Respondents indicated that objectives could also potentially be categorised by burden of disease.

### **2.3. Guiding principles**

There was broad agreement among respondents that the guiding principles were appropriate.

Respondents indicated a need to more clearly define SIRA's 'customer'. Many felt that the term 'customer' was not appropriate in a health context given injured people don't choose to participate in the personal injury schemes. There was similar feedback about a general need to simplify the terms used in the principles.

Respondents also cautioned against applying a one-size fits all approach, particularly in the context of injury type and scheme. They noted the need to separate physical and psychological injury treatment and approaches and highlighted the differences between the workers compensation and compulsory third party schemes, particularly in the context of recovery and return to work. Respondents noted that these differences may, on the implementation of specific research.

### **2.4. Engaging key stakeholders and forming partnerships**

There was consensus among the respondents that SIRA needs to increase opportunities for participation in its research program.

The two proposed models outlined in the consultation paper were well received although respondents had varying views on which model would be most appropriate and would like more information about how the proposed models could be implemented. Planning and

governance processes were highlighted as a potential barrier to the implementation of the proposed models.

Further considerations were also provided to assist SIRA to build effective partnerships, these included:

- Utilisation of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation Framework and Toolkit
- Using internal data to engage specific scheme participants
- Generating more opportunities for co-design with people with lived experience.

Respondents indicated that recruitment via an expression of interest process would be most appropriate and reiterated the importance of inclusivity in this process.

## **2.5. Aligning research priorities**

Respondents reiterated the importance of involving people with lived experience in the setting of research priorities. Respondents agreed that those with lived experience are best placed to identify research areas of need and to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of individual research projects. Some respondents felt the views of people with lived experience should be prioritised, while a similar number of respondents felt that the input of people with lived experience should be considered equally with the input of all other key stakeholder groups.

In relation to setting research priorities, it was suggested there may be greater benefit in funding a smaller number of research projects through the discrete phases of knowledge generation, knowledge translation and knowledge implementation rather than funding research projects with an aim to deliver equity across each priority area.

## **2.6. Co-designing research with customers and key stakeholders**

There was broad agreement among respondents that opportunities for co-design with key stakeholders would be beneficial.

The implementation of a model of collaboration based on a need and/or topic specific basis was suggested as a mechanism to create efficiencies in resource utilisation.

Respondents indicated a variety of methods to involve stakeholders, particularly those with lived experience in all facets of SIRA's research program. This includes

- Online surveys
- Focus groups
- Case studies.

Respondents noted that ongoing two-way communication between SIRA and key stakeholders was imperative, as is the opportunity for continuous feedback throughout the process.

## **2.7. Translating and implementing knowledge**

Respondents noted some confusion in relation to the terms 'knowledge generation' and 'knowledge translation' used within the consultation paper. They highlighted the need for more simplified terms to better describe these activities.

SIRA proactively engaging stakeholders in the knowledge translation process is considered fundamental across all key stakeholder groups.

Respondents want more direct and regular communication of research outcomes and insights via a range of channels including:

- Conference presentations
- Email updates
- Flyers
- Text messaging
- Online training modules.

Respondents also indicated that stakeholders should have a mechanism to confirm their information delivery preferences.

Respondents would like to see specific knowledge translation and implementation projects funded discretely, to better facilitate engagement in these phases.

## **2.8. Success indicators**

There were four success indicators shared in the consultation paper, the below summarises respondent feedback to each indicator:

### **2.8.1. Generate knowledge collaboratively**

- Respondents expect knowledge collaboration to generate tangible results and impact for injured people and all stakeholders.
- The collaboration approach should include key performance indicators and outcome measures to assess its effectiveness.
- Clear and transparent identification of key stakeholders for collaboration is important to ensure the approach adds value for all stakeholders
- People with lived experience, including those with existing claims should be a focus for all collaboration activities.

### **2.8.2. Collaborate to effectively deliver knowledge**

- Respondents would like SIRA to better communicate the role it plays in generating evidence to support the recovery of injured people to ensure stakeholders understand how they can be involved in the process.
- Respondents would also like to see SIRA's research partners and other key stakeholders, including insurers, be more transparent about their involvement in research and provide injured people with further opportunities to be involved in the delivery of knowledge.

### **2.8.3. Invest in activities to address current, novel, and emerging challenges**

- Respondents agree with the need to be undertaking activities of this nature and encourage SIRA to utilise its existing data to inform decision making. It was noted this approach relies on the quality of the data available.
- There was also agreement among respondents for SIRA to share relevant data and suggestions in relation to current, novel, and emerging challenges with stakeholders on a routine basis to ensure validity. The method used to share this information with key stakeholders must be tailored to individual stakeholder groups to encourage ongoing involvement, particularly for stakeholders from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Many respondents noted that a community of practice model may be an effective option.

### **2.8.4. Apply new knowledge to existing and unique organisational insights within SIRA**

- Respondents would like SIRA to benchmark the application of knowledge in a transparent way that allows stakeholders to understand how knowledge is being used within the organisation and provided suggestions around specific metrics including the creation of data-driven guidance materials, the dissemination of educational materials, customer satisfaction and overall customer outcomes.

- Respondents noted successful examples in the private sector and suggested SIRA could apply these learnings in the regulatory context.

### **3. Next steps**

Further in-depth analysis of the consultation responses is continuing. The consultation responses will inform the development of a multi-year SIRA research strategy and implementation plan.

The strategy and implementation plan are currently under development. Further information will be provided in late 2021.

## **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](http://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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