

## **ISCRR Response to McKeon Review**

### **Terms of Reference 8 & 10**

This submission will provide a case study of the Institute of Safety Compensation and Recovery Research (ISCRR), an innovative, collaborative research model aimed at improving and increasing the translation of research into policy and practice within the personal injury prevention and compensation sector in Victoria. This case study will describe the establishment of ISCRR, the development and implementation of ISCRR's model for research translation and ISCRR's experience with 'what works' for research translation.

**ISCRR Position:** The Australian government should build capacity for the rapid translation of research outcomes into improved health policies and practices, through provision and support for the development of independent 'research translation' organisations and/or functions.

#### **The Development of ISCRR and a Model for Research Translation:**

**An example of building capacity for the rapid translation of research outcomes into improved health policies and practices the personal injury prevention and compensation sector in Victoria**

#### **The Establishment of ISCRR**

ISCRR is a partnership between WorkSafe Victoria, the Transport Accident Commission and Monash University. It was established in April 2009 with the mission to conduct research aligned to scheme issues and objectives that will lead to fewer and less severe occupational injuries and diseases and improved health, vocational and social outcomes.

The motivation for its establishment was the desire:

- By the two personal injury insurance schemes to have a research capacity more aligned to their needs, specifically by ensuring research questions were directly relevant to policy problems, and that research outputs were timely and actionable
- By the university to model collaborative research processes which had a significant focus on community impact, a future direction for academia, and a major focus of this university's corporate strategy.

Features of the collaborative research model are:

- Significant attention to setting the research agenda and translation of the research, as well as doing the research
- High priority given to stakeholder engagement. In fact the objective for stakeholder engagement is 'Maximise the potential impact of our research by optimising our engagement with stakeholders in setting the research agenda, conducting research and translating research into policy and practice'.

Level 11, 499 St Kilda Road  
Melbourne, Victoria  
Australia 3004

Phone +61 3 9097 0610

Fax +61 3 9097 0699

Email [info@iscrr.com.au](mailto:info@iscrr.com.au)

Web [www.iscrr.com.au](http://www.iscrr.com.au)

The corporate structure of ISCR is an innovative one developed by Monash University. In this model the research organisation is not an incorporated entity, rather it is a partnership, e.g. in ISCR's case between the two personal injury schemes and the university. The research organisation is administered through the university. By and large it follows the university policy and procedures. However the Vice Chancellor has devolved his responsibilities to the ISCR Board which is comprised of six representatives from the three partners and one independent representative. Therefore it is fairly easy to innovate beyond current university systems.

Funds have been provided for research in a five year contract, but research plans are approved by the two regulators and each project plan is approved by the ISCR Board, thus the regulators have significant control of the research which is undertaken, but as the organisation is administered by a university there is good quality control, e.g. via ethics committees, the university review process and the academic culture of peer review, and a significant degree of independence in the way the research is conducted and the publication and translation of the research.

### **ISCR's Research Translation Program**

One of the three key pillars of ISCR's Strategic Plan is to support the translation of research findings into policy and practice in WorkSafe and the TAC. Specifically, ISCR's Research to Action (RTA) program seeks to drive and support use of academic research evidence to inform decision making and practice regarding transport and workplace injury prevention and rehabilitation policy and program development.

### **Development of a Model for Research Translation**

A joint initiative of

ISCRR developed a Research to Action (RTA) Model to guide its research translation program and activity. The development of the RTA model was based on literature reviews of factors affecting use of evidence in health policy environments, processes of research and policy development, and a review of research translation models, plus feedback from Monash partners.

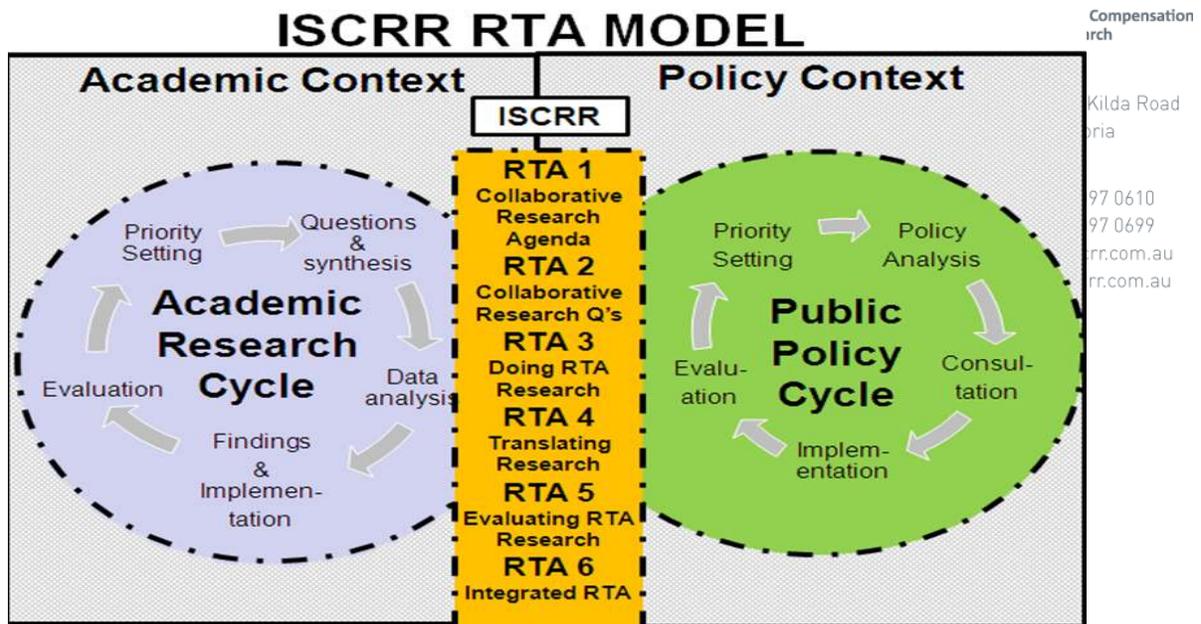
Level 11, 499 St Kilda Road  
Melbourne, Victoria  
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Phone +61 3 9097 0610  
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Web [www.iscrr.com.au](http://www.iscrr.com.au)

The key findings of the literature reviews were:

- The three key factors affecting use of evidence in health policy are research relevance, timeliness of research in relation to policy need, and accordance between researcher and policy maker goals, motivations, values and expectations.
- Enhanced interaction and collaboration between researchers and policy makers are key enablers to increasing policy maker use of evidence
- Existing research translation models and tools lack evidence of effectiveness.
- The research process and policy and project development processes have, or can be depicted as a cycle, with areas of overlap that provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration.
- Prospective, evaluative research is needed to test whether research translation models are effective.

This evidence formed the basis of the development of the RTA model to guide the production and translation of academic research. Please see below for a depiction of ISCRR's RTA Model.



The RTA model has been designed to increase and enhance interaction and collaboration between researchers and policy and project workers (the end users of research) throughout the research and policy cycles. Through increased interaction and collaboration between researchers and policy and practice workers at each interaction point, the research produced is likely to be more relevant, timely and actionable in the health policy and practice operating context.

**Implementing ISCRRs RTA Model**

ISCRR's Model for RTA identifies 6 critical points for interaction between the policy cycle and the research development cycle. In particular, Setting the Agenda, Collaborative Setting of the Research Questions and Translating Research are critical to achieving effective translation outcomes. Collaborative setting of the agenda and research questions ensures that the research is relevant to the end user. Actionable, clear, concise and timely translated research products ensure that research findings can be readily picked up and used in policy, program, project or practice decision making.

Implementation of the specific stages will now be described.

**RTA 1: Collaborative Research Agenda:** In 2011 ISCRR undertook an innovative, large scale, process for setting a Collaborative Research Agenda. The process, titled 'Futures of Safety, Compensation and Recovery: The Futures Research Initiative', provided the information needed

to set the ISCRR Research Strategy for a 5 year period, and is linked to the 5 year business strategies of WorkSafe and the TAC.

Level 11, 499 St Kilda Road  
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The Futures Initiative was a staged process that began with Horizon Scanning Project. This project identified 11 themes related to the future of safety, compensation and recovery. These 11 themes were then explored through 11 online blogs, driven by ‘Thought Leaders’ who each introduced and contributed to the online discussions around one of the 11 themes. Analysis of the information provided through these online discussions resulted in the identification of 9 themes related to the future of safety, compensation and recovery prevention and compensation, which were to be discussed at the final stage of the process, the Futures Workshop.

The Futures Workshop brought together the industry partners WorkSafe, the TAC, Monash University, other injury prevention and compensation regulators, safety, compensation and recovery stakeholders including relevant union and industry representative groups and professional practice groups. A presentation was made at the Workshop by a leading world expert in ‘futures’ thinking, and the Thought Leaders participated in panel discussion. A range of exercises, scenarios were undertaken, played out and discussed. This set the basis for discussion around ‘scoping research questions, where workshop participants voted on the priority of each question.

The five areas of research interest that should form the agenda for safety, compensation and recovery research, in order of priority, were: Intervention Research; Research on outcome indicators; social research; translation research; and systems capacity research. This information was then used by ISCRR and their partners to set the ISCRR Research Strategy which outlines the research areas that ISCRR research must be aligned with: Performance measurement; Efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory systems; Health and disability services delivery; Impact of social factors; Research to action.

To deliver RTA 2 – 6, from Collaborative Setting of Research Questions to Integrated RTA, the RTA Model is implemented and delivered through ISCRR’s Project Management Framework.

**RTA 2: Collaborative Setting of Research Questions:**

Development and refinement of the research questions should be a collaborative process between the researchers and the end users of the research in WorkSafe and TAC. An essential component of this stage is consideration and involvement of all possible end-users or interested parties within the business.

Collaborative development and refinement of research questions will ensure that that research is relevant and actionable for end users.

Level 11, 499 St Kilda Road  
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**RTA 3: Doing Research:** Determining the most appropriate methods for answering the research question and undertaking the research should be a consultative process, where researchers are sharing information about how they are doing the research and providing updates on any preliminary findings.

**RTA 4: Translating Research:** Researchers and the RTA team will develop and support products and process that communicate research findings in a relevant, actionable and timely manner. RTA products and processes that are tailored to the target audience can include plain language summaries of the research findings, presentations, workshops, meetings, tools, training, video, website publication, development of 'key messages' for media, etc.

**RTA 5: Evaluating RTA Research:** Evaluation of the process, impact or outcome of research projects should be a collaborative process between the researchers and the stakeholders of the research.

**RTA 6: Integrated RTA:** Interaction is weaved into all stages of the research and policy cycles. RTA 6 is the holistic version of the model, where the researchers and research users interact and collaborate throughout the entire RTA process. The researcher is placed within WorkSafe or TAC, or a WorkSafe or TAC policy or project worker may be placed in a research environment.

**What ISCR has learned about what works and what doesn't work in research translation**

Increasing interaction between researchers and policy workers, and developing translated research products that speak to the needs, issues, skills, knowledge and understanding of policy workers is a challenging task. ISCR have been learning through doing, through working through the daily challenges as they present themselves, and changing and tweaking our practice in

response as we learn. This has been necessary in a space where this is no 'right way' or best practice approach, we are forging ahead in a new field, informed and supported the existing evidence describing the barriers and enablers that we should be aware of, address and incorporate in our program of work.

Level 11, 499 St Kilda Road  
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#### Key challenges:

- Research development for translation into a specific policy context requires internal and academic staff with strong content knowledge and advanced facilitation and communication skills to operate and interact at a senior level within universities and the policy environment, which can be difficult to find.
- Identifying the 'right' end users of the research, those with the need, knowledge and authority to adopt research findings, within each policy organisation, is difficult and requires significant investments in relationship and network building, which can only develop over time and through strategic, concerted effort.
- Identifying and establishing Programs of Research through which interaction and collaboration can be effectively facilitated has taken considerable time.
- Guiding researchers to translate research findings, to communicate and present research findings in format and language that is relevant and actionable for policy makers, continues to pose a challenge; researchers are not trained to communicate their findings to policy audiences.

#### What works:

- Up front, early involvement of policy and project workers in the research planning process; particularly discussion and clarification of research needs, research questions and identification of potential end users of the research.
- Development of a project management system that is focused on and drives the adoption of research findings, not just the production of research and reporting of research findings.
- Development of a flexible realistic research Impact Assessment Framework that is meaningful to both the policy organisations and the university has been valuable in articulating and demonstrating the benefits of investment in research translation efforts.
- Development of tools and templates that support and inform the communication and presentation of research findings so that is it actionable, relevant and timely for

researchers; in particular one page summaries have proven to be useful and in demand by policy and project workers.

- Continued, considered, discussion and relationship and network building between ISCRR, researchers and WorkSafe and the TAC policy and project workers.

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### **Formal Evaluation of ISCRR's RTA Model**

An evaluation of the RTA model is planned to determine how effective the RTA Model has been in increasing use of academic research evidence in WorkSafe and TAC policy and practice. The evaluation has two key purposes. Firstly, it will provide critical information for ISCRR and its partners which can be used to evolve the model and its implementation process to enhance improvements over time. It will also contribute to the existing gap in the evidence base around the effectiveness of models designed to increase evidence informed decision making in health policy and practice environments.

To evaluate the model ISCRR will conduct a prospective study, including using quantitative survey data to assess changes in policy worker and academics attitudes, values and behaviour (i.e. actual use) regarding use of evidence following the implementation of the RTA model (the intervention).

### **Summary**

The development of ISCRR and its model for research translation provides an example of how capacity for research translation can be built to support evidence informed decision making in health policy and practice that can lead to better health policy and better health outcomes for the Australian community. As research translation is a relatively new field, presently it requires significant investments in funds and time to build the knowledge, skills and tools required to increase evidence informed health policy and practice decision making that can lead to improved health outcomes in the community.

Institutes such as ISCRR provide a critical foundation for the development of the knowledge, skills and tools required to achieve an increase in evidence informed health policy and practice development. These early, evidence based efforts to drive increases in use of evidence in health

policy environments also require significant testing and evaluation to ensure that improvements are gained and maintained.

The Australian government has the opportunity to invest in and support the development of research translation organisations, which have the ability to drive significant improvements in the quality of health policy and practice development, implementation and evaluation. Such investment and support will ensure that future health policy development will be more likely to achieve the intended outcomes of health policy, which can drive critical improvements in health outcomes for the Australian community.

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Phone +61 3 9097 0610  
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Web [www.iscrr.com.au](http://www.iscrr.com.au)

Authors:

- Pauline Zardo, Research Translation Officer, ISCRR
- Prof. Niki Ellis, Chief Executive Officer, ISCRR
- Dr. Alex Collie, Chief Research Officer, ISCRR