

Call for Expressions of Interest

23 October 2017

1. THE CHALLENGE

Disasters such as storm, flood, fire, cyclone, earthquake and tsunami expose human, infrastructure and institutional vulnerabilities, and subject the Australian community to considerable impact and loss. Such events make headlines when they cause injury, death and widespread damage. However, their full impacts often remain poorly quantified, but will be felt through long-term consequences for individuals, communities, infrastructure, the landscape and the economy.

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC has established a Tactical Research Fund to provide a source of funding for short-term, end-user focused projects, addressing strategic issues for the sector and having national significance supporting the development of a more disaster resilient Australia.

2. ABOUT THE CRC

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre was established on 1 July 2013. The CRC is a partnership involving federal and state governments, emergency management and services agencies, non-government organisations the private sector and research institutions. Approximately 20 universities and 30 government bodies are formal partners in the CRC. Detailed information regarding the CRC may be found at www.bnhcrc.com.au.

3. DEVELOPING THE CRC TACTICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

Recently, a call for proposals went out to end-user partners of the CRC seeking proposals for application of the Tactical Research Fund.

Following the completion of that process, the CRC is seeking expressions of interest from research providers to undertake projects in the following areas:

-) A Strategic Analysis of Risks Associated with Non-Complying Building Products

This call for expressions of interest seeks research providers to address these areas. The detailed project statement is provided in Appendix 1. The areas will be addressed in two stages.

Stage 1 – to be completed by 17 December 2017

Stage 1 encompasses the production of high level capability statements in accordance with the format prescribed in Attachment 2.

Expressions of interest will be reviewed and those selected to go forward for further refinement will be notified by 12 January 2018.

Interested research participants will work with end-user representatives during January and February 2018 to further develop and refine plans to address the identified areas. During this time, there will be opportunity to clarify and fine-tune the problems under examination and shape the research to be completed.

Proposals are to be submitted via email to office@bnhrc.com.au
no later than 11.59pm (AEDT) **Sunday 17 December 2017**
Proposals must be submitted in the format specified in Appendix 2

Stage 2 – to be completed by 5 February 2018

The final project plans will be further developed from the work undertaken in Stage 1. There will be a requirement for all participants to produce detailed project plans and budgets for the full term of the CRC.

4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Those interested in submitting an expression of interest are encouraged to read these guidelines and follow the processes outlined. Stage 1 of the process encompasses the following:

1. Call for Expressions of Interest – submissions due **17 December 2017**
2. Proposals evaluated and successful applicants notified – **12 January 2018**

Successful applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to progress to Stage 2 and participate in a workshop with end-users to refine the project plans.

1. End-user and researcher workshop – **January/February 2018**
2. Project plans finalised – **26 January 2018.**
3. Contracting completed and commencement – **12 February 2018.**

Who can apply? Australian research institutions or consortia of institutions are able to make a submission to the CRC for consideration. However, CRC guidelines only allow the funding of direct costs to non-Australian organisations.

How and when to apply? Expressions of interest must be lodged via email and submitted no later than 11:59pm (AEDT) **Sunday 17 December 2017**, in the format as specified using the template guide as included as **Attachment 2**.

Email: office@bnhrc.com.au

Acknowledgement: All proposals received will be deemed “Commercial-in-Confidence” and treated as such by the CRC. Applicants will be provided with an acknowledgement of receipt of their submission within two business days.

What support is available?

The CRC will be monitoring the office@bnhrc.com.au email address to respond to any questions or clarifications as required. If you require further information or wish to discuss this Call for Expressions of Interest further, please contact us via email at office@bnhrc.com.au with your query, and include phone / email contact details.

5. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation panel. The criteria by which expressions of interest are judged are:

Criterion	Comment	% Weighting
Research experience, Expertise and international leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) A demonstrated and recent track record of industry aligned research including, delivery, quality, partnerships and collaboration.) Demonstrated professional standing, background and experience, including national and international journal publication, invitations to present and collaborate. 	40
Project scoping: applicants are required to describe a potential research project for funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) The clarity and conciseness of the approach to addressing the project area, demonstrating a sound understanding of the stated problems, the impact and benefit to be potentially derived from the research.) Demonstration of relevant expertise.) Realistic budget and project plan. 	40
Institutional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Ability to leverage extra funds, physical, in-kind, % staff commitment equivalent to at least the cash funding sought to support the project.) For estimation purposes, Project Leaders/key Researchers are valued at \$280,000 p.a., Researchers at \$220,000 p.a. and Technical Support Staff at \$180,000 p.a. per FTE. CRC funded post-doctoral fellows can be counted as \$70,000 p.a. as an institutional in-kind contribution covering facilities, equipment and administration. 	10
Research to utilisation experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Track record in building capacity, partnering with industry / government, and supporting research utilisation. 	10
Institutional endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) All expressions of interest must indicate that the proposal, including budget, has been reviewed and approved by the research provider's institutional Research Office or equivalent. 	Mandatory

Proposals that do not meet the criteria specified will not be funded regardless of whether funds are available.

The evaluation process will be concluded by **12 January 2018** with successful applicants notified shortly thereafter.

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC reserves the right to not award all available funding if insufficient proposals of appropriate quality, end user support or alignment to priority areas are received. The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC reserves the right to sole source proposals from selected research providers.

Appendix 1: project areas

A Strategic Analysis of Risks Associated with Non-Complying Building Products

Aim: The primary aim of this project is to develop a deeper understanding of the risks to occupants and emergency responders when buildings are identified as non-compliant with regulations and to identify what strategies can be implemented to reduce the risk.

The secondary aim or foundational work for possible further research is to understand why people take the risks they do when confronted by a major fire event.

This research will seek to identify the risks to occupants and emergency responders and ascertain best practice examples for reducing the identified risks. This will be achieved through a review of fire events domestically and internationally that significantly involve external building products and insulation materials.

Previous research has included structural and product analysis for non-compliance with national or local regulations. However, with the increasing risks associated with higher density population, fire agencies are concerned not only for the occupants but also the firefighters and other emergency service personnel responding to fires that are consequently behaving in an unpredictable manner.

This research will inform future best practice approaches both for fire engineers and operational staff.

Background: Australian fire authorities have an expectation that new buildings are constructed in accordance with the National Construction Code and developers, architects, builders, building surveyors, fire engineers, and others involved, all check and certify that construction meets the required standards. These processes are also in place to protect the health and safety of building occupants and firefighters who may be required to enter burning buildings and search for occupants during fire events.

It is the firefighters who must confront risks and try to assist scared, vulnerable, elderly, and disabled residents. It is the senior officers who must make decisions about whether the risk at a fire is so great that firefighters must be withdrawn to protect their own safety, with residents consequently unable to be assisted as they otherwise would.

Approach: This project is envisaged as comprising of two stages.

Please Be Advised

Applications that propose to deliver on only one of the following stages may still be considered for funding. Please provide details of costings for the proposed stage/s.

Stage 1:

An environmental scan of domestic and international fire events involving external façade/insulation building products. This scan is to identify events, injuries, casualties, structural damage and any unusual observations.

Key questions for this stage of the project are:

-) What events have occurred?
-) What are the risks to occupants?
-) What are the risks to emergency responders?
-) What are the commonalities of events resulting in no injuries or casualties?

Appendix 1: project areas

-) What are the commonalities in events resulting in injuries and casualties?
-) Do key elements of building codes e.g. sprinklers, sprinklers on balconies and multiple escape routes make a significant injury to the injury/casualty rate?
-) What are the main types of façade or insulation materials involved?
-) What issues were identified?
-) What follow up action was taken?

Expected Deliverables for this stage:

-) A database containing all the fire events investigated and the various characteristics that were categorised
-) A research report documenting each aspect of the research and database

Stage 2:

A deeper analysis of identified fire events involving building products to highlight good and bad practices by architects, builders, emergency services, building regulators and governments.

Key questions at this stage of the project are:

- Have inquiries/hearings uncovered how the building products ended up being on the building?
- How have jurisdictions internationally dealt with the issue of non-conforming building products?
- What are the implications for fire services seeking to mitigate risks with limited resources?
- How are governments approaching buildings identified with combustible façade and insulation materials that are remaining occupied?

Expected Deliverables for this stage:

-) A shorter report or a series of short reports accessible to a non-research audience to facilitate evidence based policy development.
-) Recommendations for the AFAC Built Environment Technical Group (BETG) to facilitate the development of best practice guidance for fire and emergency services related to manage risks associated with non-conforming building products.
-) A research report documenting all stages of the research

Appendix 2: application form

FORMAT OF PROPOSALS – TEMPLATE GUIDE (create your own document from this guide)

Responses to this Call for Expressions of Interest should use the following table as a template guide. All proposals should be submitted in MS Word (preferred) or PDF.

Project Title:
Lead researcher (<i>contact details, key areas of expertise and qualifications</i>)
Research team (<i>including institutions and key areas of expertise and qualifications</i>)
Research objectives
Research experience and expertise (maximum one page – including information above) <ul style="list-style-type: none">) A demonstrated and recent track record of industry aligned research including delivery, quality, partnerships and collaboration.) Demonstrated professional standing, background and experience, including national and international journal publication, invitations to present and collaborate.) Demonstration of expertise relevant to the project area.
Project scoping (maximum two pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none">) The clarity and conciseness of the approach to addressing the identified issue, demonstrating a sound understanding of the stated problems, the impact and benefit to be potentially derived from the project.) Realistic budget and project plan.
Institutional support (maximum 0.5 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none">) Ability to leverage extra funds, physical, in-kind, % staff commitment equivalent to at least the cash funding sought to support the project.) For estimation purposes, Project Leaders/Key Researchers are valued at \$280,000 p.a., Researchers at \$220,000 p.a. and Technical Support Staff at \$180,000 p.a. per FTE. CRC funded post-doctoral fellows can be counted as \$70,000 p.a. as an institutional in-kind contribution covering facilities, equipment and administration.
Research to utilisation experience (Maximum 0.5 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none">) Track record in building capacity, partnering with industry / government, and supporting research utilisation.
Biographies of key research team members <i>of no more than one page each.</i>

NOTE: Project proposals longer than five pages, excluding biographies, will not be reviewed.

Submission to be emailed to:

office@bnhrc.com.au no later than **11:59pm (AEDT) Sunday 17 December 2017**