



Ms Elizabeth Hart  
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Dear Ms Hart

Thank you for your recent correspondence to Professor Ian Olver AM, Chair, Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC) [19 March 2014 and 12 April 2014] and Professor Warwick Anderson AM, Chief Executive Officer, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [15 April 2014], regarding your concerns over the Australian Government's Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) vaccination program and the transparent disclosure of interest by members of AHEC as well as other Commonwealth advisory committees. I am responding on behalf of both Professors Olver and Anderson.

AHEC discussed your correspondence at its recent meeting on 7 May 2014. The issues you have raised in relation to the dose requirements for the MMR vaccination raise matters of both a scientific/technical nature as well as procedural matters relating to the current process. Before providing you with a considered response, AHEC wishes to seek further information from the relevant government agencies responsible for Australia's immunisation policy and its implementation.

With regard to the transparent disclosure of interest by members of NHMRC Principle Committees, I wish to assure you that all potential members of NHMRC Principle Committees, and any NHMRC working committees, are required to declare all relevant interests in line with NHMRC's policy [Guideline Development and Conflicts of Interest: Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest of Prospective Members and Members of NHMRC Committees and Working Groups Developing Guidelines](#) before their appointment as members.

This policy aims to ensure:

- transparency in the disclosure of any interests
- appropriate management of these interests
- balance and diversity of expertise and perspectives
- a balance between the benefit of having persons with expertise and the risks of their interests biasing a process
- the committee is chaired by someone who has no conflicts of interest that could, or could be perceived to, erode the integrity of the recommendations
- the integrity of the committee.

In your email to Professor Anderson you raised that the declared interests of AHEC members are not publically available on the NHMRC website. Thank you for drawing this to our attention. The Office is in the process of rectifying this omission and you will be notified once these declarations are available. I will write to you again once AHEC has provided its final advise on the issues you raised.

Yours sincerely,



Samantha Robertson

Executive Director

Research Translation Group – Portfolio 1

20 May 2014