



RESEARCH GOVERNANCE UNIT
St. Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne)
Caritas Christi Hospice
St. George's Health Service
Prague House

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Statement of Intent and Outcomes

The St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is committed to fulfilling the governing principles of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (2013), by ensuring that the committee is constituted and functions in accordance with the Code.

Definitions

Nil

Procedure

Institutions must ensure that membership of the AEC comprises at least one person from each of four categories of membership:

- **Category A:** a person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the institution's activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge.
- **Category B:** a suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the institution and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience.
- **Category C:** a person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution, and who is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, the person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and nomination by, such an organisation.
- **Category D:** a person not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their under-graduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other Category.

Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of the AEC membership.

Each member is responsible for deciding whether, in their own judgement, an application or other matter under consideration by the AEC is ethically acceptable and meets the requirements of the Code. To fulfil this responsibility, members should be familiar with the Code and other policies and guidelines relevant to the business of the AEC and provide opinions on the ethical acceptability of applications and other matters under consideration by the AEC.

Institutions must appoint a chairperson of the AEC. Institutions should consider appointing a chairperson who holds a senior position in the institution. If the chairperson is an external appointee, institutions must provide the chairperson with the necessary support and authority to carry out the role. The chairperson must be appointed in addition to Category A to D members. The chairperson is responsible for impartially guiding the operation of the AEC, resolving conflicts of interest related to the business of the AEC, and representing the AEC in any negotiations with the institution's management.

In addition the AEC should include a person responsible for the routine care of animals within the institution and also additional members with skills and background of value to the AEC.

In the event additional expertise is required, the AEC may invite people with specific expertise to provide advice as required. This will be determined by the AEC and Chair.

To ensure all members are aware of their obligations, including the acceptance of the Terms of Reference, requirement to declare conflicts of interest, and the requirement to maintain confidentiality, a formal declaration must be signed by all members (termed the "Members Agreement") on an annual basis (when the Terms of Reference are reviewed and updated). Signed agreements will be kept within the AEC membership folder.

If an AEC member is listed as an investigator on a project under review, the member will not be involved in the review/approval process as per the SOP 4.8 Conflicts of Interest.

Associated Procedures/Instructions

4.8 – Conflicts of Interest

Reference Documents

- Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013)
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)

Authorized by:



Dr Megan Robertson
Director of Research

Author: Research Governance Unit	
Date Issued: 2011	Next Review: 2022
Date Revised: 2016, 2019	Filepath: