



**ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL**  
MELBOURNE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

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

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## COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE

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### 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 an efficient and effective process for the review and approval of AEC submissions.

### Definitions

**Consensus:** the outcome of a decision-making process whereby the legitimate concerns of members of the animal ethics committee are addressed and, as a result, all members accept the final decision, even though it may not be an individual's preferred option.

### Procedure

The AEC must provide competent, fair, consistent and timely review of applications and reports related to the care and use of animals. The AEC must make a judgement on whether the proposed use, or continued use, of animals is ethically acceptable. This judgement must be based on information provided by the applicant that demonstrates the application of the principles outlined in Section 1 of the Code and balance whether the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved is justified by the potential benefits. The AEC may approve only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code. Decisions should be based on a thorough, fair and inclusive process of discussion and deliberation by AEC members at a quorate meeting, and should be made only by those present throughout the discussion and be made on the basis of consensus.

Once a decision has been agreed to approve a project or amendment subject to clarifications (conditional approval), a decision must also be made as to whether the response should be considered at the next meeting, or whether authority is delegated to Spokespersons or Committee Executive for out of session review.

A Committee Executive must include the chairperson (unless a conflict of interest is declared), and at least one member from Category C or D, and may also include a Category A or B member. The Committee Executive retains the right to request clarification or additional information, or defer consideration to the full AEC as required. Out of session Executive decisions will be ratified at the next scheduled quorate meeting.

The Committee Executive is also delegated to approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities, for ratification at the next AEC meeting. A minor change is an amendment which does not raise any ethical issues, or where the proposed change is not

likely to cause harm to the animals, including pain and distress. For example, different strain of animals, substitution or addition of agents or a change in procedure/technique provided it doesn't increase impact. Committee Executive may also approve Changes to Research Team to approved projects or activities and Project Time Extensions.

All submissions to be reviewed Committee Executive must be distributed in writing (i.e. via email or hard copy). A written account of the review and decision making process must also be submitted to the AEC Secretary by each reviewer, and kept on file.

All decisions made by the Committee Executive must be ratified by the AEC at the next quorate meeting.

**Associated Procedures/Instructions**

- 2.1 – New Project Applications
- 2.2 – Project Amendments
- 2.3 – Changes to Research Team
- 2.4 – Project Time Extensions
- 4.6 – Delegation of Authority
- 4.7 – Making and Communicating Decisions
- 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

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<b>Date Issued:</b> 2011	<b>Next Review:</b> 2022
<b>Date Revised:</b> 2016, 2019	<b>Filepath:</b>