

Date of Revision:	23 December 2010
Review Date:	December 2011
Authorised by:	Alfred Health Chief Executive

ALFRED HOSPITAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Statement of Purpose:

The Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee shall carry out the functions of an institutional ethics committee consistent with those set out in the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and subsequent revisions and provide a forum for consideration of general ethical issues.

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee shall:

- 1.1 consider the ethical implications of all proposed research projects involving human participants and to determine whether or not they are acceptable on ethical grounds;
- 1.2 provide for surveillance of research projects until completion so that the Committee may be satisfied that they continue to conform with approved ethical standards;
- 1.3 maintain a record of all research protocols received and reviewed, as stipulated by the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and subsequent revisions;
- 1.4 preserve the protocols of research proposals in the form in which they are approved;
- 1.5 provide an appropriate forum for the consideration of ethical issues within the hospital;
- 1.6 consider any matter referred to it by the Hospital Executive.

Other committees, sub-committees and individuals may assist the Committee by providing advice, recommendations and decisions.

2. Composition and membership

- 2.1 The Chief Executive shall appoint members of the Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee for a 12 month period. Renewal of appointment is at the discretion of the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 Each year the Chief Executive shall appoint a Chair of the Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee.

2.3 In accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the Committee shall comprise:

- A Chairperson
- At least two members who are lay people one man, one woman, who have no affiliation with Alfred Health are not currently involved in medical, or legal work
- At least two members with current research experience, that is relevant to the type of research to be considered at the meetings they attend
- At least one member with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people, a nurse or allied health professional
- At least one member who performs a pastoral care role in a community, eg a Minister of Religion, Aboriginal elder
- At least one member who is a lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the institution
- Where possible one or more of the members should be experienced in reflecting on and analysing ethical decision-making
- A nursing representative.

In Attendance

- the Ethics Manager and Ethics Officers

2.4 Changes in these terms of reference shall be reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive

3. Meetings

3.1 The Committee will meet at least 11 times each year.

3.2 By invitation of the Chair, others may attend for all or part of one or more meetings of the Committee as a resource, in an advisory capacity, or as an observer (by prior arrangement).

3.3 A majority of Committee members present shall constitute a quorum.

4. Remuneration

4.1 Provide a sitting fee for eligible members.

5. Accountability of the Ethics Committee

5.1 The Ethics Committee is accountable to the Alfred Health Chief Executive in the conduct of its business.

5.1.1 The Ethics Committee's performance is reviewed at least annually and the results reported to the Chief Executive. Statistical records of performance will be maintained.

5.3 The Ethics Committee shall provide reports to the Alfred Health Board annually.

5.4 The Ethics Committee shall provide reports every two months to the AMREP Council.

5.5 The Ethics Committee may from time to time bring to the attention of the Chief Executive issues of significant concern.

5.6 The Ethics Committee will provide external reports annually:

- to the Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC) in accordance with the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council
- to the Victorian Health Services Commissioner in accordance with the requirements of the Health Records Act 2001 (VIC).

6. Resignation

Members are deemed to have resigned from the Committee when they no longer hold the position on which their membership is based.

7. Committee Procedures

- An agenda that includes appropriate documentation to inform the Committee and support decision making will be circulated before each meeting to ensure that members have time to consider the contents and raise questions they may have before the meeting date.
- Minutes of each meeting will be prepared, circulated and retained as the complete and formal record of each meeting of the Committee. The minutes of each meeting will be confirmed or amended and confirmed at the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.
- The absence of a quorum shall not invalidate the proceedings of a meeting.
- Decisions of a meeting without a quorum must be ratified at the next meeting with a quorum unless an out-of-session ratification process has been agreed to by the Ethics Committee in advance.

8. Relationship to other processes of research review

To assist the Ethics Committee in its work, the following sub-committees and delegates of the Ethics Committee may provide advice, recommendations and/or decisions:

1. Research Review Committee
2. Low Risk Sub-Committee
3. Expedited Review and Cross Approvals
4. Discarded Tissue Officer
5. Innovations Committee
6. General Ethical Issues Sub-Committee

The Ethics Committee (through the Ethics Secretariat) shall establish procedures for the workings of these sub-committees and delegates, and submit their Terms of Reference to the Ethics Committee for approval.

9. Relationship to non-affiliated researchers

Non-affiliated researchers must include at least one senior Alfred Health member of staff, from the appropriate discipline, on the research team. This person shall assume responsibility for the conduct of the research at Alfred Health sites. Alfred Health will establish a Memorandum of Understanding with non-affiliated researchers or their institutions for the governance aspects of the research.

Last reviewed December 2010