

BELLBERRY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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BACKGROUND

Bellberry Limited is a private not-for-profit company which developed following the recognition of a need for a Human Research Ethics Committee to service the private sector. Bellberry Limited manages the Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees.

Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees review and where appropriate approve and monitor human research projects.

Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees are registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The Committees are constituted under the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) incorporating all updates and are professionally managed.

Any funds surplus to operational costs are directed back to the Australian health research community.

PURPOSE

Outlines the purpose of the Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees.

1. OBJECTIVES

- To provide independent, competent and timely review and monitoring of research projects.
- To ensure that all research projects are reviewed in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) incorporating all updates (National Statement).
- To protect the welfare, dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all participants in research projects it reviews.

2. FUNCTION

- To assess proposals submitted to the Committees and to decide whether they meet the requirements of the National Statement.

3. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees are part of an independent, private not-for-profit organisation which reviews research proposals.
- Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committees are unaffiliated and non-institutional based and accept human research proposals from any interested institutions or researchers.
- Bellberry makes a determination on a case by case basis whether our HRECs will review particular studies based on our current expertise.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE BELLBERRY HREC

- The Bellberry HRECs are accountable to the Chief Executive (and Directors of Bellberry Limited).
- Reports are be provided to the NHRMC as required.
- Terms of Reference, Policies and Standard Operating Procedures are publicly available at www.bellberry.com.au.
- Bellberry has written policies and procedures designed to ensure all research approved meets national standards.
- Bellberry strives for continuous improvement to meet the changing needs of the research environment and is open to sponsor, investigator and participant queries or concerns.
- Minutes of HREC meetings are regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive.
- Operations Manager and Committee Manager regularly attend HREC meetings and provide reports to the Chief Executive.
- The Chief Executive attends HREC meetings on an ad hoc basis.
- The HRECs may bring issues of significant concern to the Chief Executive.
- The Chief Executive provides regular reports to the Board.

5. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

The minimum membership of the Research and Ethics committees is a minimum of eight members, with equal numbers of men and women as far as possible, in accordance with the National Statement Section 5.1.29 & 5.1.30, appointed by Bellberry Limited, comprising of:

- a) a chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement;
- b) at least two lay people, one man and one woman who have no affiliation with Bellberry and are not currently engaged in medical, scientific, legal or academic work;
- c) at least one member with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people; for example, a nurse or allied health professional;
- d) at least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community, for example, an Aboriginal elder, a minister of religion;
- e) at least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise Bellberry; and;
- f) at least two people with current research experience that is relevant to research proposals to be considered at the meetings they attend. These two members may be selected, according to need, from an established pool of inducted members with relevant expertise.

Bellberry HREC maintains a core group of members who are appointed as individuals for their knowledge, qualities and experience, and not as representatives of any organisation, group or opinion per the National Statement Section 5.1.35.

For NHMRC certified HRECs, at least half of the members appointed in the minimum membership categories, listed above, must have two or more years of HREC membership experience.

6. MEMBER REMUNERATION

Bellberry HREC Members are remunerated.

REFERENCES

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) incorporating all updates.
- NHMRC Certification Handbook National Certification Scheme of Institutional Processes related to the Ethical Review of Multi-centre Research
- Bellberry Ltd Constitution August, 2004.