

## **ACT HEALTH HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)**

### **Low Risk Sub-Committee**

#### **Terms of Reference – June 2014**

The role of the Low Risk Sub-Committee (LRSC) is, with delegation from the ACT Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), to consider and approve or otherwise research proposals which the LRSC considers are consistent with the National Statement description of low risk, namely, proposals for research in which the only foreseeable risk to participants is one of discomfort.

Proposals considered by the LRSC and determined to be inconsistent with the National Statement definition of low risk are referred to the HREC. The decisions of the LRSC are final as decisions of the HREC and are reported to the next available HREC meeting in the form of minutes.

The LRSC is considered to be an appropriately constituted ethics committee for the purposes of approving waiver of consent requests that are included in a low risk proposal.

#### **Terms of Reference**

##### **Objectives**

The Sub Committee shall review and consider all proposals received by it:

- To determine the proposal is low risk. If it is not the proposal will be referred to the HREC. Proposals which involve contact with vulnerable groups are not considered to be low risk.
- Where the LRSC refers a proposal to the HREC, the Sub-Committee may provide advice to the HREC in relation to the ethical acceptability of the proposal.
- Where the proposal is suitable for consideration by the LRSC, the Sub-Committee will determine the ethical acceptability of the proposal and any conditions or further actions required in relation to the ethical approval of the proposal.
- The Sub-Committee will assess each proposal against the National Statement criteria

The terms of reference shall be reviewed periodically to ensure their ongoing relevance.

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<i>HREG001-14</i>		<i>1.0</i>	<i>Jun 14</i>	<i>Jun 16</i>	<i>HREG</i>	<i>June 2014</i>

## **Membership**

LRSC shall consist of:

- The Chair of HREC; the acting Chair of HREC; or a member of HREC appointed by the Chair for a particular meeting
  - At least two members with HREC experience and relevant research knowledge and experience
  - Members will be appointed for a term not less than 6 months, (there will be one member with medical expertise and one with social research expertise (or their substitutes appointed for specific meetings))

Members of HREC are able to attend the LRSC meeting as observers at any time.

LRSC shall be provided with the appropriate level of administrative support.

LRSC may, from time to time, consult with a person or persons with specialist knowledge relating to a matter under discussion.

Membership (excepting the HREC Chair) is by appointment from the Director of Research who will consider the recommendations of the HREC Chair and give due consideration to the knowledge base of the membership and current research trends.

Members may serve successive terms at the discretion of the Director of Research and HREC Chair.

Members will complete conflict of interest declarations on an annual basis. A member who is not covered by a current COI declaration will not be permitted to attend meetings or act as a reviewer.

## **Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of at least two members, with one of them having medical research expertise.

No decision shall be taken where a quorum is not present.

Meetings may be held face to face or by teleconference.

Where the Secretary of the Committee believes that a forthcoming meeting may not achieve quorum representation due to foreseen absences, he or she should consider the following options:

- Postpone/re-schedule the meeting or
- Cancel the meeting

## **Schedule of meetings and reporting**

LRSC will normally meet every two weeks except around the Christmas/New Year break. The Minutes of each meeting will be provided to the HREC.