

## HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

### Information for Applicants

#### General Information

The HREC (Tasmania) Network is a network of ethics committees that review health & medical and social science research proposals. It is constituted by joint agreement between the University of Tasmania and the Department of Health & Human Services.

There are two committees under the HREC (Tasmania) Network: the Tasmanian Health and Medical HREC and the Tasmanian Social Science HREC. The primary role of each HREC is to protect the welfare and the rights of participants in research. The primary responsibility of each member on these committees is to decide whether, in his or her opinion, the rights and welfare of the participants will be protected during the conduct of each research proposal submitted to the HREC.

#### Regulating Documents

There are two main documents regulating issues regarding ethical conduct in research:

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm>

Developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>

Developed jointly by the NHMRC, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia

#### Legislation

Legislation regarding the privacy of Commonwealth and private institutions also influences ethical conduct in research:

Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tasmania)

Privacy Act, 1988 (Commonwealth) – Information Privacy Principles

Section 95A of the Privacy Act 1988 – National Privacy Principles

#### Composition of Human Research Ethics Committees

The Tasmanian Health and Medical HREC and the Tasmanian Social Science HREC are established according to the guidelines set out in the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

The minimum membership of an HREC is eight. As far as possible:

- (a) there should be equal numbers of men and women;

- (b) at least one third of the members should be from outside the institution for which the HREC is reviewing research; and
- (a) there should be members from both the north and south of the State.

This minimum membership of an HREC consists of the following:

- (a) a chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under this National Statement;
- (b) at least two lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with the institution and do not currently engage in medical, scientific, legal or academic work;
- (c) at least one person 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 the institution; 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.

### **Current Vacancies**

The Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network is currently seeking expressions of interest from suitable applicants in:

- Category b Lay people (female)
- Category d Spiritual leader
- Category f Current researcher

The above positions are available on both the Tasmanian Health and Medical HREC and the Tasmanian Social Science HREC.

Please note:

- These are voluntary positions with some financial contribution for committee expenses;
- The appointed persons will be members in their own right, and will not represent any group or organization.
- All members must have email access for the purposes of the administration of the committees
- Members can be retired, semi-retired or working

### **Time commitment and Venue**

The Tasmanian Social Science HREC usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 1.30pm – 4.30pm.

The Tasmanian Health and Medical HREC usually meets on the last Monday of each month from 12pm – 3pm.

Both committees meet by video link up so members can attend from a site in Burnie, Launceston or Hobart.

In addition to the meeting times, preparation for each meeting requires reading time equivalent to 1 full day a month. On rare occasions, an extra meeting is called to deal with excess applications.

Once a year, an Annual Members Day is held to give members of both Tasmanian HREC committees a chance to meet and discuss policy and issues that affect all committees. This day is usually held during the week in

November/December and is a valuable opportunity to discuss issues that have arisen during the past year's business. Transport to this event is arranged from the University.

Each year there are conferences and seminars that are a valuable learning tool for members. Depending on the cost and the importance, some members can attend these events.

More information, including meeting dates, can be found at:

[http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human\\_ethics/medical.htm](http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human_ethics/medical.htm) (Health and Medical HREC)

[http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human\\_ethics/social\\_science.htm](http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human_ethics/social_science.htm) (Social Sciences HREC)

## **Expectations**

Members are expected to:

- Be familiar with, and base decisions regarding research applications on, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and other guidelines and legislation;
- Prepare for and attend monthly meetings of the review body from February to December;
- Accept and review the agendas for each meeting. Agendas are circulated approximately 10 days prior to each meeting.
- Attend the Annual Members Day

Where members cannot attend meetings, adequate notice is appreciated and if at all possible, members are expected to give comments on agendas to be considered at the monthly committee meeting.

## **Payment**

There is recognition that members incur costs in the form of petrol, parking etc. Committee members will be paid \$45 / meeting. Payments are made twice yearly.

## **Selection of Membership is undertaken by a Selection Committee.**

Due consideration is given to the composition of the Committees as well as the need for stability and the effective functioning of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network.

To apply, please complete the application form as directed. Application forms are available at:  
[http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human\\_ethics/news.htm](http://www.research.utas.edu.au/human_ethics/news.htm)

Applications must be received by COB on Friday 20 March 2009.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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