



*Professor Alan Pettigrew
Chief Executive Officer*

**UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL'S
CONSIDERATION OF ANIMAL-TO-HUMAN TRANSPLANTATION
(XENOTRANSPLANTATION) RESEARCH**

I am writing to provide you with an update on the consideration by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of whether or not animal-to-human transplantation research should proceed in Australia and, if so, under what regulatory framework.

Council considered the final report prepared by its Xenotransplantation Working Party at its recent session on 16-17 September. Council endorsed the Working Party's recommendation that there should be a five-year moratorium on any clinical research into animal-to-human **whole organ transplants** in Australia, and that **non-human primates** (eg baboons) should never be considered as source animals for any future clinical trials of animal-to-human transplantation.

Issues relating to **animal-to-animal** pre-clinical studies, (including a possible animal-to-animal register) were referred by Council to the NHMRC's Animal Welfare Committee for advice.

Council also requested additional information before considering issues surrounding **animal cellular therapies** and **animal external therapies**, which have a lower potential risk of infection and higher expected benefit to humans than animal organ transplants. Specifically, it sought input from State and Territory jurisdictions, as well as regulatory authorities such as the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator. The coordination of this task, and further action on animal-to-human transplantation, will be managed by the NHMRC's CEO Unit, which can be contacted on (02) 6289 9140, exec.sec@nhmrc.gov.au.

In addition, Council will further consider its role in promoting **human organ and tissue donation** in Australia.

A media release was issued by the NHMRC following Council's consideration of this issue, which is available from the NHMRC website at: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/media/index.htm>

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer

1 October 2004