

Communiqué from the Human Genetics Advisory Committee (HGAC) 1st Meeting – 16-17 February 2006

The Acting CEO of the NHMRC, Mr Bill Lawrence, welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the newest Principal Committee of the NHMRC and on behalf of the Council wished the HGAC well with its deliberations.

Members discussed the declaring of conflicts of interest and agreed that the HGAC should take a rigorous approach to such matters. To foster transparency in the HGAC's working, it was agreed to publish on the NHMRC website the Agenda and a Communique following each HGAC meeting.

Members agreed that the HGAC would make a submission to the Australian Health Ethics Committee on the review of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*.

Members discussed the Recommendations arising from *Essentially Yours* and *Genes and Ingenuity* and the Government's response to the former which will comprise one component of the work program for the HGAC.

Members also discussed recent correspondence from the ACCC regarding insurance issues. Members recommended that the current arrangements are continued and to monitor future developments.

The HGAC agreed to set up Working Groups covering the following areas:

- Industry and Commercialisation
- Communication and Education
- Health Delivery, Technical and Research
- Ethical, Legal and Social

Membership of the Working Groups would be drawn from the HGAC plus coopted expertise.

The 2nd HGAC meeting in April 2006 would combine a meeting of the Working Groups including coopted expertise.

Members agreed to form a Consultative Group to facilitate community and other interactions.

The 3rd HGAC meeting in June 2006 would include a meeting of various stakeholders to initiate community consultation.

Members discussed "horizon scanning" and how consideration of emerging issues would inform the Committee. It was determined that each of the above working groups would take responsibility for horizon scanning within the group's ambit.