

Introduction to ethics considerations

Ethics and ethical principles extend to all spheres of human activity, and apply to our dealings with each other, with animals and the environment. Australian activity in ethical review of human research began during the 1960s and was related closely to the federal funding of medical research. In 1966, the National Health and Medical Research Council, constituted in 1936, issued the *Statement on Human Experimentation* that expressly drew on the *Helsinki Declaration*.

By 1990, it was estimated that there were over 100 (what are now known as) Human Research Ethics Committees) throughout Australia and in 2005, there are more than 220.

The NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council), the ARC (Australian Research Council) and the AVCC (Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee) commenced a review of the previous National Statement in 2005. The review involved wide consultation with institutions and researchers in all disciplines and the community. In March 2007, after two rounds of public consultation, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* was released.

Further information on these matters can be obtained from: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-ethics/human-research-ethics-committees-hrecs/human-research-ethics-committees-hrecs/national>

VET researchers

VET researchers need to comply with the ethical policies and procedures of their institutions (especially if within universities) and with AVETRA's Ethical Guidelines. The following documents may be helpful.