



Australian Academy of Science submission to the public consultation on Section 3 (Chapters 3.1 & 3.5), Glossary and Revisions to Section 5 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007

The Australian Academy of Science supports the aims, goals and content of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council and Universities Australia. The Statement represents a foundation component of the ethics and integrity environment for Australian scientific research, along with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and the international *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity*.

The Academy considers that biomedical research is an inherently ethical, altruistic activity. While science in general is directed towards systematically gathering knowledge for the benefit of humanity, biomedical science specifically targets the health and wellbeing of humans—to alleviate suffering, disease and impairments that may potentially affect any human. It is important that all research be conducted at the highest ethical standard, something that is well understood in the research community. Research on humans, however, has the potential to adversely impact on the very people it is designed to aid, making ethical research practices all the more important, and matters of integrity all the more central. Indeed, with developments in precision medicine and associated extensive databases, considerations of ethical conduct can only become more important.

The Academy feels that the Statement captures both the highly ethical nature of research on humans and the high ethical standards required of research on humans. Moreover, the amendments largely achieve their aim of providing guidance in addressing key ethical issues in human research, and are presented in a manner that is appropriate for the target audience.

The Academy commends the NHMRC and UA on their joint commitment to the highest principles of ethics in scientific research.