



Research Ethics Monthly

Dear <<First Name>>.

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Kua hinga te tōtara i Te Waonui-a-Tāne, the tōtara tree has fallen in Tāne's great forest

It is with great sorrow that we note the passing of one of our consultants, Barry Smith.

Lindsey Te Ata o Tu MacDonald

Of Te Rarawa and Ngāti Kahu descent, Barry was an extraordinary man. A true kaumatua, his wit and wisdom on matters of indigenous health and indigenous research ethics is irreplaceable.

Showcasing the best of the leadership through humility, Barry was relied upon by committees to bring an appreciation of Maori - and research ethics more generally - to their work. More than that, because of his diplomacy and humanity he became the kamatua of the process that brought Māori ideas and ways of knowing to the research ethics sector in New Zealand. Just a small list of his appointments is indicative of the status accorded to him senior scientists, ethicists, and government officials and ministers; he was or had been a member (and often a chair) on all the national bodies that set ethical standards and/or reviewed the ethics of research in New Zealand.

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Why do we need Category D appointments on HRECs and how should we find suitable people?

Judith C S Redman

The compulsory presence of the Category D members on Australian Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) can be controversial. Category D used to be termed 'minister of religion' and most HRECs recruited ordained Christian ministers to fill these roles, although at least one of the Monash University HREC Category D members has been a rabbi (recruited by me). People question the need for a 'religious perspective' on HRECs, especially on those that regularly look at research concerning issues like abortion, contraception or euthanasia, or stem-cell research where 'the Church' is seen to have negative stances. I am a Uniting Church minister and a long-term university chaplain, which makes me a prime target for recruitment to the Category D position on university HRECs. I am currently in my 18th year as a Category D appointment, serving my fourth university. Clearly, it is something I find interesting and rewarding and I would like to offer some comments on the nature of the position.

First, referring to the category as 'minister of religion' is misleading, because the role is not to provide a religious perspective per se. 'Minister of religion' was included as a category (along with lay woman, lay man and member external to the institution) in the First Report by the NH&MRC Working Party On Ethics in Medical Research published in 1982 (p 20) and incorporated into the first National Statement published in 1983. In the 1999 version of the National Statement, the position was listed as: 'at least one member who is a minister of religion, or a person who performs a similar role in a community such as an Aboriginal elder'

(NHMRC, 1999, p16 – emphasis mine), thus hinting that it was not the minister’s religious perspective that was being sought. In fact, even when Australian society was far less multi-faith than it is today, no one clergy-person could provide a representative religious perspective. The 2007 National Statement made the purpose more overt in describing the category as ‘at least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community, for example, an Aboriginal elder, a minister of religion’ (NHMRC, 2007 p 81). This wording has carried across to the current revision. (NHMRC, 2018 p 87).

What, then, is it that Category D members of HRECs bring to meetings? What is pastoral care? Finding a simple definition is somewhat challenging but Grove (2004, p. 34) defines it as ‘all measures to assist an individual person or a community reach their full potential, success and happiness in coming to a deeper understanding of their own humanness’. Pastoral carers are not therapists, but they do come into contact with human beings at high and low points of their lives. Often, however, they see more every-day lows than those that typically cause people to make appointments with therapists – and very few people will pay a therapist to share joys. They do, however, come to congregational clergy and Aboriginal elders to share the joy of the birth of a child and to mark other rites of passage within the life of their communities. Pastoral carers thus have insights into how people make meaning in their lives that many other people are not privileged to share. They can therefore offer broader perspectives on how participants might respond to some kinds of research than can many other HREC members.

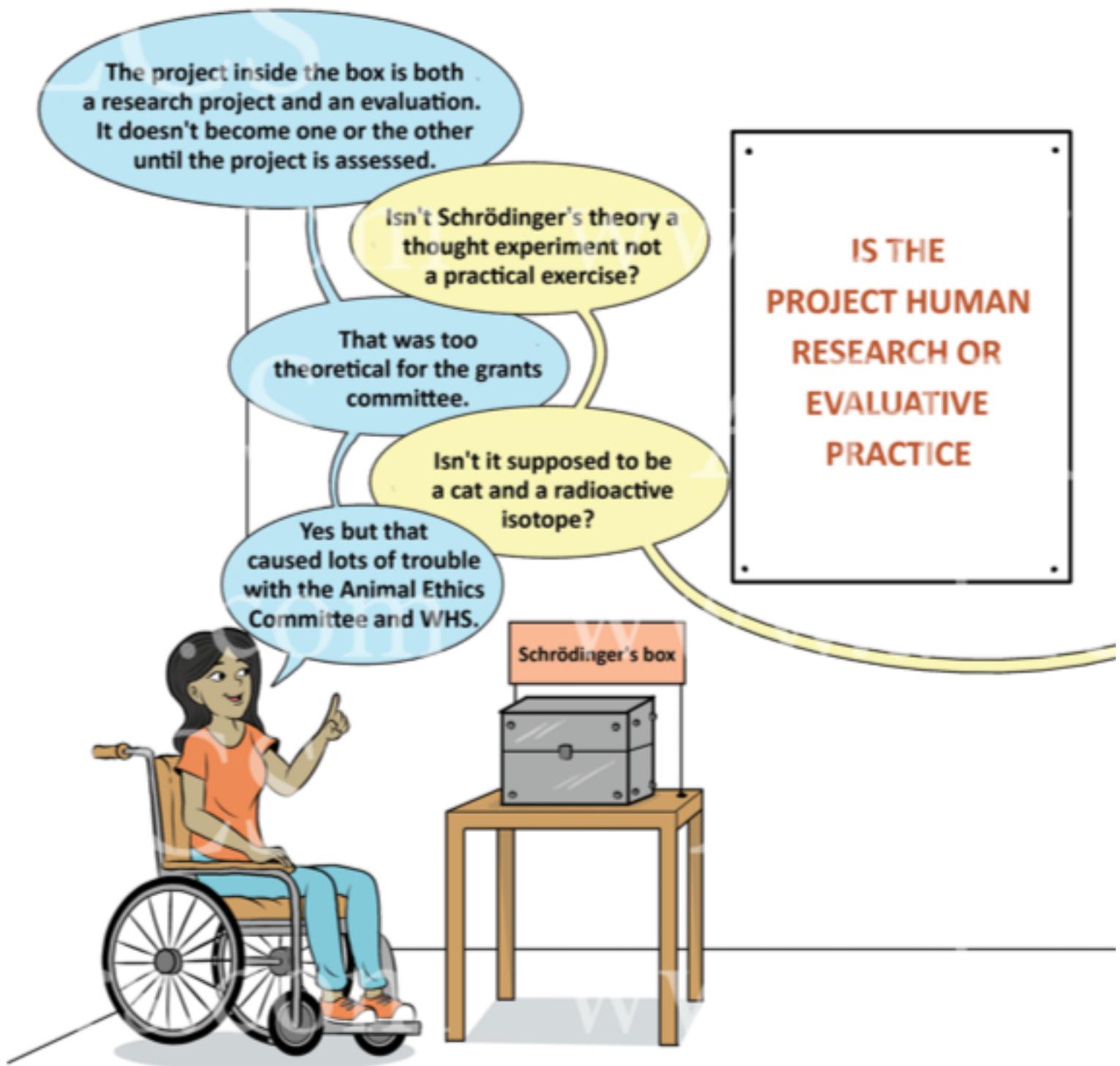
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Institutional approaches to evaluative practice

Gary Allen, Mark Israel and Colin Thomson

In 2001, the NHMRC published its policy document *When does Quality Assurance in Health Care Require Independent Ethical Review?* The document was rescinded in 2007 and is no longer available since the update to the NHMRC website in 2018. Several changes led to the rescinding of the 2001 policy document:

1. The release of the 2007 edition of the National Statement provided a mechanism for exempting work with de-identified data where the work involved no more than negligible risk.
2. The 2007 edition of the National Statement established clear criteria for determining whether research could be reviewed outside of an HREC (e.g. a project cannot involve any greater than a low risk of harm and cannot involve matters the National Statement specifies as requiring HREC review). [1]
3. The ‘pressure to publish’ has meant a significant amount of work that used to be conducted as an evaluation or for quality assurance is now being submitted for publication to refereed journals.
4. Stakeholders and funders require services and expenditure to be based on robust evidence and analysis.



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Sage case studies in social research methods

Nathan Emmerich

As part of their collection of case studies in social research methods, Sage has been developing a collection of case studies focused on research ethics in the social sciences. Edited by Dr Nathan Emmerich (ANU) these case studies allow authors to report on their experience of particular ethical issues as they arise in the course of pursuing their research or on the process of seeking ethical approval for research. Each case should offer insight into the particular ethical question or concern encountered by the researcher such that others, particularly students, may learn from their experience. Around 20 cases have been published so far. Those interested in writing a case should contact Dr Emmerich on nathan.emmerich@anu.edu.au to discuss their proposal and access the case study template. More information can be found at:

Self-plagiarism follow-up

Mark Israel

Mark Israel's [article](#) in *Research Ethics Monthly* on 'Self-plagiarism?' has been receiving a little interest outside Australia and New Zealand. It was reposted by the [LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog](#), and listed by Retraction Watch. Given that it offered guidance on the ethics of republishing in another language, it was nice to hear that the five pieces of advice had been translated into Mandarin by Zheng-Rong Gan for use at National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan (reproduced below with her permission).

- Assess whether your reasons are ethically defensible; 評估這麼做的理由在倫理上是否站得住腳
- Seek the agreement of those involved in your first publication – co-authors, editors and publishers; in some cases, publishers will want a specific form of acknowledgement; 尋求出現在第一次出版相關文章/文字者的同意，其中可能包含共同作者、編輯、出版商（有時會要求有特定的認可方式）

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Travelling Consultants and Professional Development Roadshows

Mark Israel and Colin Thomson

Prof. Mark Israel plans to be in **CANBERRA** (2-3 April), **SYDNEY** (8-10 May), UK and Belgium (27 May-8 June), **MELBOURNE** (13 June) and **Perth** (22-26 April, 1-5 July) should any universities, health services or research organisations wish to meet to discuss their research ethics or research integrity needs with an AHRECS Senior Consultant.

Prof. Colin Thomson plans to be in **CANBERRA** (8-10 April), **BRISBANE** (30 April – 1 May).

Read more

Congratulations Wendy

AHRECS was delighted to hear that Prof. Wendy Rogers (Professor of Clinical Ethics at Macquarie University) had received the 2018 Biennial [Ethics Award](#) from the NHMRC. The award is given on the basis of nominees' 'contribution supporting high ethical standards in Australia in health and/or health and medical research, including innovation in ethical policy formulation, leadership in the formulation of ethical standards and/or services'.

Among other matters, Wendy's research has covered the ethics of overdiagnosis and surgical innovation. Her recent [advocacy work](#) condemns both covert organ harvesting from

executed political prisoners in China and the failure of the medical research community to block the practice or even the publication of such unethical research. National Statement tragedies (like those of us at AHRECS) will also be familiar with Wendy's role as Chair of the working party on the current rolling revision of the National Statement and her push towards evidence-based reform. Wendy joined the Constructive Voices panel discussion hosted by AHRECS late last year on the implications of these revisions.

On-call human research ethics/research integrity advice for your institution

One of the [services](#) AHRECS offers is an on-call advisory service. This involves purchasing a block of hours for the provision of advice on tricky human research ethics or research integrity questions. Questions can be asked in an email or by phone and generally advice will be provided in the same way. For first-time clients, we recommend purchasing three hours. For small blocks of time, the rate is \$330 per hour and this rate goes down as the block of time increases. Time is used in 15, 30 or 45 minute blocks, depending on the complexity of the question asked. To enquire about setting up an on-call arrangement for your institution send an email to OnCall@ahrecs.com.

We're working with a talented animator



We are pretty excited to be working with an animation company on a couple of projects. On the website is an animation we commissioned that we will be using at the opening of our workshops and events. Please let us know what you think of it.

<https://ahrecs.com/our-services>

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Drop us a line to enquiry@ahrecs.com if you want to discuss how AHRECS can assist your institution.

While you are here...

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In addition to the warm glow from supporting our work, you will be subscribed for monthly updates of useful material (such as resources for use in your local workshops).

Subscriptions start at USD1/month and USD15/month gives you access to all materials.

A few profiled items from the subscribers' area:

1. [Designing a strong institutional approach to the ethical design and conduct of evaluative practice](#) - **Template**
2. [Evaluative practice or human research?](#) - **Graphic**
3. [Collegiate Research Ethics Adviser network](#) - **Graphic**
4. [Notes about establishing a Research Ethics Adviser network](#) - **Resource**
5. [Information privacy in human research – a second resource](#) - **ppt with embedded audio by Colin Thomson AM**

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Please join us in saying a big thank you to our new Gold Patrons:

Bendigo Health

Bond University

Edith Cowan University

Two universities that asked to remain anonymous

A national research funding body that asked to remain anonymous

University of Wollongong Ethics Unit

5 researchers who asked to remain anonymous

Things You May Have Missed...

Resource Library (<https://ahrecs.com/ahresources>)

1. [\(US\) Is it time to revise the definition of research misconduct?](#) - Paper

2. [Organ transplants from executed Chinese prisoners and research ethics](#) – Radio National ABC

3. [Whitepaper: Practical challenges for researchers in data sharing](#) - Papers

4. [Editorial Mutiny at Elsevier Journal](#) – Inside Higher Ed

5. [Major medical journals don't follow their own rules for reporting results from clinical trials](#) – Science

CRISPR BABIES SCANDAL

- Collection of stories [Three latest below, with links to earlier items] -

1. [China to tighten rules on gene editing in humans](#) – Nature

2. [New call to ban gene-edited babies divides biologists](#) – Science

3. [Why were scientists silent over gene-edited babies?](#) – Nature

KOGAN/CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA/FACEBOOK CASE

- Includes links to earlier reports and related items -

[Academic Behind Cambridge Analytica Data Mining Sues Facebook for Defamation](#) – New York Times

Blog (<https://ahrecs.com/blog>)

1. [Conducting research with \(not on\) consumers in health – exploring ethical considerations](#)

2. [Sage Methods Minute. January Spotlight: Research Ethics](#)

3. [The Ethics of Evaluation Research](#)

4. [Australia Day honours recognise contributions to human research ethics](#)

5. [REALising a collegiate Research Ethics Adviser network](#)



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Australasian Human Research Ethics Consultancy Services (AHRECS) · 14 Sovereign Way · Samford Valley, Qld 4520 · Australia

