

19 May 2006

Annie Dullow
Plasma Fractionation Review Secretariat
Dept. of Health and Ageing

Email: plasmafractionationreview@health.gov.au

Dear Ms Annie Dullow,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Review of Australia's Plasma Fractionation Arrangements. The Australian Hepatitis Council would like to register its interest and provide input.

The Australian Hepatitis Council is the lead national agency for people with hepatitis C and other chronic viral hepatitis. As a non-scientific organisation our comments are confined to consumer advocacy issues around the protection of Australian consumers from any increased risk of blood borne viruses from imported products.

The Australian Hepatitis Council is interested in point 2 and 3 of the Terms of Reference:

2. Identify appropriate requirements to be met by producers of plasma products or suppliers of plasma fractionation services to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of such products or services. These requirements shall not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

The Australian Hepatitis Councils believes that the level of regulation and requirements imposed on non-Australian producers and suppliers of plasma products, must not put recipients of plasma products at any increased risk of known-viral hepatitis exposure. Regardless of trade obligations the quality and safety of the product of paramount concern.

3. Identify issues arising as a result of any increase in competition for the provision of plasma fractionation services for Australia and indicate how these issues could best be dealt with through future procurement arrangements.

The Australian Hepatitis Council believes that a security of supply (donor to recipient) system must be maintained, reviewed and funded appropriately to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of plasma derived products, in particular off-shore plasma processing where the longer the supply chain, the increased risk of an adverse incident.

The Council looks forward to being involved in the Plasma Fractionation Review.

Sincerely,

Helen Tyrrell
Executive Officer
Australian Hepatitis Council