

## **Submission to Government 2.0 Issues Paper**

Agency: National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

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Date: 24 August 2009

### **Building online communities (OECD Principles 1, 11, 13)**

NHMRC is interested to encourage online communities among health and medical professionals and researchers, and the interested general public. Additionally, as specified under the *NHMRC Act*, we have a regulatory requirement to open our health and clinical guidelines to public comment in their preparation stages. We are interested in technologies that disseminate news of consultation documents as widely as possible, and make it as easy as possible for people to make submissions.

#### *Emergency Care Community of Practice*

An example of NHMRC's contribution to an online community is the Emergency Care Community of Practice blog (<https://emergencycare.nhmrc.gov.au/blog/index.php>). NHMRC established this blog to support the exchange of ideas and sharing of clinicians' and emergency care managers' experiences in closing the evidence practice gaps in emergency care.

### **Managing risk vs innovation (Qns 30, 31)**

Apart from the privacy and security risks mentioned in the discussion paper, NHMRC is concerned with how to keep online conversations 'on topic'. We would be very interested in practical best-practice guidelines for managing these channels, covering aspects like balancing availability of staff to respond to conversations vs their authority and expertise; limiting legal liability from misinterpretation of posts; and dealing with inappropriate content from non-government posters.

### **Does one size fit all?**

As a small statutory authority governed by its own Act, NHMRC is concerned to ensure that all-of-government approaches to IT infrastructure and procedures take into account the operational differences between an agency of our size and budget, and the bigger departments. Simply put, we do not do the same work in the same way as them.

### **About NHMRC**

The current legislative basis of the Council is the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act)*. NHMRC's functions come from the statutory obligations conferred by the *NHMRC Act*, and are to:

- raise the standard of individual and public health throughout Australia;
- foster the development of consistent health standards between the various States and Territories;
- foster medical research and training and public health research and training throughout Australia ; and
- foster consideration of ethical issues relating to health.

#### *NHMRC guidelines*

NHMRC issues guidelines for best practice in health and clinical matters, based on the best scientific evidence. The *NHMRC Act* specifies that all NHMRC guidelines must be issued in development as drafts for public consultation, and that submissions to these consultations must be considered.