

**Submission
No 45**

THE PROMOTION OF FALSE OR MISLEADING HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION OR PRACTICES

Name: Mr Trevor Wilson

Date Received: 2/12/2013

2nd December 2013

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Inquiry into the Promotion of False or Misleading Health-Related Information or Practices

I have grave concerns about this review and wish to make an individual submission.

To begin with, I have a number of queries on the use of the following terms within the TOR:

- *Unscientific health-related information or practices.* Who decides what is unscientific?
- *Individuals who are not recognised health practitioners.* Recognised by whom?
- *Accepted medical practice.* Accepted by whom?

Reading between the lines, I think the implied assumption is that mainstream medicine is the judge and jury on all these matters i.e. medical doctors are the recognised health practitioners referred to and they should decide on what is accepted medical practice and on what is unscientific health-related information.

It seems that this review is an attempt by mainstream medicine to suppress anybody outside the profession from voicing other opinions on medical matters. This is a violation of one of the five basic freedoms we take for granted in Australia i.e. freedom of speech. This is described as¹:

Australians are free, within the bounds of the law, to say or write what we think privately or publicly, about the government, or about any topic. We do not censor the media and may criticise the government without fear of arrest. Free speech comes from facts, not rumours, and the intention must be constructive, not to do harm. There are laws to protect a person's good name and integrity against false information. There are laws against saying or writing things to incite hatred against others because of their culture, ethnicity or background. Freedom of speech is not an excuse to harm others.

I am aware that the Health Care Complaints Commission has taken a great interest in the Australian Vaccination Network (AVN) in recent times. I am a retired professional person and have been associated with that organisation for many years. I carried out a membership

¹ The website of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection lists five basic freedoms that all Australians are entitled to – freedoms of speech, association, assembly, religion and movement.

survey on behalf of the organisation towards the end of 2012. I have published a report² that is freely available. In fact, it was placed on the *Australian Doctor* website on the 5th July this year. I want to briefly comment on the major findings:

1. There is nothing reactionary or sinister about the AVN. Members are ordinary people who are concerned about the health of their children. Six hundred and forty members responded to the survey. Over 80% had a post school qualification, while 56% had a bachelor degree or higher. More than half worked in professional occupations. And almost all had accessed a wide range of information sources on vaccination.
2. Thirty-three percent said that at least one family member had suffered adverse reactions to a vaccine. And thirty percent said that at least one family member had suffered long term effects from vaccines. Allergies, including food intolerance, and asthma, along with a host of behavioural disorders such as autism, were all mentioned. The family case study descriptions provided by members also highlighted the fact that many had turned to complementary health providers because they were unsatisfied with mainstream medicine.
3. There was almost unanimous agreement with the statement – *On average, non-vaccinated children tend to be healthier than those that have been vaccinated.* (That is also my own personal observation over many years).

This raises the question – have medical authorities collected hard data, not opinions, to show that the 30 or so vaccinations that kids are supposed to get before starting school are not deleterious to health? If so, vaccination awareness groups would love to see it. And if not, isn't that a gross dereliction of duty?

As stated, I think that clamping down on opinions on medical matters other than those from mainstream medicine is a violation of one of our basic rights. If free speech is to be gagged, it must be conclusively shown that the intention is not constructive, or that the opinions expressed will do harm (See description of free speech on previous page). In AVN's case, I doubt that is possible. If the opinion of its members is to count for anything, the opposite is true.

I was under the impression we lived in a country where free speech is valued. I therefore beg the inquiry to accept this, and also to accept the possibility that mainstream medicine may not be infallible. There may be other opinions out there that should be listened to.

Sincerely



Trevor Wilson
BAgrSc BEcon MSc
Continuous employment with the Government of Queensland 1969 – 2011
Retired as Principal Agricultural Economist

² Wilson T. D. (2013). [A Profile of the Australian Vaccination Network 2012](#). Published by the Australian Vaccination Network. (ISBN 978-0-646-90295-1)