

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

Minister for Medical Research



Friday, 17 July 2026

SAFER MEDICAL RESEARCH FOR VICTORIA'S FIRST PEOPLES

Today the first Aboriginal-led human research ethics committee in Victoria will begin its work.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll today welcomed the first members of the Aboriginal Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Funded by the Labor Government, the HREC will oversee medical research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It will ensure projects uphold cultural safety and deliver meaningful benefits for First Peoples.

The HREC will be delivered by the Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation (VACCHO).

VACCHO is the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing in Victoria.

Labor invested \$4.5 million in VACCHO to implement *marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri* – the Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord.

The HREC is a key part of the Accord, which envisions an ethical and culturally safe research sector.

The Labor Government delivered Australia's first Statewide Treaty Agreement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Families are better off when they have responsibility over their lives and Aboriginal families are no different.

For more information about the committee, visit: www.vaccho.org.au/hrec

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll

"We're giving Aboriginal families a say over medical research that involves them – that means more ethical research with better research outcomes."

"We're helping strengthen community trust and accountability in medical research involving Aboriginal people."

Quotes attributable to VACCHO Acting CEO, Jim O'Shea

"The VACCHO HREC now fills a gap and provides a rigorous, culturally embedded review process that finally puts Aboriginal research back where it belongs – in Aboriginal hands."

"Over the past 25 years, researchers undertaking work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria have navigated mainstream ethics that have not been designed with Community or with cultural safety at their heart."

"An Aboriginal Human Research Ethics Committee review is not just best practice; it is the mark of responsible research."

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