

Review of Human Tissue Laws: Response to Discussion Paper

This submission is responding to the request for comment on the Review of Human Tissue Laws (Issue Paper 51 – May 2025) by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

This is a personal submission although my interest is as a member of Melanoma Research Victoria Consumer Review Group.

As such I write to you requesting the review to improve the efficiency of access by researchers to melanoma tissue samples, either donated or left over from medical procedures.

In particular I request the ALRC considers:

1. Enabling an obligation to inform all patients that leftover tissue can be donated to tissue registries or agencies for medical research.
2. Making a specific acknowledgement that such tissue samples are a resource for public good and the ownership or custodianship of such tissue be legally clarified.
3. Improving consistency across all jurisdictions regarding donation, storage and access for tissue samples for research purposes.
4. Creating an obligation for holders of previously donated tissue samples, such as pathology companies, to respond in a timely manner to requests for samples with a modest and reasonable cost recovery.