



Thursday, 29 January 2026

Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission Review of Human Tissue Laws Discussion Paper

This submission is made on behalf of the Human Tissue Advisory Committee (HTAC) within the School of Medicine at Deakin University. HTAC's role is to advise the School on compliance with the *Human Tissue Act 1982 (Vic)*, associated Regulations and government guidelines, and to support the ethical use of human tissue for educational purposes.

Questions 31–34 of the Discussion Paper address the regulation of stored tissue collections. HTAC recognises the need for reform in this area and supports the development of a national framework for human tissue collections held for educational purposes.

Question 33 seeks views on which aspects of educational collections should be subject to a national approach. HTAC considers that all aspects should be included—namely the collection, storage, use, transfer and disposal of human tissue—in order to strengthen confidence, consistency and compliance. By way of example, under the *Human Tissue Act 1982 (Vic)*, the Victorian Department of Health has issued the [Guidelines for the Governance of Schools of Anatomy in Victoria](#) (October 2014). These Guidelines address some matters not covered by the Act or its Regulations, creating uncertainty regarding their legal status and enforceability.

Section 10.10 of the Discussion Paper considers collections of human tissue used for educational purposes where there is limited or no associated documentation (legacy collections). HTAC agrees that there is a need for clear guidance on how such collections may be protected and used in a manner that is transparent and promotes public trust. Importantly, HTAC emphasises that any guidance relating to legacy collections must be supportive of, and consistent with, efforts to repatriate First Nations remains.

HTAC would welcome the opportunity to clarify any aspect of this submission and to contribute further to this important work.

Submission prepared by Cailin Mellberg (HTAC Chair) and Jane Duffy (HTAC Member) on 28 January 2026.