

Conflicts of Interest of Members of the Australian Technical and Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)

The ATAGI committee is responsible for providing immunisation advice to Australia's Health Minister. Professor Terry Nolan is the chairman of the ATAGI committee and he provides advice directly to Australia's Health Minister. He is also the deputy chairman of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) which has influence in the scientific areas that will receive funding for research. **Professor Terry Nolan's declared conflicts of interests** include being a member of a CSL vaccine advisory board (at some time) and receiving nominal payments (honoraria) as well as support for conference attendance from CSL Ltd, Novartis and GlaxoSmithKline [1]. He was also the chief investigator of the clinical trial for CSL's Panvax influenza vaccine in 400 children in 2009 whilst he was on the government's primary advisory boards for vaccination policy-decisions at the time.

Professor Robert Booy is the co-director of the government National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). He is also a member of the government's advisory committee on influenza – the Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) that is 100% funded by industry [2]. Whilst holding these positions he was also an investigator in the clinical trial for children's Panvax (H1N1) influenza vaccine in 2009 which was funded by CSL [1]. He has received support from CSL limited and other pharmaceutical companies to attend conferences [1]. He has been a representative on a vaccine advisory board for these companies at various times and has also received funding from Roche, Sanofi, GlaxoSmithKline and Wyeth for attending and presenting at scientific meetings [1]. These activities are a possible conflict of interest with his role as a government policy advisor and director of the government's research and surveillance unit but they are not transparent to the public.

Associate Professor Peter Richmond is a member of the government's Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) (a body that is 100% industry funded) and also a member of ATAGI. At other times he has been a representative on a CSL vaccine advisory board [3]. At various times he has received nominal payments from CSL (honoraria) and he was also an investigator in the CSL funded clinical trial for Panvax vaccine in 2009 [1]. He was influential in implementing the Western Australian Influenza Vaccine Efficacy trial (WAIVE) for children in WA (2008 – 2013) that was funded by CSL and Sanofi–Pasteur (WA Health Dept. 2008). He stated in 2010 that 'I don't think investigators involved in clinical trials are working for CSL' [3].

Dr. Alan Hampson is the chairman of the Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) and he was previously the Research and Development Manager at CSL [4]. He was instrumental in the formation and development of the ISG and is a former deputy director of the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza [4]. He is also the Editor in Chief of the international journal *Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses*. He has a consultancy role with the WHO and the Australian Government.

Anne Kelso was a member of the ISG in 2010 and she had shares in CSL, Australia's only flu vaccine manufacturer. She was also in charge of the WHO influenza laboratory in Melbourne [5].

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References:

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