

19 September 2014

Dear Ms Wilyman

I refer to your recent contact to the Commission about the Department of Health (the Department).

You raised concerns regarding the introduction of the HPV vaccination program in schools, stating that you believe the Department has not provided the Australian community with sufficient information about the vaccination. You make reference to human rights breaches.

I appreciate that you are concerned about this vaccination program. However, it is not clear whether this is an issue the Commission's Investigation and Conciliation Section can assist you with. The Commission can consider claims of human rights breaches against the Commonwealth. However, 'human rights' are specifically defined to include those rights and freedoms provided for in the international instruments scheduled to, or declared under, the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth). This includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It is not clear how your concerns relate to a right or freedom contained in these instruments.

Also, for the Commission to be able to inquire into a complaint, the complaint must be lodged by or on behalf of an aggrieved person. That is, a person who is directly affected by the act being complained about. It is not clear from the information you have provided to date that you would be considered such a person in relation to the introduction of this program. It would appear that you are raising concerns about this program as a member of the general public.

I hope this information is of assistance. Should you have any further queries, please advise by return email or call our National Information Service on 1300 656 419.

Regards,

Rebecca Gieng

Supervisor, National Information Service

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Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday