The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing revokes the AVN's charitable authority

Approximately 2 hours ago, I received a notification from the OLGR that they would, effective Wednesday, October 20th, be revoking the AVN's charitable status.

They have sent me a letter listing the reasons for this revocation (those reasons are reproduced below) and also the announcement that is being Gazetted today.

(a) that any fundraising appeal conducted by the holder of the authority hasn't been conducted in good faith for charitable purposes

The Organisation has failed to publish a disclaimer on its website as recommended by the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC). This has resulted in an unacceptable risk of potential donors to the Organisation being misled when making a decision whether or not to make a donation, which has led to appeals not being conducted in good faith.

(c) that any fundraising appeal conducted by virtue of the authority has been improperly administered

The Organisation's website is misleading in that it may lead people making donations to believe that they are donating to a cause which promotes vaccination whereas the Organisation adopts an anti-vaccination position. When requested by the HCCC to publish a disclaimer on its website the Organisation failed to do so.

(f) in the public interest, the authority should be revoked.

The failure of the Organisation to comply with the HCCC recommendation
resulted in the Commission publishing a Public Warning on 26 July 2010 advising that this failure "poses a risk to public health and safety". In this circumstance it is in the public interest to not permit the Organisation to conduct fund raising appeals under the Act.

As you can see, the OLGR based their entire decision on the HCCC's demand for us to declare ourselves as being anti-vaccine and putting their disclaimer on our website - two things which we refused to do (they say we failed to do it - there was no failure involved - this was a deliberate move on our part to defend our freedom of communication).

Indeed, instead of changing our current disclaimer to what the HCCC requested, we issued this statement - explaining why the HCCC was wrong and any moves to suppress the AVN were anti-democratic.

I have just sent the following press release to media outlets across Australia. The complainants - all active members of the organisation, Stop the AVN - are just being notified about the OLGR's decision. Both Stop the AVN and the government will be making their own statements today, I am sure.

I am still trying to get my head around the implications of our loss of charitable status but what I was informed by the OLGR (and I will need to confirm this but for now, I am taking it as read), Wednesday comes, we will no longer be able to accept donations from anyone who is not an AVN member.

So if you were thinking of donating to our organisation, please do so before Wednesday by clicking here if you are not already a member. If you were considering becoming a member or buying a gift membership, please do so ASAP by clicking here! And if you are in a position to donate to us and have been waiting for the right time - this is it! We will need your support to fight these efforts to shut us up and shut us down.

Yours in health,
Meryl Dorey

The OLGR's political decision

14/10/2010 - For Immediate Release:

For over two years, the Australian Vaccination Network (AVN), a national volunteer-run health lobby and support group, has been under attack. Our message of individual informed health choice conflicts with the government's policy which is pro-mass vaccination.

Part of this attack has included complaints to the Office of Liquor Gaming and
Racing (OLGR), the body that oversees charities.

Earlier this year, the OLGR audited the AVN. It found several errors with our bookkeeping system and some minor problems with the way in which we accounted for fundraising income. The OLGR openly stated that there was no evidence of fraud or criminality. Despite this, it has announced that the AVN's authority to fundraise is being revoked.

"Had the OLGR based its decision upon the simple errors which were found during our audit - errors which any small, volunteer-run organisation can and does make - it would have been unfair but not unexpected." says Meryl Dorey, media spokesperson for the AVN. "What makes this decision difficult to understand is that the revocation was based solely upon a questionable decision by the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) which we believe is not relevant to the OLGR's mandate."

The campaign to shut down the AVN has included:

1. Attacks and threats against our advertisers, members and professional supporters.
2. Death threats against committee members.
3. Hate mail.
4. Abusive phone calls and emails.
5. Numerous vexatious complaints against to various government agencies.

In a democracy, it is always in the public's interest to allow citizens access to full and accurate information on all issues so they will be empowered to make their own decision. The OLGR's statement that rescinding the AVN's charitable status is in the public's interest seems to confuse the Australian public with the Australian medical industry.

In a true democracy, the government should be defending its policies in the court of public opinion - not by abusing its power by suppressing legitimate dissent.

For further information, Please contact Meryl Dorey on 02 6687 1699 or 0414 872 032.

**About Australian Vaccination Network, Inc.**
The AVN is a non-profit, volunteer-run charitable association. Since 1994, the AVN has provided information and support to the general community who are trying to make informed choices about vaccination and health. Their lobbying in Federal Parliament has ensured that compulsory vaccination for children has not come to pass and they are the major reporters of vaccine adverse reactions to ADRAC (The Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee).

For more information visit [www.avn.org.au](http://www.avn.org.au)

Ph: 02 6687 1699 Fax: 02 6687 2032 Mobile: 0414 872 032