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Dr. Robert Hall,  
Director Public Health and Chief Health Officer,  
Department of Human Services,  
GPO Box 1670N  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3001**

Dear Mr. Hall,

#### RE REVIEW OF HEALTH ACT 1958

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on the draft policy paper for review of the Health Act 1958 by the Department of Human Services (Victoria)

I believe that the review and subsequent legislation will ensure a modern public health system for Victoria and the Department of Human Services is to be commended for such a comprehensive draft policy review.

St John of God Health Care a not-for-profit organization, provides private health care in Victoria predominantly to the rural and regional communities through its five acute hospital divisions, as well as dedicated rehabilitation and mental health services.

This draft policy essentially promotes public health strategies and these do not directly impact on the operational activities of the St John of God Healthcare Divisions and therefore specific detailed comment would therefore be inappropriate.

The proposed public health policies and their planning are detailed and focus on reducing non communicable diseases as well as addressing communicable diseases and environmental risks. This reflects sound future planning strategies.

Hospitality Compassion Respect Justice Excellence



The proposal to consolidate existing Consultative Council provisions is sensible, but in doing so their status is not diminished. This particularly applies to the Consultative Council on Obstetrics and Paediatric mortality and morbidity.

All of the Consultative Councils provide a sound education process for the medical profession, allied health professionals and the community. I believe the mandatory reporting of birth defects by hospitals, diagnostic laboratories and perinatal screening facilities is appropriate and would be in the public interest.

All of the Divisions of St John of God Health Care (both in W.A. and Victoria) have a robust clinical risk management strategy and a comprehensive electronic incident management system. The principal that the notification by hospitals to the Victorian Surgical Council of all surgical deaths and certain adverse events should be mandatory is supported. Given the sensitivity of this information and its legal protection it would be wise for such reporting by registered medical practitioners to remain voluntary for the present. This should be reviewed from time to time.

The details relating to confidentiality and disclosure of information described in paragraph 2.2.8 are most strongly supported. It would be appreciated by your Department that such provisions are important in the private sector.

In general the proposed recommendations are supported and better reflect the purpose of the new act and the improved provision of public health services with equity of access to the community.

I will ensure that the document is available throughout the St John of God Health Care Victorian Divisions.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Con Michael,  
Group Director Medical Services