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Appendix E — The National Blood Authority

Introduction

The National Blood Authority is a Commonwealth agency established under the *National Blood Authority Act 2003* to improve and enhance the management of the Australian blood banking and plasma product sector at a national level.

The National Blood Authority came into effect from 1 July 2003, and is a key part of new reforms to the blood sector, which have been agreed to by all States and Territories. These are set out in the National Blood Agreement.

The establishment of the National Blood Authority represents the culmination of consideration and cooperation by all governments through the Australian Health Ministers' Conference in responding to needs for reforms identified in the 2001 Review of the Australian Blood Banking and Plasma Product Sector (the Stephen Review).[1]

The role of the National Blood Authority

The role of the National Blood Authority is to ensure that Australia's blood supply is safe, secure, adequate and affordable. It does this by:

- Coordinating demand and supply planning for blood and blood products from suppliers on behalf of all States and Territories;
- Negotiating and managing national contracts with suppliers of blood and blood products;

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1 National Blood Authority (NBA), *About the National Blood Authority*, www.nba.gov.au/, accessed 5 August 2004.

- Working with all governments to ensure that they get the blood and blood products they require, according to an agreed single national pricing schedule;
- Undertaking research to support policy development and operations within the blood sector through transparent evidence-based processes;
- Developing and implementing national strategies to encourage better use of blood and blood products;
- Promoting adherence to national safety and quality standards; and
- Taking responsibility for national contingency planning.

Stakeholder responsibilities

There are three main stakeholders in the blood sector: the States and Territories; the Department of Health and Ageing; and the Therapeutic Goods Administration. They have the following responsibilities:

- States and Territories
  - ⇒ fostering the development and implementation of best practice planning and management systems to promote efficiency in the use and minimisation of wastage;
  - ⇒ ensuring the flow of information and advice to the National Blood Authority in relation to demand for blood and blood products; and
  - ⇒ managing local issues such as those involving clinical practice.
- Department of Health and Ageing
  - ⇒ managing the Commonwealth's policy and financial participation in the National Blood Authority;
  - ⇒ managing the National Cord Blood Program, the Bleeding Disorder Registry and the Bone Marrow Transplant Program;
  - ⇒ handling contracts with the Haemophilia Foundation of Australia and the Australian Haemophilia Centre Directors' Organisation; and
  - ⇒ taking responsibility for quarantine as it may affect the blood supply.
- Therapeutic Goods Administration
  - ⇒ auditing Good Manufacturing Practice;
  - ⇒ initiating product recalls;
  - ⇒ implementing modifications to safety standards; and
  - ⇒ issuing directives regarding such things as donor deferrals.[2]

2 NBA, *About the National Blood Authority*, www.nba.gov.au/, accessed 5 August 2004.