

The background of the slide is a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping, semi-transparent green shapes. These shapes include various polygons, circles, and curved lines, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from light, pale greens to darker, more saturated shades, with some areas appearing almost black due to the high contrast of the overlapping layers.

# 5.0 WHAT IS A HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE?

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Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) are usually established by organisations (public, not-for-profit or private) that conduct research involving humans. Universities and hospitals are the most common of these organisations, however, not all organisations that conduct research have their own HREC. Some organisations and individual researchers use the services of HRECs that are based within other organisations. They may also use HRECs that are established by organisations that do not conduct research but have established an HREC to provide the service of ethical review to researchers who do not have an HREC at their own organisation, or who are not associated with an organisation.

### Who sits on a Human Research Ethics Committee?

According to the National Health and Medical Research Council, the minimum membership of an HREC is eight people and should comprise equal numbers of men and women, and at least one third of the members should be from outside the institution for which the HREC is reviewing research. A standard HREC will also usually include:

- a) A chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities will not impair the HREC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the National Statement;
- b) At least two lay people, one man and one woman, who have no affiliation with the institution and do not currently engage in medical, scientific, legal or academic work;
- c) At least one person with knowledge of, and current experience in, the professional care, counselling or treatment of people; for example, a nurse or allied health professional;
- d) At least one person who performs a pastoral care role in a community, for example, an Aboriginal elder or a minister of religion;
- e) At least one lawyer, where possible one who is not engaged to advise the institution; and
- f) At least two people with current research experience that is relevant to research proposals to be considered at the meetings they attend.<sup>9</sup>

