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**MEDIA STATEMENT FROM KEN MCLEOD REGARDING THE NSW HEALTH CARE  
COMPLAINTS COMMISSION REPORT ON THE "AUSTRALIAN VACCINATION NETWORK"**

"I welcome the [Report by the HCCC](#) into the anti-vaccination activities of the so-called "Australian Vaccination Network" (AVN) and its President, Ms Meryl Dorey. I see that the HCCC has determined that the AVN and Ms Dorey provide misleading and inaccurate information to support their anti-vaccination campaign.

*"The HCCC report says that the "AVN provides information that is misleading for the average reader by inaccurately representing information, selectively reporting information, and giving non-peer reviewed and anecdotal material the same authority as peer-reviewed literature. The HCCC found in all cases, the AVN and Ms Dorey were doing so to maintain an anti-vaccination position."*

"So, why did I submit the [complaint to the HCCC](#)?

**"Firstly**, I was distressed by the death of baby Dana McCaffery in early 2009 of pertussis, (whooping cough), a preventable disease. With the technology and science available today, such deaths just should not happen. As a 62 year-old, I remember what polio did to my family when my baby sister contracted polio in the last of the polio epidemics in the 50s. I remember going as a 6 year old to hospital to visit her. I saw several kids in iron lungs and many in cots. Some died, some didn't, and this was a country town. I remember two schoolfriends who disappeared from school and asking what happened to them. It was enough to be told "Oh, Tommy and Billy got the polio." We never saw them again. A year after that, the polio vaccine arrived, and polio disappeared as if by magic. I can remember in those days watching men coughing up blood in the street because of TB, and we don't see that any more either. I am amazed that any rational person would want to wind the clock back 60 years.

**"Secondly**, vaccination rates are falling because governments and health authorities are ignoring the anti-vaccination crackpots, so I thought it was time to stir them up.

"I see that Commonwealth, State, and Territory governments and health authorities have promised to implement a national campaign to protect infants against whooping cough. This campaign, inter alia, is pledged to *"counteract the spread of misinformation about immunisation."* <sup>i</sup> Governments and Health Authorities have completely failed to do that,

but now have all the resources and information they need to fulfil that promise. The time for focus groups, market research, strategy development, liaison seminars, communication plans, and all the other buzzwords, is over. Now is the time for those responsible in government to get on with it.

“This is also a reality check for the Australian media. For too long they have gone to the AVN and Meryl Dorey for comment whenever immunisation becomes an issue. This is “false balance” and gives credibility when none is due. Lazy journalism has misled the public with tragic consequences.

“I stress that my complaint and the HCCC report are not attempting to limit anyone’s freedom of choice or freedom of speech, nor impose compulsory vaccination. People are entitled to make free choices, but those choices must be based on fact, not the misleading, selective, anecdotal, biased, and dishonest information such that published by the AVN and Ms Dorey.”



Ken McLeod

See our websites at: <http://www.antivaxxers.com>

And: <http://www.stopantivaxnetwork.com/>

And: <http://www.australianimages.com.au/opinion/vaccination.php>

And: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=76305414878&ref=mf>

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<sup>i</sup> Media Release by Hon. John Hatzistergos NSW Minister for Health September 5, 2009.