



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

ADVICE TO CLINICIANS

Establishment of the Clinical Advisory Committee on Lyme Disease

Lyme disease/borreliosis is a multisystem tick-borne, zoonotic bacterial infection caused by the *Borrelia burgdorferi* genospecies complex. There is debate within the community about the existence of indigenous Lyme disease in Australia. This is because some Australians, who have not travelled overseas to endemic areas have developed symptoms similar to those of Lyme disease. However, a causative organism and its vector for Lyme disease have yet to be formally identified in Australia.

To assist the investigation into the presence of Lyme disease in Australia, I have established a Clinical Advisory Committee on Lyme Disease to provide me with advice on:

1. The identification and characterisation of a causative microorganism and vector in Australia
2. The best diagnostic pathway in Australia, and
3. Appropriate treatment options for any Australian cases.

The CACLD will also provide advice on the most appropriate ways to disseminate information to health professionals and the general public.

To date, the Committee has met twice and has:

- identified issues arising from Lyme disease in Australia which have been documented in a discussion paper titled [CACLD Discussion Paper on Lyme Disease](#), and
- agreed that more information is required about the research needs for identifying and characterising a causative microorganism (a *Borrelia* species) and its vector for Lyme disease in Australia, and that a scoping study should be conducted.

I anticipate that while scoping research requirements for the identification and characterisation of an indigenous causative organism, an enhanced diagnostic pathway for Lyme disease in Australians will be progressed.

While the investigation into an indigenous causative organism for Lyme disease continues, there is a need to raise awareness of Lyme disease as a

possible diagnosis in returned travellers who may have acquired the infection whilst visiting overseas endemic areas.

For more information and updates about the Committee please visit the [Department of Health and Ageing's Lyme disease](#) website.

The departmental point of contact for this activity is Dr Gary Lum (Gary.Lum@health.gov.au) in the Office of Health Protection.

[Approved for electronic distribution]

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