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Office of the Privacy Commissioner

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Our reference: OMI:MH

Ms Juanita Fernando
Chair, Health Privacy
Australian Privacy Foundation

Email: Secretary@privacy.org.au

Dear Ms Fernando

I refer to your correspondence of 19 May 2009, in relation to an article appearing in *The Australian* on 19 May, concerning a medical market research organization, AsteRx Pty. Ltd. I am replying on behalf of the Privacy Commissioner.

In particular you were concerned about a proposal by AsteRx to provide business intelligence software to General Practitioners "in exchange for access to patients' de-identified prescription data".

The Office was already aware of this matter and has commenced an "own motion" investigation into the issue. As you know, the *Privacy Act* requires that the Office conducts investigations in private. Accordingly I am unable to comment further at this point.

Thank you for drawing the matter to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Mark Hummerston
Assistant Privacy Commissioner

21 May 2009