

Bastard Sheep

Musings of a woolly dolphin.

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Australian Vaccination Network at Woodford Folk Festival. #StopAVN

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I've [spoken](#) about the [Australian Vaccination Network](#) [before](#), but those have generally only been mentions and references, I've never really gone in to who and what they are.

EDIT: BREAKING NEWS! It appears [StopAVN](#) have done something [fantastic and unexpected](#) at Woodford Folk Festival! Please scroll down to the next bolded "EDIT:" and ensure even if you don't read most of this, you at least read that!!! 😊

Who are the [Australian Vaccination Network](#)?



The [Australian Vaccination Network \(AVN\)](#), despite all claims to the contrary, are an anti-vaccination group. They are headed up by [Meryl Dorey](#) and claim they're not, they claim they just support informed choice and provide a counter to the governments provides. However, the information the [AVN](#) provide is wrong on almost all counts which means it's not really an informed choice they're providing but a misinformed one, and if the governments provides is pro-vaccine, then any stance counter to that surely must be anti?

Their preferred sources of information are not scientific studies, but rather conspiracy th

such as [whale.to](#) (a site that collects any and all articles and claims no matter how crazy and unsubstantiated they are), conspiracy theorists such as [David Icke](#) (who promotes world leaders and the royal family being lizard people), and people with revoked medical licenses such as the disgraced [Andrew Wakefield](#).

They've had their charity license revoked. In the last two years, only two issues of their 6/year magazine "Living Wisdom" has been released (and despite being so far behind in issues owed, they're still actively pushing subscriptions). They regularly cry oppression, censorship and demand free speech, despite blocking/banning anyone who dares counter their supposed-not president [Meryl Dorey](#) with information that is nothing more than factual. They have also been caught filing numerous false DMCA requests to hide public and factual information they don't like. The [Australian Vaccination Network](#) about as hypocritical as one can get.

Who are [Stop The AVN](#)?



Fortunately there's also groups out there who try to combat the [Australian Vaccination Network](#)'s misinformation campaign, one of which is called [Stop The AVN](#) ([StopAVN](#)). Despite being completely banned from the [AVN](#)'s mailing list, FaceBook page, and google group for the reasons mentioned above, they're doing an amazing job at countering the [AVN](#)'s misinformation campaign. With their own [FaceBook page](#) and [information website](#) they regularly counter [Meryl](#)'s false claims, and have done some great work putting the [AVN](#) in its deserved place. The ABC for example have been told globally not to use her as an expert in vaccines, and that if she is to talk at all it's to be made clear she's an anti vaccination promoter.

Unlike the [AVN](#) which was a charity (license revoked) and is still a registered non-profit business, [StopAVN](#) is just a loose collection of people with common interests. They don't have any official structure, nor do they ever campaign for funds. Anything and everything is done entirely on the individuals time and with their own personal funds, simply because they care and are passionate about the wellbeing of others, helping out those who are too young to be vaccinated or who are immuno-compromised so vaccines cannot help.

Woodford Folk Festival?

Last but not least in this little sordid tale is the Woodford Folk Festival (WoodfordFF). It is a music/culture festival held near Woodford in Queensland every year between Christmas and New Years. For the last few years they've invited [Meryl](#) to talk and give her false information on the topics of vaccines and autism. Two years ago [Meryl](#) spoke as well, and all attempts to have this stage removed from her failed. In fact it became quite clear that the people behind WoodfordFF were very in support of things like alternative (read: Ineffective) medicine, anti-vaccination, and just about anything not supported by evidence or science. This extends to the point where they even have a [homeopathic](#) first aid tent on site.

Last year [Meryl](#) didn't attend due to schedule conflicts, but this year she was invited back and accepted. [StopAVN](#) first approached WoodfordFF to let them know just what/who they

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providing a platform to, and they didn't care. If anything, their response yet again showed they supported the unhealthy and dangerous stance [Meryl](#) promotes. [StopAVN](#) then went to the media contacts. This second approach has proven more successful, with numerous sponsors pulling out due to the misinformation claims not only of [Meryl](#) and the [AVN](#), but also of other stalls and speakers at WoodfordFF. Numerous organisations including council/governments who support but don't sponsor the festival requested their names and logos be removed from sponsor lists.

Through some great activism, [StopAVN](#) have managed to get WoodfordFF to reluctantly act, although not as much as I and many others would have liked. WoodfordFF have decided to step back from giving [Meryl](#) an unchallenged stage to spout her lies and misinformation, and have allowed an immunologist to go up in debate against her, with a person from the World Health Organisation as the moderator. This is great news, but debates still aren't the best either. They are won not by who is correct, but who is the most confident. You need to keep your information short and sharp. It is much easier to do that with lies and false statements that sound like "statements of fact" when said confidently. Here's hoping the moderator keeps her on a tight leash, stopping her on any lies.

It's a good step, but Woodford Folk Festival are still not doing enough for the wellbeing of their patrons. Remember, this isn't censorship. It isn't silencing her either. It is just refusing her a stage. She is still free to spout her misinformation, but she'll have to do it elsewhere.

EDIT: OH MY FRACKING GOD! News has just come in that [Stop The AVN](#) have managed to pull something off I would not have expected in a hundred years! They had people handing out [these awesome pamphlets](#) to counter the misinformation they're expecting [Meryl Dorey](#) to be spouting. Not only that, while [Meryl](#) was on stage spouting her misinformation (and for two hours after), [StopAVN](#) managed to hire a plane to fly over the festival with a banner in tow stating "[Vaccination Saves Lives](#)"! This would have been flying above WoodfordFF right in [Meryl](#)'s face during and just after her talk! BRILLIANT!

So much praise to [Stop The AVN](#)! My hat and pants go off to them.

EDIT 2: [Stop The AVN](#) have released some banners we can put on our blogs. I've added them to the top and bottom of this post and will shortly be putting it on my blog sidebar as well. I'm still waiting (hoping) for pictures of [Meryl](#)'s talk and the plane, and will edit this a third time when I can get them. 😊 Bravo [StopAVN](#), Bravo.



Links and Resources:

- [Vaccination Saves Lives – Press Release from StopAVN.](#)
- [Vaccination Saves Lives – Pamphlet being handed out at WoodfordFF.](#)
- [Vaccination Saves Lives – StopAVN.](#)
- [Chain of Protection.](#)
- [My past blog posts about Vaccines/AVN.](#)
- [HCCC Public Health Warning about the Australian Vaccination Network.](#)
- [Stop the Australian Vaccination Network Facebook Page.](#)
- [Stop the Australian Vaccination Network Website.](#)

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- [Disgraced Andrew Wakefield.](#)
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