

Woodford Folk Festival – “Vaccination Saves Lives” Campaign

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 27 December 2011

Vaccination advocates urge Woodfordians, “Look to the heavens for inspiration during Dorey speech”

Following two weeks of intense public pressure, the Woodford Folk Festival has cancelled a solo presentation by Meryl Dorey of the Australian [anti] Vaccination Network. In its place will be a panel discussion between Ms Dorey and [Professor Andreas Suhrbier](#), head of the immunovirology laboratory at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. The discussion will be moderated by [Dr John Parker](#), a veteran of Doctors without Borders.

This is an important concession on behalf of the organisers, but does not go far enough. Ms Dorey should never have been booked to appear at the Festival. Certainly, once organisers realized a [public health warning](#) had been issued against Ms Dorey’s organisation by the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission, and that the AVN had its fundraising authority revoked by the [NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing](#) for 23 breaches of the act, Ms Dorey’s invitation should have been withdrawn.

While unhappy that Ms Dorey will still be speaking at Woodford, the Stop the AVN Facebook group, a loose-knit consortium of concerned citizens, scientists, doctors and nurses, decided to use a little humour in order to have ‘the last word’.

The group has hired an aircraft to fly over the Woodford Folk Festival site during the two hours surrounding Ms Dorey’s appearance.

Between 1.45 and 3.45pm on Thursday, 29 December, the plane will tow a banner with the message: VACCINATION SAVES LIVES.

Volunteers will be on the ground to hand out [flyers](#) after Ms Dorey’s appearance in the Blue Lotus tent at 2.15pm. The flyer addresses some of the myths about vaccination and counters them with facts.

Despite her claims to the contrary, Ms Dorey is *not* an expert, nor does she hold any qualification, in medicine, science, statistics or immunology.

There is no debate about the safety or efficacy of vaccines within the mainstream medical and scientific community – that is, among *experts* in the field.

The allegation that vaccines are *not* safe or effective is discredited by scientific evidence and relates to a wider set of new age [conspiracy theories](#) involving concerns about ‘one world government’, [the Illuminati](#), chemtrails and [AIDS denialism](#). This is the kind of ideology which informs Ms Dorey’s creative reinterpretation of the scientific data.

Ms Dorey plays down this aspect of her beliefs in her public appearances, [explaining to her Yahoo group](#) on 29 July, 2009:

“While we are already seen as rabid, idiotic fringe-dwellers by so many in the mainstream, it does our argument no good at all to bring in conspiracy theories which, though we may subscribe to them, are unprovable.” (Emphasis added.)

While almost every medication has the potential to create adverse reactions in certain individuals, the risk of a reaction more serious than a little localised pain and swelling and a slight fever after a vaccination is exceedingly small. The medical and scientific communities overwhelmingly agree that the benefits of vaccination far outweigh any small risk.