

July 2022

Re: Inquiry into the use of primates and other animals in medical research in NSW - Supplementary questions to Beagle Freedom.

1. What is the community expectation for researchers - should they be rehoming animals wherever they can, rather than killing them when the experiment is over or using them in experiments over and over? What could happen to any social license if healthy animals are being killed?

Community expectation is that research involving animals, especially cats and dogs, should be stopped completely. However if animals are used, the community does expect that they should be given up for adoption after a set amount of time rather than utilizing them over and over again. We imagine there would be outrage from the community if animals continued to be put to sleep rather than offered the chance at a new life.

2. An argument made by industry against rehoming animals is that it will increase the total number of animals used in research, and therefore work against one of the 3R's of 'reducing' the number of animals used in research. Do you think recycling the same animal through multiple research protocols their whole life is an overall welfare benefit – or is the cost to that individual animals so great that this position doesn't really reflect the purpose of 'reduce' in the 3Rs?

No, we don't believe that 'recycling' the same animals through research protocols for their entire life span is in the best welfare of that individual animal. Simply using the same animal over and over until it dies is a gross misinterpretation of the 3R's. Reduction would not be achieved by 'recycling' as the exact same number of studies involving animals would be conducted. Researchers should focus on refinement and replacement in order to be able to achieve a reduction of animals used. They are, after all, highly intelligent scientists.

We also remind the committee that The Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013 states at point 1.1 *Respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.*

'Recycling' an animal over and over until it dies, doesn't display any respect for that animal.

3. You highlight in your submission that enrichment is lacking in some animal research facilities – why is enrichment so important, both to the quality of life for these animals but also their ability to be rehomed?

It's a well known fact that enrichment reduces stress in animals. The more enriched an animals life it, the less stressed it will be. It also sets the animals up for a happier, longer and meaningful life, both inside the facility and when they transition to an adoptive home.

4. What recommendations would you like to see from this inquiry?

In summary, the recommendations that we'd like to see come from this inquiry are;

- Rehoming to be made mandatory to reputable rescue groups, not pounds / shelters.
- Retirement age of 6 for dogs and cats (or 5 whelping cycles for breeding animals).
- Mandatory up skilling for staff.
- Staff to animal ratio implementation and enforcement.
- Each facility to employ a minimum of 2 qualified enrichment officers.
- The revision of all guidelines or governing documents into a more clear and concise format.
- The regulation of animal ethics committees, including the introduction of term in office of no more than 3 years.

You can see full details on these recommendations in our submission.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Nikki Steendam

President - Beagle Freedom Australia

