



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 2 – HEALTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

# REPORT TABLED INTO THE USE OF PRIMATES AND OTHER ANIMALS IN MEDICAL RESEARCH IN NEW SOUTH WALES

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 October 2022

Portfolio Committee No 2. – Health has today handed down its report into the use of primates and other animals in medical research in New South Wales.

The Chair of the committee, the Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC said, “The inquiry had generated considerable public interest and engagement, with the committee receiving a number of submissions and conducting three public hearings involving 49 witnesses. The evidence from individuals, NGOs, academics, institutions and research bodies was detailed and of high quality.”

The committee made 13 recommendations covering a range of what it identified as key priorities. These included improving and enhancing both the induction and ongoing training of animal ethics committee members. The committee also recommended the increase in funding to effectively resource the audit and inspection functions of the Animal Research Review Panel and reinstate three-yearly audits of animal research facilities, to be conducted by inspectors employed by the Department of Primary Industries. “More transparency is certainly needed in the area of medical research that involves the use of animals, so the committee also made recommendations around improving statistical reporting and the provision of details of government funding, including funding given to the alternatives.”

The committee has also recommended that the NSW Government commit funding to enable the establishment and operation of a national flagship 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) research centre in the state. “In recommending this funding, the committee highlights the potential opportunity for New South Wales to lead the country in cutting-edge medical research.” Examples of non-animal medical research techniques already in use include growing human cells in vitro, using organ-on-a-chip technology and bioprinting organs including skin.”

Given that medical research involving animals is not restricted to any one state or territory, the committee has recommended that the NSW Government engage with the Australian Government at a ministerial level to advocate for a priority review of the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purpose*, to ensure that veterinarians with appropriate expertise are appointed to animal ethics committees along with requiring research institutions to employ a veterinarian.

The committee did identify two specific medical research experiments – the use of rodents in the forced swim test and the smoking tower test – that it concluded were particularly harmful and accordingly, recommended that the conduct of them be rapidly phased out in New South Wales. The committee also recommended that the NSW Government commit to a mandatory model for rehoming animals used in medical research, building on the Animal Research Review Panel’s ‘Research Animal Rehoming Guidelines’ and investigate opportunities to provide support to animal rescue organisations who rehome animals used in medical research.



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The Chair concluded, "It is our hope that the evidence documented and the commentary provided in this report will both help inform the NSW Government's consideration of these matters and facilitate discussions at the national level that will prompt positive developments with respect to the welfare of animals used in medical research."

The NSW Government will now have three months to respond to the committee's recommendations. The committee's report and other inquiry documents can be found on the committee's [webpage](#).

-ENDS-

*For further information, please contact Committee Chair the Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC, on (02) 9230 2280.*