

**Submission  
No 252**

**INQUIRY INTO USE OF PRIMATES AND OTHER ANIMALS  
IN MEDICAL RESEARCH IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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## Parliamentary Inquiry into Animal Experimentation

Dear Committee Members,

As a one-time member of the University of Adelaide's Animal Ethics Committee, I know that lack of transparency in research using animals has been and remains essential to continued cruelty. This needs to be reversed urgently.

The lack of transparency dates from late 19th century London, where a small number of doctors, who experimented on and vivisected animals, realized that the public's revulsion at the howls of tortured animals would end their experiments. They met to decide what to do, and concluded that the only way to keep vivisecting and experimenting on animals was to perform all their research in total secret, away from the public's eyes and ears. They also decided that it was essential to foster close relations with influential members of parliament. This strategy has spread throughout the world and continues today.

Certain types of experiments need to be prohibited immediately, including

- those for which alternatives are available. That such alternatives are not used is sometimes caused by a reluctance to change and by laziness.
- those conducted only to satisfy scientific curiosity. For example, much suffering is inflicted on animals by students so that they can submit research to gain Honours degrees and Ph.D's. One student bragged, in a University of Adelaide newsletter, that his research had no practical value and was done only to satisfy scientific curiosity. He surgically altered small Australian marsupials' sexual organs to see how this would affect their behaviours when kept in an overcrowded cage. Amongst other things he found that he could cause male animals to mount other male animals. Conducting experiments merely to satisfy scientific curiosity is of course not restricted to students, and sometimes it is indulged in to provide work for academics.

All facilities using or housing animals should be able to be inspected at any time and without warning by persons nominated by the organizations such as Animal Ethics Committees, Humane Research Australia, the RSPCAs, Animal Welfare Leagues, PETA and the like. Sometimes only searches can uncover extremely cruel non-approved experiments. For example, when a pregnant rat was accidentally sent the Department of Dental Surgery at the University of Adelaide, for an experiment approved by the Animal Ethics Committee, the experimenters kept the newly born rats so that they could perform very painful experiments on them that they knew would not be approved. It was only because someone informed me of this that a team was sent to investigate the allegation. It found the rats and caught the experimenters. The rats were removed but not the experimenters. In this case the whole department knew of the experiments including reception and clerical staff, one of whom informed me through a friend.

Not only should experiments such as those described above be banned, but eternal vigilance needs to be instituted to deter staff and students from carrying out unapproved procedures.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Adamson.