

Submission
No 272

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 24 March 2022

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the use of primates and other animals in medical research in New South Wales

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Terms of reference:

That Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health inquire into and report on the use of primates and other animals in medical research in New South Wales, and in particular:

- (a) the nature, purpose and effectiveness of medical research being conducted on animals in New South Wales, and the potential public health risks and benefits posed by this research;
- (b) the costs associated with animal research, and the extent to which the New South Wales and Federal Government is commissioning and funding the importing, breeding and use of animals in medical research in New South Wales;
- (c) the availability, effectiveness and funding for alternative approaches to animal research methods and technologies, and the ability of researchers to meet the 3 R's of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement;
- (d) the ethical and animal welfare issues surrounding the importing, breeding and use of animals in medical research;
- (e) the adequacy of the current regulatory regime regarding the use of animals in medical research, particularly in relation to transparency and accountability;
- (f) overseas developments regarding the regulation and use of animals in medical research; and
- (g) any other related matters.

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Thank you for accepting my submission to the above-named inquiry. I have addressed terms (d) and (e) in this submission.

(d) the ethical and animal welfare issues surrounding the importing, breeding and use of animals in medical research

It is estimated that each year in Australia, [6.5 million non-human animals](#) (including non-human primates) are subject to experiments in the name of science. On a global scale, this number amounts to [115 million animals per year](#). 115 million individuals, which is equivalent to the entire [population of Ethiopia](#).

To justify using animals as part of scientific experiments for medical, pharmacological and toxicity testing, researchers must prove that the potential benefits to humans outweigh the impact on the animals involved. Yet, despite this principle, it remains questionable as to whether the multitude of invasive, and ultimately lethal experiments inflicted on animals can be justified for the sake of so-called human 'development'. Some have even argued that animal testing [delays progress of human medical research](#).

Primates, our closest living relatives, still have significant genetic differences that can make applying any results extracted from experiments ineffective at best, and [lethal at worst](#). The [unreliability and limitations](#) of animal experimentation have been [well-documented](#) and [increasingly acknowledged](#). [Three major conditions](#) undermine researchers who justify using animal bodies and lives in experiments –

1. the effects of the laboratory environment and other variables on study outcomes
2. the disparities between animal models of disease and human diseases, and
3. species differences in physiology and genetics.

The statistics speak for themselves: [92% of drugs fail in human trials](#) even though they passed preclinical tests (including animal tests) – whether on safety grounds or because they do not work. [Only 5% of cancer drugs](#), for example, are approved after entering clinical trials.

Experiments conducted on animals are *simply not allowed to be performed on humans* due to the cruelty and risks involved in subjects being tested on. In a 2013 Melbourne-based experiment, a group of macaque monkeys had their skulls drilled into and electrodes inserted into their brains – not to discover a cure for a fatal disease – but instead, to measure their attention spans. To add insult to the cruelty inflicted upon these animals in the final moments of their lives, and their subsequent deaths – the results of such a test cannot be directly applied to humans because, despite our similarities to non-human primates, our brains — specifically our visual processing centres — are fundamentally different. Other non-human primates were [destined to be infected with immune-deficiency viruses](#). This conflict remains at the very core of animal experimentation.

Furthermore, would any human willingly subject their pet dog or cat to the same experiment? Or parent offer up their child to be tested on, ‘for the greater good’, the advancement of the whole of humankind?

Animal testing is not only wholly unethical, it is *unnecessary*. Why is it that animals pay the price for humanity’s failure to utilise progressive, animal-free tools for scientific and medical experimentation? What, exactly, makes an animal seem like an acceptable, ‘lesser’ being to experiment on?

Breeding animals into existence for human consumption – whether that be through their flesh (meat), their secretions (bovine milk, eggs), or lives (animal testing) – is ethically and morally wrong on every level. This should not exist. Taxpayers should not have to fund animal cruelty via the procurement/breeding and/or importation of animals for research that ultimately, proves little benefit for the broader community.

All animals are intelligent and sophisticated in their own way, and deserve our respect and kindness — not a life of fear and suffering in a cage, to be routinely tortured and murdered. I demand that animal experimentation ceases to exist in NSW (and Australia more broadly).

(e) the adequacy of the current regulatory regime regarding the use of animals in medical research, particularly in relation to transparency and accountability;

Considering that [64% of Australians do not believe that animals should be experimented on](#), and yet these tests still continue behind closed doors, the current regulatory regime remains woefully inadequate. The current regulations are modelled on what I believe is such an outdated version of what is considered ‘appropriate’ or ‘adequate’ or ‘justifiable’ use (and abuse) of animal bodies.