

**Submission
No 280**

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

Name: Mr Josh Duckett and Ms Alyssa Lim

Date Received: 30 March 2022

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

Written by: Alyssa Lim and Joshua Duckett

Animal experimentation is an unnecessary practise that does not have a place in our modern context. It is a cruel act that is inherently rooted in the misguided concept that animal life and experience is secondary to that of humans. The practise of using primates and other animals in medical research contradicts existing state legislation regarding animal cruelty, is outdated and does not reflect contemporary societal expectations, and ignores the potential to utilise existing alternative humane and non-animal methods to gather data that is more accurate and beneficial to humans.

The practise of animal experimentation is irreconcilable with legislation created specifically to protect animals. The New South Wales *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* defines “cruelty upon an animal” as “unreasonably, unnecessarily or unjustifiably” inflicting acts that result in an animal being “beaten, kicked, killed, wounded, pinioned, mutilated, maimed, abused, tormented, tortured, terrified or infuriated, over-loaded, over-worked, over-driven, over-ridden or over-used, exposed to excessive heat or excessive cold, or inflicted with pain.” In all instances of animal experimentation — all of which would require repeated acts over an extended period of time, denies their choice in the matter, and restricts their freedom — the animal being tested upon will experience one or compounded acts of cruelty outlined in the legislation. It is inconceivable that NSW law has clearly defined the terms of animal cruelty and yet, the practise of animal experimentation — acts which exhibit the hallmarks of the mistreatment of animals — is still permitted to continue.

On 1 July 2020, the Federal Government banned cosmetic testing on animals, aligning with the European Union’s stance on the matter and acknowledging the [“strong public support to ban cosmetic testing on animals.”](#) The implementation of this legislation is a clear reflection that cosmetic testing on animals is unnecessary and, according to the Australian Department of Health, “encourages information from new methods not relying on the use of animals, for chemicals with any industrial use (including cosmetics).” The government’s adoption and enforcement of this legislation is acknowledgement that animals should not be subjected to these practises and alternate sources for gathering data are available and effective. It is incongruous that a ban on animal testing is limited solely to the cosmetic industry but other methods involving data gathering from animal sources in other areas would still be permitted to occur.

Multiple studies have confirmed the psychological and physiological trauma resulting from processes involving the use of animals for testing, and have also indicated that data derived from animal-led research is limited in its applicability to humans. Existing alternate methods are

available, including the use of computer-based methods, clinical trials involving human volunteers, simulation modelling, and in-vitro testing — all of which have the shared factor of proving to be increasingly more accurate than animal testing. In the 14 years prior to 2022, an investigation by media publications *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* found that Research and Development funding “as a share of GDP has been falling,” curtailing the possibility to explore and develop new methods of data gathering and foster breakthroughs across several industries. With concerns for human use and safety being the leading argument for testing new products on animals, it is illogical that the outdated and inaccurate practise of animal testing would be relied upon for data collection. It would be to society’s advantage to pursue data gathering through alternate methods that provide much more precise results, and increase research and development investment to provide the means for developing better data collection methods.

In every instance, animal testing has proven to be incompatible with existing legislation, testing requirements, and social expectations. Banning the use of primates and other animals in medical research is long overdue and is ultimately in the best interest of society, with the added benefit of valuing animal life with the same weighting as we do human life. The NSW government has the opportunity to exhibit decency and reflect the views of its constituents by recognising and respecting the sentience of all living creatures, and be a forerunner in the scientific community by providing the parameters to pursue new avenues for medical research and testing. A ban on animal testing would be a significant step in securing Australia’s reputation as a leader of research and development, and is an opportunity to signal the nation’s potential as a modern, adaptable, and forward-thinking society to the international community.