

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge my submission into the above Inquiry. This is an issue which is of personal concern and interest to me both as a member of the Australian community and a consumer of health and medical products.

I accept that this is a NSW inquiry but it is open to all residents of Australia. I strongly believe a national approach to the issue of the use of animals in medical research is vital and hope that NSW can take a lead in addressing issues that can then be adopted nationally.

I submit that by taking the following urgently needed initiatives, NSW can be a leader in removing the shackles of an outdated method of scientific research.

1. 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

Around the world, the effectiveness of animal based medical research is increasingly questioned. It is now accepted by the research community and pharmaceutical companies alike, that over 90% of drugs that are successful in animal trials fail in the clinical setting. The premise that animal research benefits humans is declining rapidly.

In order to assess the predictive nature of animal models for human disease, systematic reviews can provide information as to whether there is indeed a translation of results. In 2007, Knight showed that this is indeed not the case and that animal research is indeed not scientifically valid. (Knight, A. (2007) Systematic reviews of animal experiments demonstrate poor human clinical and toxicological utility. *Alternatives to laboratory animals*, 35(6) 641- 59)

Reliance on an old and outdated method of research is dangerous to human health and a waste of important research resources.

I therefore submit that NSW commission a truly independent report to evaluate the impact of animal-based research and that publicly available retrospective assessments of animal research be a mandatory condition of funding.

2. 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.

It is important that the general public be offered the opportunity to comment at this Inquiry but it is impossible to provide a detailed response to this section when the costs associated with animal research and the extent to which the NSW and Federal government is funding the importing, breeding and use of animals in medical research when such details are hidden (unquestionably

deliberately) from the public. Without transparency in relation to funding by the granting bodies, no effective assessment can be made.

For example, there is no public information available on the funding (either from NSW or federally) of the baboon breeding facility in NSW. Without this information a response to this Inquiry in regard to the cost /benefit of the breeding facility is nigh impossible.

I therefore submit that the NSW government collaborates with government funding bodies (such as the NHMRC and ARC) to introduce a process which allows public access to information about which projects have been funded that have involved animal use.

I also submit that a publicly available, fully independent, assessment into the operating expenses and the viability of the baboon primate breeding facility be undertaken and made available as a matter of urgency.

3. 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

I submit that there is a need for a state, territory and federally funded research stream for the development of non-animal based scientific research centre. I also submit there is a need for further incentives such as awards, scholarships or research grants for non animal based research. Further, I submit that each and every animal ethics application be submitted to an expert in the area of non-animal technologies for review.

4. The ethical and animal welfare issues surrounding the importing, breeding and use of animals in medical research

Sentient animals used in biomedical research are denied the ability to consent to the research that is forced upon them. This has meant that animals in NSW have been subjected to horrendously cruel experiments (with little or no value to humans) such as:

- a) Inhalation research currently being conducted at the **University of Newcastle** and the **Centenary Institute** with mice forcibly exposed to cigarette smoke or other hazardous inhalants for up to 18 weeks in duration. In addition, other invasive procedures are carried out during the experiments such as induced painful diseases such as colitis. Translation of the findings due to biological differences between humans and mice are negligible as most scientists realise that it is impossible for a mouse to accurately mimic human inhalation.

I therefore submit forced inhalation studies on animals in NSW must be banned forthwith on ethical grounds.

- b) **The Forced Swim Test** forces mice or rats to swim in a cylinder of water, desperately trying to escape until they stop struggling and float. These experiments have reportedly been carried out at Macquarie University and the University of Wollongong. Again, these experiments are unethical and unreliable as they are not predictable models of depression

in humans. Increasingly around the world this old outdated test, which was developed over 40 years ago, is now recognised as outdated and unscientific.

I therefore submit the forced swim test in NSW must be banned on ethical and unscientific grounds.

c) Primate Breeding

There is no public information available on the funding nor cost benefit analysis of the baboon breeding facility in NSW. Public information as to how much funding from NSW and federally is expended on this primate breeding facility is unavailable. There is no publicly available information on the purpose for use of these primates.

I therefore submit that primate breeding facility be transitioned into a rehabilitation and sanctuary for the remaining baboons held captive there and primate research be phased out. This is a prime opportunity for NSW to take a step in the end to primate research in Australia and set an example for other primate breeding establishments in Victoria and worldwide.

5. Overseas developments regarding the regulation and use of animals in medical research.

I submit that the NSW government, in conjunction with the federal funding agencies, develop initiatives to develop and validate non-animal methods of research and invest in alternatives and thereby truly reflect a commitment to the replacement of animal research. Such alternative centres exist around the world but not in Australia – NSW should take the lead.

6. The adequacy of the current regulatory regime regarding the use of animals in medical research, particularly in relation to transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are woefully inadequate when it comes to the issue of animal experimentation and breeding establishments within NSW and Australia generally. For example, there is no national government body compiling the animal use statistics.

According to a ARRP annual report, there were no inspections of research facilities in 2018-19, clearly identifying a lack of transparency and accountability.

Information about animal experiments and the baboon primate breeding facility are shrouded in secret.

I submit that plain language non-technical summaries of research projects be provided for each project. I further submit that inspections of research facilities be carried out monthly and that adverse incident reports be made publicly available. Further, a list of research establishments that hold scientific licences should be made publicly available. To use the excuse of fear for researchers' lives is outdated and gives the impression that the government lacks transparency by withholding public information. CCTV cameras must be installed in all animal research institutes. NSW should support an Australia wide body to oversee animal research and ethics applications.

Finally, relying on animals for research into human relevant diseases is fraught with difficulties in translation and often extremely cruel to the animals involved. It is now time to move away from this outdate practice for the wellbeing of both animals and humans.

Yours sincerely