

"Truth never damages a cause that is just."

- Mahatma Gandhi

The European Union have addressed such concerns; Article 43.3 Directive 2010/63/EU now requires that **non-technical summaries (NTS)** are published by the European Member States in order to provide the public with access to information concerning projects using live animals.

NTS must include title, purpose, objectives and benefits, number and type of animals, predicted harms and application of the 3Rs (Reduction, Refinement & Replacement of animals). They must be written in non-scientific language and accessible for five years.

Certain projects (including those which use non-human primates) must also undergo a retrospective analysis – a powerful tool to facilitate critical review of the use of animals. It is believed that this facilitates improved design for similar studies, raises openness of best practice, and prevents mistakes.

Australia has a bad reputation when it comes to animal usage - being the fourth highest user, behind only China, Japan and the United States - with no commitment to reduce the numbers. And unlike more progressive nations has no government-funded institution dedicated to the development and validation of alternative research methods.

Australia has a long way to go in giving laboratory animals a better deal – lifting the veil of secrecy, by following in the EU's footsteps, should be the first step.



What you can do

Write to the Federal Minister for Health asking for more transparency and accountability of animal experiments. His contact details are below, or you can send via our webform by visiting our website.

The Hon Peter Dutton,
Federal Minister for Health,
PO Box 2012, STRATHPINE QLD 4500
Peter.dutton.mp@aph.gov.au

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Through the Looking Glass

- seeking transparency in animal experimentation



"There is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy."

- Joseph Pulitzer

Obtaining information about what actually happens to animals in research is a difficult and frustrating process. Questions to the funding bodies are usually redirected to the state or territory departments responsible for animal welfare; and the state departments usually refer back to the funding body which in Australia is the National Health & Medical Research Council. Requests for information – minutes of Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) meetings, annual reports - are denied, and straightforward requests such as statistics are, at best, "difficult" to obtain, and do not provide an accurate account of the purpose for which the animals are used.

Questions to institutions about their use of animals in research elicit the standard response that all animal use has been considered and approved by an AEC, and that they adhere to strict animal welfare legislation. Case studies prepared by Humane Research Australia however, suggest otherwise. How is it that such research as feeding alcohol to pregnant sheep, shaking lambs to death, and dropping weights onto the exposed brains of rats have possibly gained ethics committee approval? And how can it be argued that these animals' welfare has been protected by legislation?

A 2013 opinion poll commissioned by Humane Research Australia, found that **57% of respondents were not even aware animals are used in experimental research in Australia.**

These experiments are often funded by Australian taxpayers - and it appears that we don't have a right to know what our precious resources are being spent (or wasted) on.

