

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 23 May 2013



University of Newcastle response to Humane Research Association allegations surrounding treatment of animals in research

The University of Newcastle is firmly committed to the ethical treatment of animals in research. We share community concerns about the ethical use of animals in necessary medical research and we adhere to Australian standards, which include some of the most stringent animal research legislation and procedures in the world.

Any use of animals for research must meet the requirements of the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. All research involving animals is evaluated against the principles of reduction in the number of animals used, replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives wherever possible, and refinement of techniques and procedures to reduce the impact on animals. Research must also be tested against the principle that the work is worthwhile.

These principles are also embodied in the NSW Animal Research Act and NSW Animal Research Regulations.

Researchers who work with animals must obtain approval from the University of Newcastle Animal Care and Ethics Committee that has been established under the NSW legislation. The Committee consists of a panel of community members, animal welfare representatives, veterinary scientists and academics.

Researchers who use animals for research also have a personal responsibility for the welfare of the animals they use.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to Humane Research Australia's concerns about the treatment of greyhounds and the necessity of the research undertaken.

The research in question was conducted prior to 2004 and published in 2011. Dogs have not been used for research at the University of Newcastle for more than ten years.

The research was carried out by leading physicians and anaesthetic clinicians who work daily with people with serious health conditions. The research is relevant to improving our understanding of the control of blood flow experienced by people with respiratory obstructions or affected by disease.

The experiments were designed to minimise discomfort to the animals. The balloon catheter procedure used on the animals under local anaesthetic mirrors the procedure used in humans, for whom it is also done under local anaesthetic.

Please attribute these comments to Professor Mike Calford, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Newcastle. Media contact: Sharon Buckland, (02)4985 4049 or 0452 642 766.