



MEDIA RELEASE

2nd May 2016

Unexpected and Unexplained Deaths at Primate Research Facility Gippsland, Victoria

Following recent media coverage of the use of primates in research, and a senate bill to ban the importation of primates for research, information has become available to Humane Research Australia concerning harm and neglect of animals at a Victorian primate breeding facility, including the unexpected deaths of some animals when key personnel were on leave.

HRA subsequently lodged Freedom of Information requests with Monash University and the Victorian Government.

Our enquiries verified the following incidents.

- **20 February 2016**, a female marmoset aged ten years (and known as CJF602) was found listless and bleeding from her bowel. After being treated and placed in a humidicrib she began gasping for breath and died. CJF602 was a female “breeder” recently imported from France. The cause of her death is unknown.
- **14 January 2016**, a male marmoset aged 8 years (and known as CJM814) was found listless with shallow breathing and vomiting clear foamy liquid. The vet was called for treatment but the marmoset died 30 minutes later. CJM814 was a male “breeder” recently imported from France. The cause of his death is unknown.
- **18 September 2013**, a male macaque (age not divulged) was anaesthetised to obtain blood samples for a commercial client. He exhibited an adverse reaction to the anaesthesia taking a long time to regain consciousness and had difficulty moving his limbs. He was killed the following day as he failed to show signs of recovery. According to the Animal Ethics Committee discussion, there was no explanation for his failure to recover.

Interestingly, the response from the Victorian Dept. of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources stated:

"... the department has not received a report of an incident leading to animal deaths at the facility..."

It has been claimed that primates used in research are kept in world class facilities:

“The welfare of every animal is continuously monitored and recorded. The outstanding facilities provided to support animal research in Australia are governed by individual state and territory legislation, ensuring the highest standards.” ^[1]

HRA CEO, Helen Marston: *“Our apparent “gold standards” of animal welfare are clearly failing and we need to put an end to this cruelty. It is even harder to justify knowing that scientific literature has revealed that despite the genetic similarity to humans, non-human primates are not appropriate models on which to base medical research.”*

The animals mentioned above had not been involved in research yet succumbed to unexpected and unexplained deaths. Others are subjected to highly invasive procedures including brain and vision experiments.

How many more animals are suffering and dying unnecessarily in these facilities at the expense of Australian tax dollars?

Please sign our petition to the Minister for Health, the Hon. Sussan Ley, asking her to
Ban Primate Experiments.

Background:

- In November 2015 a bill to ban the importation of primates for research was re-presented to the Senate and then referred to a senate inquiry by the Senate Environment and Communications Committee. The bill has not yet been debated in Parliament.
- Australia is home to three government-funded primate breeding colonies where animals are bred specifically for research purposes. Marmosets and macaques are bred in Churchill, Victoria and baboons in Wallacia, NSW.
- Australia is beginning to lag the rest of the world now as other nations look at phasing out their use of primates in research (see below).

Related:

[Call to end monkey brain experiments as research deemed scientifically redundant and misleading](#)

[Dutch Parliament passes motion to phase out non-human primate research](#)

[NIH to review its policies on all nonhuman primate research](#)

[FRAME's response to Australia's proposed ban on importing monkeys for research](#)

[You might find my research using monkeys abhorrent, but it could save your life](#)

[HRA responds to researcher's opinion](#)

^[1] James Bourne, The Guardian, 1st March 2016.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/01/you-might-find-my-research-using-monkeys-abhorrent-but-it-could-save-your-life>