



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

COUNTING ON ANIMAL CRUELTY?

Latest annual statistics indicate an increase in the number of animals used in Australia for research & testing purposes

Humane Research Australia has collated the latest national statistics for the use of animals in research, but with so many 'loopholes' in states' reporting, it is difficult to portray an accurate picture of how many animals are actually used in experiments in this country.

The results for 2009 show that the number of animals used (5,311,321) is slightly higher than the number from 2008 (5,116,787) – this figure, however, is a conservative estimate as it does not take into account the animal use in Western Australia, the Northern Territory or Queensland, as figures have not been made available. Going by the most recent obtainable statistics for two of these states (589,047 in 2004 for QLD and 1,049,379 in 2007 for WA) the total number of animals used is closer to **6.9 million**. New South Wales recorded the largest figure with 2.4 million animals used, followed closely by Victoria with a total of 2.2 million. Of the total number of animals used in 2009, there were over **5500 dogs** and over **700 primates**. Other animals used include pigs, mice, sheep, horses, cats, fish and native mammals.

The procedures ranged from 'Observational studies involving minor interference' to 'Major physiological challenge', 'Production of genetically modified animals' and '**Death as an end point**'.

A full breakdown of the figures is available at <http://www.humaneresearch.org.au/statistics/>

Chief Executive Officer, Helen Marston, said today "*It's disappointing that Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory no longer provide their state statistics and one can only wonder what it is they have to hide?*"

"The extrapolation of data from animals to humans can be dangerously misleading due to anatomic, genetic and metabolic differences. It is therefore not the most efficacious method of medical research. Australia should be investing in the development and validation of more humane and scientifically valid research methods – as occurs in Europe and the United States."

Ms Marston concluded "*Australia has a notorious record of using large numbers of animals for research in comparison with other nations. We are the forth highest user, behind the United States, Japan and China. When you consider Australia's lower human population, the number of animals used per capita suggests there is no commitment to adhere to the three R's Principle of animal use – Refinement, Reduction, Replacement.*

"Today's researchers carry a huge responsibility. Their work affects a great many lives – not only those animals they may choose or choose not to use – but many terminally-ill human patients who are looking toward cures. They don't care whether a cancer drug works on a mouse, or diabetes can be cured in a monkey. These ongoing promises only taunt them with false hope. These people need real cures. Unfortunately this will not happen unless we let go of antiquated methodologies that rely on data from a different species."