

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tony Abbott Urged to Not Squander \$20 Billion on Cruel Animal Experiments

Humane Research Australia has today written to Prime Minister Mr Tony Abbott, acknowledging the importance of \$20 billion invested in the Medical Research Future Fund (announced in last night's budget) but urging him that it not be wasted on cruel & unnecessary animal experiments.

Currently, much medical research in Australia is based on the use of animals, which have shown to be poor predictive models for human disease and ailments. For example, according to the US Food and Drugs Administration, nine out of ten drugs deemed successful from animal tests fail in human clinical trials. This certainly illustrates the need for more human-specific testing methods.

Helen Marston, Chief Executive: *"I am concerned that with an annual "turnover" of more than 7 million animals used in Australian experiments, Australia is already the fourth highest user of animals – behind only China, Japan and the United States. When we consider our much smaller human population, this makes our per capita use of animals embarrassingly high! A \$20 billion "investment" into such research might suggest that the number of animals used will increase dramatically, and this would be bad news – not only for the animals themselves, but for the many Australians currently experiencing ill health who are looking toward real medical breakthroughs – not false promises based on animal experiments."*

HRA's records show that over the past few years, Australian taxpayers have funded such research as:

- Breast implants on pigs
- Shaking lambs to death to "prove" shaking baby syndrome
- Feeding lamingtons and dim sims to rats
- Administering alcohol to pregnant sheep
- Feeding marijuana and ecstasy to rats

Aside from the obvious cruelty to these animals, this research is clearly not life-saving and is a blatant waste of our financial resources.

Helen Marston: *"I therefore urge the government to ensure the \$20 billion invested into the Medical Research Future Fund is indeed a genuine investment into human health, by not being squandered on archaic and irrelevant animal experiments, and instead used to embrace the new (non-animal) technologies that are more predictive of and relevant to human health."*

*"Other nations are already investing in these types of research, such as the Centre for 3R's in the UK, the European Union Reference Laboratory for Alternatives to Animal Testing and The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods in the United States. It's crucial that Australia follows their lead and invest in **real** medical advancement."*