Tuesday 29 March 2022

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health

Legislative Council

NSW Parliament

6 Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Inquiry into the use of primates and other animals in medical research in New South Wales

Dear committee members,

I am writing on behalf of Liberty Foundation Australia Limited, a not-for profit organisation that has the sole objective to facilitate the release, rehabilitation and rehoming of animals from research in Australia.

Commencing operations in late 2017, Liberty Foundation is a company limited by guarantee operating as a registered not for profit with DGR status. Our activities to date have focused on rehoming small animals (from research) in NSW and the ACT that can become pets and companions in the community. These animals have included dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice and fish – more than 420 individuals to date. We can also accommodate farm animals that can be retired to sanctuaries, and have the structure in place to work in any state or territory of Australia.

We have signed rehoming agreements with several large research establishments and have been working with others to develop rehoming policies and pathways with the view of starting rehoming soon.

We are a non-political organisation, which does not take any formal position on whether animals should be used for research and scientific purposes. We are not aligned with any other groups, political parties, or organisations that use animals in research.

Liberty Foundation is an independent, charitable organisation that exists solely to facilitate rehoming of animals from research. This work involves:

- the rehoming of animals from research
- outreach work within the research and scientific community to promote rehoming and to assist in the development of pathways to rehoming
- outreach work within the community to promote rehoming and to attract supporters, volunteers, donors and members
- public comment through the media and other forums to raise awareness of rehoming animals from research.

There are, of course, thousands of animals used in research that could be rehomed, which are currently euthanised by research establishments throughout Australia.

This is despite the clear direction to rehome wherever possible in the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*.

We would like to point out that not all animals used for research and scientific purposes in Australia, including NSW, are used for medical research. Many are used for veterinary research, agricultural research, product testing and in a range of other contexts. Our submission is relevant to and references all the categories of research and scientific work that use animals.

We believe rehoming is relevant to your inquiry is because:

- it represents a significant ethical and welfare issue for research establishments and the broader community given that much of the animal-based research in Australia is government funded
- improved transparency and accountability in the animal-based research industry are essential for providing better outcomes for animals at the conclusion of their use in research on two counts:
    1. transparency - access to better data will allow for better planning of rehoming services, and
    2. accountability – the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* is not a voluntary national code, it states clearly that rehoming should be considered wherever possible and where it's in the best interest of the animal
- Australia is lagging behind comparable developed nations in terms of rehoming animals from research
- the inquiry provides a rare and valuable forum to discuss and progress the ethical treatment of animals in research which must include options for animals at the end of the research process.

With the advent of Liberty Foundation and numerous other non-specific small animal rehoming services operating in NSW, there would be few occasions if any, where the rehoming of a much greater number of animals from research would not be possible.

It is staggering to consider the amount of government funding directly supporting animal-based research, when compared to the absence:

- of funding to support end-of-research options for these animals either at the industry, federal or state government level
- of state government rehoming programs for the animals being used in their own government facilities.

While there are government grant programs for companion animal rehoming in general in other states, there are none in NSW aside from some assistance to major welfare agencies such as the RSPCA, least of all for companion animals from research such as rats and mice.

This is an issue that must be addressed in any discussion around improving welfare outcomes for animals and the demand this will create for rehoming services.

This was reflected in the recent work of the Victorian government's *Taskforce on Rehoming Pets.* Its final report to government in December 2021 recommended that the government not only consider mandatory retirement for dogs and cats at the conclusion of research but it consider specific grant programs to support the rehabilitation and rehoming of animals used

in research and training. It further recommended that the government consider funding programs to support the sector to upskill in rehabilitation and care for such animals.

We have provided a submission that draws upon our earlier whitepaper[1] (released in 2016) that addressed the business case for a rehoming movement supported by the animal-based research industry. This whitepaper led directly to the establishment of Liberty Foundation as a small animal rehoming service.

The aims of starting the charity in this way where twofold: to meet the present demand for a rehoming service for animals coming out of research by proactive research establishments; and to demonstrate a successful model for rehoming that addresses the needs of both animals, adopters and carers, and industry.

Liberty Foundation has been successful on all counts and has, since FY2020-2021, been able to operate fully on its own resources through donations and fundraising (prior to that it received funding from the founder). However, for the rehoming movement to expand and become sustainable at scale, we believe industry and government must work together with rehoming organisations, most importantly, by providing funding.

We commend you for undertaking this inquiry and giving your time and attention to this important issue.

Given the specialist nature of our work and the expertise within our organisation, we would welcome the opportunity to attend a hearing of the inquiry and give evidence.

Please contact me directly should you require any further information about our submission or clarification of any kind.

Regards,

Paula Wallace

Director

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www.libertyfoundation.org.au

https://www.facebook.com/LibertyFoundationAustralia

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCISjfihJnJ6BCs8KVYaW_3g

1. http://www.inbetweenmedia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/WHITE-PAPER-15.8.pdf

The case for rehoming in Australia

A more sustainable and ethical approach to managing non-human animals in research

Introduction

It's estimated that there are thousands of non-human animals used for scientific purposes in Australia that could safely live their natural life spans following their use in research but for the majority, where death is not the end point of research itself, euthanasia is still the most common outcome.

While there is insufficient data to enable a sound statistical analysis of animal-based research activities in Australia and the establishments involved, there is ample evidence to predicate the need for a rehoming alternative for the animals that are used in basic/fundamental science, human and animal health research, product and toxicity testing and agricultural research.

By supporting and/or investing in alternative outcomes for these animals, the establishments* that are responsible for these animals; the animals themselves; and broader society will benefit in a number of ways.

The advantages of supporting and/or investing in rehoming to establishments that are engaged in – through administering, conducting, funding or supporting – animal-based research, are well-founded and numerous. They range from reputational advantage, to better risk management and alignment with government regulations and public and stakeholder views.

The benefits of rehoming to animals used for scientific purposes are clear and obvious: they will have the opportunity to live out their natural life, as well as experience an environment different from that of the institutional context, free from scientific intervention, where the care and services are available to enable them to lead an enriching existence.

There is in fact a global movement in the rehoming of ex-research animals including sanctuaries or specialist centres. Until recently, there was no such option for animals in Australia but there are now two dedicated charities:

- Liberty Foundation – based in NSW, providing rehoming services for the full range of animals from research that can become pets or companions, or can be retired to farm sanctuaries in Australia, and
- Beagle Freedom Australia – based in Victoria, providing a rehoming service predominantly for dogs and cats in Australia.

Aside from these services, there are no industry/government-supported or dedicated facilities for ex-research animals in Australia.

The rehoming movement globally plays an important role in placing greater awareness and value on the lives of animals; and in assisting research establishments to improve their approach to animal management, increase staff morale and keep pace with international trends and government requirements.

* While the organisations engaged with animal-based research activities in Australia – through administering, conducting, funding or supporting such activities - may vary in terms of their purpose, structure, governance and function, the term research establishment is used in the context of this submission to include primarily: universities; government agencies; companies; and biomedical research entities.

The rehoming opportunity

The latest available national figures, for 2018 show that the percentage of animals used for non-observational[1] procedures in Australia, involving varying levels of invasiveness and challenge but not resulting in death was around 33% (3.33 million animals) from a total of 10,105,257[2] used for scientific purposes. This is based on data from five states of Australia but includes three of the largest user states of NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Figures for 2019 show the number of animals used in research work in NSW that did not result in their death directly was 744,828[3] animals. This figure excludes any genetically modified animals which cannot leave secure facilities according to Australian law.

In theory it is animals from the groups described above that could potentially be available, but not necessarily suitable, for rehoming. That simply means that animals from these groups have been involved in work that did not directly result in their death.

Of course, that doesn't automatically make them available for rehoming. In the case of dogs and cats for instance, many are counted in annual data that are attending university veterinary clinics and are privately owned, or they may be not be "retired" for 8-10 years and can be passed onto other facilities to continue in research work.

Since 2019, licensed research establishments in NSW have been required to report on the fate of animals in research, including domestic dogs and cats. The data to date shows a small but increasing number of dogs are being rehomed from research establishments: 30 dogs were rehomed in 2019 but no cats.

This is a promising result but the data also shows that 640 cats and 887 dogs were retained in projects or retained for use in other projects or supplied to another establishment/individual for research. This raises the question of whether a mandatory retirement age should be introduced which takes into consideration the cumulative impact on the animals of remaining in research for an extended period of time and how this may impact their opportunities to be rehomed at a later date.

Before this data was available it had been estimated there were around 1000 dogs and 500 cats in the system at any one time that could be available for adoption at some point. It appears these figures were not far off the mark in the case of NSW.

Typically, the largest groups involved in research are rats and mice, followed by fish, amphibians and other aquatic animals.

National statistics do not categorise animal species against type or purpose of procedure, however the NSW government does provide this information which is significant given the state is one the largest user of animals in research in Australia representing 22% of the animals recorded across the five reporting states.

[1] Animals involved in observational studies are not included where they are considered non-invasive as they are mostly conducted with free-living or sanctuary populations

[2] https://www.humaneresearch.org.au/statistics-2018-animal-use-in-research-and-teaching-australia/

[3] NSW 2019 Animal Use in Research Statistics, NSW Department of Primary Industries

What the latest figures (2019) from NSW show is that there were large numbers of farm animals such as poultry, pigs, sheep and cattle being used for research purposes in NSW in a variety of procedures. Aside from the largest groups – rats, mice, amphibians and aquatic species – there were a number of other animals that may be suitable for rehoming as shown in the table. These included cats, dogs, rabbits and guinea pigs for example.

Figure 1: NSW animal use in research in 2019 – by selected species, research category and procedure categories 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 only

Type of animal/Research category	Stock Breeding	Stock Maintenance	Education	Research - Human or Animal Biology	Research - Human or Animal Health & Welfare	Research - Animal Management or Production	Production of Biological Products	Diagnostic Procedures	Regulatory Product Testing	TOTAL for each animal type
Cats	67		318	16	882	68	7	16	122	1496
Dogs	71	2	955	316	1548	159	304	51	178	3584
Fish	536	151	978	18579	389	1540	3580			25753
Guinea Pigs	405		53	107	153				343	1061
Mice	49628	4109	1667	79848	28284	45		83	631	164295
Primates	16			31	6					53
Rabbits	59		41	257	186	238	96		685	1562
Rats	6	236	398	15519	2119		52	22	272	18624
TOTAL for each research category	50788	4498	4410	114673	33567	2050	4039	172	2231	**216428**

Notes: Data includes procedure categories: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 only. It excludes procedure categories 2, 8 & 9 which involve death of the animal or production of genetically modified animals as neither of these groups can be rehomed.
Data excludes animals used for the purposes of environmental study as this generally involves observation of wild living populations of animals.
Description of procedure categories:
Observation with minor interference – included in table
Animal unconscious without recovery – not included in table
Minor conscious intervention – included in table
Minor surgery with recovery – included in table
Major surgery with recovery – included in table
Minor physiological challenge – included in table
Major physiological challenge – included in table
Death as an endpoint – not included in table
Production of genetically modified animals – not included in table
Where a cell is left empty it indicates zero animals were reported
Source: NSW 2019 Animal Use in Research Statistics, NSW Department of Primary Industries

There has certainly been ad-hoc rehoming of animals from research in the past in Australia. However, until the advent of charities dedicated to this activity, there has been no ability to organise rehoming on a larger scale across numerous research establishments.

Figures from Liberty Foundation[4] indicate that the not-for-profit has rehomed around 420 animals from research since it commenced rehoming in October 2017. This includes dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice and fish.

There are no figures available from Beagle Freedom Australia[5] but it has been actively rehoming dogs and cats from research establishments nationally for around 10 years.

Image: Liberty Foundation

[4] https://www.libertyfoundation.org.au

[5] https://www.beaglefreedomaustralia.org/

Licensed facilities

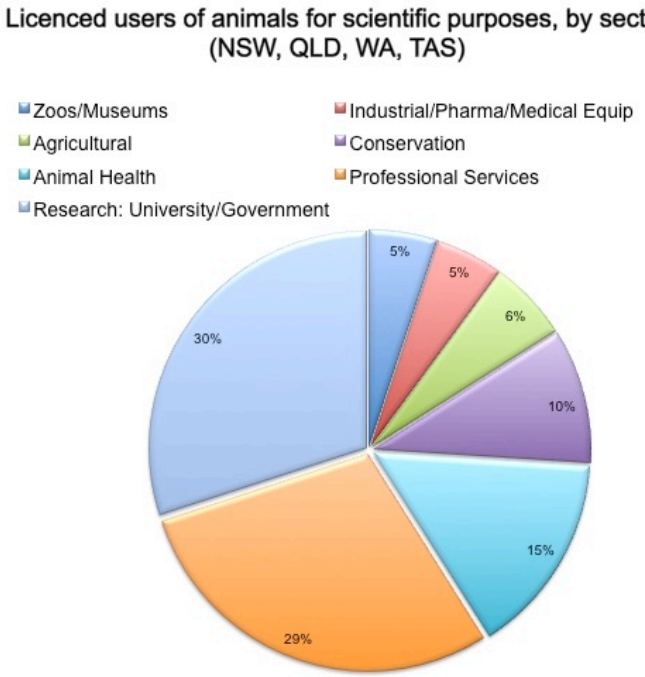
Based on information provided in 2016 by governments in NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania[6], the breakdown of licensed research establishments is shown in Figure 2.

Of these licensed research establishments, only 6% were publicly listed and less than half of them with the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX); a further 11% were university owned or operated; 13% were not-for-profit or community- owned; 13% were government owned or operated; and the remainder (57%) were privately owned or employee-owned.[7]

While this provides some indication of the share of animal-based research conducted in different sectors, it does not allow insight into individual animals and their involvement. It is also complicated by the fact that a significant proportion of licensed facilities (30% or more) are likely to be conducting field-based research on free-living or sanctuary populations which are not relevant to this submission.

The fact that information is not readily available from all states also alters the analysis as Victoria for instance leads Australia's biotechnology sector, with particular strengths in the fields of medicine and agriculture. Victoria is home to about 150 biotechnology companies, as well as 13 major medical research institutes, 10 teaching hospitals conducting significant research, and nine universities. Victorian companies make up 68% of the aggregate value of Australia's top 20 listed biotechnology companies, including Australia's largest, Commonwealth Serum Laboratories.

Figure 2: (information sourced from Humane Research Australia)



[6] Information from various sources, supplied by Humane Research Australia, 2016

[7] Figures do not include any licences held by primary and secondary education sector as they are not relevant to this paper

Research conducted by ozsheba - shareholder engagement on behalf of animals – in 2014, surveyed 117 ASX-listed companies in the categories of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, life sciences, healthcare and household and personal products. Of the 39 companies that responded, 22 advised that they "do not – directly or indirectly – use animals as part of their research for the benefit of humans"[8]. A policy of non-disclosure was indicated by a further three companies, and the remainder said they comply with regulatory requirements for animal research – which means animals are likely or definitely used by 44% of the companies that replied.

In order to accurately assess the availability/suitability of animals used for scientific purposes for rehoming, it is necessary to have nationally consistent datasets that provide more information on the number and type of species being used and the nature of the research.

Funding for research

Funding for Australian research and development comes from a variety of sources. This includes funding from all levels of government in Australian and philanthropic sources. Across the Australian economy, $31.2 billion was spent on research and development in 2015. The business and higher education sectors accounted for the vast majority - or 84% - of this expenditure.[9]

The Australian government funded or supported around one-third of this effort or $10.2 billion - mainly through the Research and Development Tax Incentive scheme, and competitive and block-based funding for university research.

National competitive research grants are underpinned by peer-review and are run principally through the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Data supplied by universities to the Department of Education, Skills & Employment shows that NSW universities received $3.5 billion in Australian (Commonwealth) government grants in 2020 and Victorian universities received nearly $3 billion.[10]

Philanthropy is also a growing source of revenue for Australian universities. According to one source, on average, Australia's top five fundraising universities receive nearly 20 times more donation revenue than their peers[11]. Donation revenue generates $476 million per year, with 73% spread across five universities -

UNSW, The University of Queensland, The University of Melbourne, The University of Sydney and The University of Western Australia.

Overall, 54% of this revenue is spent on "research" across all the recipient universities.

Universities are also among the largest not-for-profit organisations in Australia. Research from 2019[12] showed that the top ten earning charities in Australia included six universities – UNSW, The University of Queensland, University of Melbourne, The University of Sydney, Monash University and Australian National University.

Furthermore, the top ten charities for government income also included six universities - UNSW, The University of Queensland, University of Melbourne, The University of Sydney, Monash University and Deakin University.

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[8] https://ozsheba.wordpress.com/pharma-and-biotech-companies/

[9] https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/research-innovations/research-funding/

[10] https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-publications/resources/2020-higher-education-providers-finance-tables

[11] https://theconversation.com/five-australian-universities-get-the-bulk-of-philanthropic-donations-104001

[12] https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2019/07/18/australias-richest-charities/

The rehoming opportunity: in summary

Image: Liberty Foundation

- More than 3.33 million captive animals used for scientific purposes (in 2018) Australia-wide, would have theoretically been available, but not necessarily suitable, for rehoming.
- In NSW there are a number of species that could potentially be considered for rehoming into the community such as domestic cats, dogs, fish, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits and rats. There are increasing rates of rehoming of dogs now being reported by research establishments in NSW.
- Of facilities licensed to use animals for scientific purposes in four states of Australia, a significant proportion are universities, research institutes and government agencies, a trend which is likely to be reflected nationally.
- Much of the basic science conducted in Australia is supported by taxpayer-funded grants through the NHMRC and ARC, some of which involves animals. Universities are the primary recipients of current funding, with the remainder going to research institutes and government agencies.
- An increasing amount of research at university level is again being funded by the general public through donations to universities in their capacity as charities. Universities are also amongst the highest charity recipients of government funds.
- Although biotechnology and pharmaceutical/healthcare companies represent only a small portion of the facilities licensed to use animals for scientific purposes, figures are not available from Victoria, a centre of research in Australia where establishments receive nearly half of all NHMRC funding.

A more sustainable and ethical approach

It's hard to argue against the more compassionate treatment of animals, especially those who have been used in scientific exploration/experimentation.

The mandatory *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (the Code) is clear on this:

> *3.4.2 Opportunities to rehome animals should be considered wherever possible, especially when the impact of the project or activity on the wellbeing of the animal has been minimal and their physiological condition and behavioural attributes indicate that they can be introduced to a new environment with minimal, transient impact on their wellbeing.*[13]

However, rehoming should also be considered within a broader context that takes into account ethical and stakeholder considerations around animals used in research.

It can be argued that the animal-based research sector currently does not have a credible community-wide social licence in Australia. A 2013 opinion poll commissioned by Humane Research Australia and carried out by Nexus Research, found that 57% of respondents were not even aware animals are used in experimental research in Australia; and only 13% of respondents said that they would donate to a health or medical research charity if they knew it was funding animal experiments.

This lack of public awareness coupled with low levels of disclosure and reporting on animal-based research activities, much of which are funded by taxpayers, means that many Australians have not be able to formulate informed views on the matter.

For instance, more than 60% of pharmaceutical companies do not disclose whether they have taken any measures to ensure or improve animal welfare during animal testing[14].

Many establishments rely on their minimum compliance with the Code. But as we have seen in other industries where animals are part of the supply chain, reliance on a company's compliance with Australian regulation has not been sufficient to protect it from the impact of changes in public opinion and government policy[15]. Recent high-profile examples include live export and the greyhound racing industry in NSW.

Issues related to animals in industry are starting to appear on the global business sustainability agenda.[16] They have become the subject of new assessment tools for investors that connect ESG performance with corporate performance – namely the Business Benchmark for Animal Welfare (BBFAW) and the Farm Animal Investment Risk & Return (FAIRR).

In recent years, we've also seen the emergence of sustainability-linked loans or green loans, which have become a popular alternative to traditional capital raising and debt.

One such loan has been executed between the Commonwealth Bank and Queensland business Stockyard Group, which runs a 20,000-head cattle feedlot on the Darling Downs. The amount of interest paid on the loan will be charged according to how the company

[13] nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes
[14] https://connect.sustainalytics.com/sector-report-pharmaceuticals
[15] http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3753039.htm
[16] https://procurementandsupply.com/2015/10/animal-welfare-and-responsible-procurement/

reduces greenhouse gases, meets animal welfare targets, and provides a safe workplace for its staff. It is said the loan was "driven by customer interest and global trends".[17]

One recognition of the wider importance of social licence has been a global move towards greater openness in animal research. This is most advanced in the United Kingdom where the Declaration on Openness on Animal Research has now been signed by more than 126 research establishments. [18]

The resulting Concordat, released in 2014, states a primary aim of "culture change within the life-science sector, and a resulting shift to greater societal understanding of why and how research establishments use animals in science".

Since then, New Zealand and several countries in Europe have launched openness agreements based on similar commitments to those in the UK.

Regulations in the European Union also encourage greater openness, where it has been mandatory since 2010 to publish non-technical summaries of approved animal research projects, thereby making them more accessible for the "lay person".

There is now an initiative in Australia to launch an "Openness Agreement on Animal Research", a voluntary pledge that can be signed by organisations wishing to demonstrate commitment to greater transparency in their use of animals for research or teaching.

A working group convened by ANZCCART has prepared a draft openness agreement for Australia.[19] The draft sets out four commitments similar to those in other countries and also provides specific context relating to the use of animals in research and teaching in Australia. Feedback on the draft is now being sought though a public consultation process.

Encouragingly, the concerns often cited by the animal-based research community in Australia around greater transparency and broader public engagement – of impacts to funding, safety, security and reputation – have not be realised in other parts of the world where industry and governments have embraced greater openness in relation to animals in research.

What all these developments demonstrate is that maintaining social licence for research establishments is increasingly reliant on demonstrating ethical decision making, transparency and best practice. And, having mechanisms in place to assess, document and respond to stakeholder concerns.

Given that the current alternative to rehoming in most cases is euthanasia, rehoming must be considered in this broader context with the view that research establishments will be asked if they are not rehoming, "why not"?

Image: Liberty Foundation

[17] https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2021-07-22/beef-bank-loan-linked-to-emissions-animal-welfare/100311374

[18] https://concordatopenness.org.uk/

[19] https://anzccart.adelaide.edu.au/openness-agreement-public-consultation#openness-agreement-online-feedback-form

Government action

Arguable one of the biggest policy developments in animal-based research was the European Parliament's recent resolution calling for an action plan to end the use of animal experimentation. Passed with a vote of 667 to 4, the resolution calls for the European Commission to establish an EU-wide action-plan with ambitious yet achievable targets and milestones to accelerate progress in phasing out the use of animal methods in scientific research and education.

Recent political activity in Australia has been focused on the ban on the sale of new cosmetic products in Australia that have been tested on animals, which commenced on 1 July 2020.[20].

Bills have also been introduced in the NSW and Victorian Parliaments by the Animal Justice Party, calling for mandatory rehoming of domestic dogs and cats from research as well as retirement ages set across the board. These campaigns are ongoing.

The Victorian government recently convened a Taskforce on Rehoming Pets, which delivered its report to the government in December 2021. It recommended that the government not only consider mandatory retirement for dogs and cats at the conclusion of research but specific grant programs to support the rehabilitation and rehoming of animals used in research and training. And, that the government consider funding programs to support the sector to upskill in rehabilitation and care for such animals.

It further recommended:

> *"[The] Victorian Government to formally request for a review of the Australian Code, with a specific focus on retirement age for dogs and cats used in research and teaching."*

Some sector stakeholders recommended bringing retirement practices for animals in research and teaching in line with the Breeding Code (i.e. six years for male dogs, or five litters for females dogs; eight litters for female cats), to improve the likelihood of successfully rehoming these animals.

The report stated:

> *"Guidance on signs that indicate an animal is not coping with a project's conditions could also assist in identifying animals that need to be retired before the mandatory retirement age to be rehomed."*

Another development that has supported rehoming was the release by the NSW government of its rehoming guidelines[21] in December 2020, a document that is freely available and contains advice and information for research establishments and other stakeholders that is the most comprehensive in Australia, possibly the world.

Image: Liberty Foundation

[20] https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ban-cosmetic-testing-animals#:~:text=Cosmetic%20testing%20on%20animals%20is,animal%20testing%20to%20prove%20safety.

[21] https://www.animalethics.org.au/policies-and-guidelines/animal-rehoming

Global trends

The Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing was founded back in 1981 with a three year, $1 million grant from the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association. The kind of leadership shown by industry players in supporting the Center, has not only led to a massive reduction in product testing on animals globally but was instrumental in securing the public's support and therefore the industry's future.

There are now numerous international examples of mostly voluntary initiatives that:

- make direct investment in developing alternatives to animal-based research, also known as replacement science;
- account for and report the use of animals in research;
- improve stakeholder and public discussion on animal-based research;
- provide ethical options for animals post-research; and
- develop tools to enable the exchange knowledge and research.

Australian research establishments and policy makers are yet to align with these global trends. Unlike other governments around the world that directly fund replacement science, Australia has only one dedicated program that is administered and funded by the charity Medical Advances Without Animals Trust[22].

The global trend towards rehoming is gathering momentum with sanctuaries and government policy being created to see the transition of animals from research facilities to "retirement" as opposed to euthanasia:

- In May 2014, Minnesota became the first state in the US and first political body in the world to mandate that laboratory dogs and cats be adopted when the research is completed. If a dog or cat is used in a taxpayer funded research experiment and is healthy at its end, the organisation must offer them up for public adoption through a rescue organisation like Beagle Freedom Project. Since then, numerous states in the US have passed similar laws.
- Rehoming is permissible under numerous laws that regulate animal use in Europe, including European Directive 2010/63/EU, with provisos to ensure that rehoming is in each animal's best interests.
- Gut Aiderbichl's Sanctuary for Traumatized Chimpanzees and Other Primates in Gaenserndorf, Austria, cares for around 40 chimpanzees that were retired from research establishments – funded by the not-for-profit, the Austrian government and until recently the Baxter pharmaceutical company.
- Many of the chimpanzees owned by the United States' National Institutes of Health have been sent to sanctuaries for their "retirement" as the US governmental medical research agency ceases its chimp program altogether. One such sanctuary is Chimp Haven – a partly government-funded facility in Louisiana that houses 330 chimps. There are also a number of other independently operated facilities for research animal rehoming in the US and Canada.

[22] http://www.mawa-trust.org.au/

- Dogs used for research in India must be retired after a three-year experimental term or if not permitted for reuse within the three-year period should be promptly rehabilitated by the research establishment.[23]
- Rehoming has also begun in New Zealand, with a group of mice being released from Massey University in 2020.[24]

The partly government-funded Chimp Haven in the USA provides an enriching "retirement" for primates that were used in government testing facilities. Image courtesy of Chimp Haven USA

If Australia wishes to be considered a world-class centre of research, specifically in biotechnology and life sciences, it needs to align its approach to global leaders in government and research that are embracing greater openness, public engagement, reduction in the use of animals and ethical options for animals post-research that are a true collaboration between not-for-profits, governments and the animal-based research industry.

Conclusion and recommendations

With a current rate of animal usage for scientific purposes and low levels of public awareness and community engagement by research establishments, Australian industry, government and centres of research, will be required to take a more proactive and sustainable approach to animal-based research if it is to keep pace with global leaders in biotechnology and life sciences. Together, they have a great opportunity to develop frameworks that foster a more ethical approach to animals post-research that also reflect community views and respond to investor requirements.

[23] http://cpcsea.nic.in/Content/55_1_GUIDELINES.aspx

[24] https://www.libertyfoundation.org.au/interview/new-zealand-gets-onboard-with-rehoming/

The business case for corporate disclosure on sustainability issues has been established. The evidence base specific to animal welfare is less developed, however the growing awareness within the financial sector of the problems associated with factory farming demonstrates the risks and opportunities for those organisations that have chosen to proactively engage on the issue.

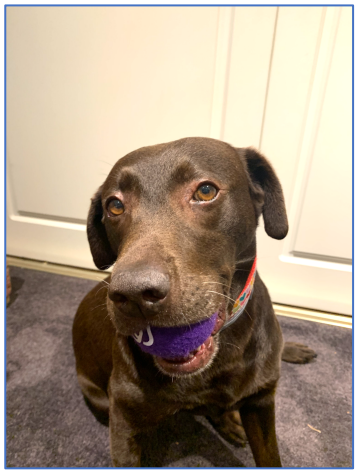
Coupled with the fact that Australian government guidelines recommend the rehoming of animals wherever possible, and there are large numbers of animals currently being euthanised at the conclusion of research work, rehoming clearly offers a more sustainable approach.

With the emergence of this movement in the US and Europe already underway, with the support of industry and government in many cases, it is in Australia's interest to consider adding to its commitment to the 3Rs, a fourth 'R' for rehabilitation and rehoming. Such a commitment will enable not only more mature public and stakeholder engagement, but immeasurably better outcomes for the many animals will go on to achieve great quality of life after having been used in scientific research.

Meeting the demand for rehoming on such a scale, will require the co-operation of not-for-profits, the animal-based research industry and governments, in order to develop the solutions that meet the specific needs of animals following their time in research.

Our recommendations to the NSW government are as follows:

- Request a review of the NHRMC's *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*, to make rehoming mandatory for all animals from research and introducing mandatory retirement ages for at least domestic/companion animal species.
- Make it mandatory for research establishments to become signatories to an openness agreement such as the one being considered by the ANZCCART initiative.
- Seek to co-ordinate states and territories to work towards nationally consistent collection and reporting of statistics of animal use in research and science including mandatory reporting on the fate of animals.
- Set up a rehoming taskforce to bring together companion/small animal rescue groups and government to discuss and respond to issues related to rehoming.
- Create funding and grant opportunities, possibly including relevant industry players, for companion/small animal rescue operators across the state.
- Fund and operate programs to support the sector to upskill in rehabilitation and care specifically for animals from research.



Submission made on behalf of:

Liberty Foundation Australia Limited

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Image: Liberty Foundation