

School of Animal Biology  
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35 Stirling Highway,  
Crawley 6009  
11 Nov. 05

To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a comment re the proposed animal welfare bill. I have been a research worker since 1972, working in Australia since 1997 and in the UK (University of Manchester) prior to that. Whilst recognising the essential role that animal research plays in many aspects of medicine, I am in full support of minimising the use and suffering of animals in research. The present proposal is very similar to the legislation that was current in the UK with the notable exception of the public register of licensed research workers' names, addresses and research programs. The publication of such a register with free access to the public greatly alarms me. It would make research workers, their families and homes easy targets for abuse, threats and violent acts from animal activists. Experience in the UK has shown that, whilst fighting for animals rights, some extremists have no regard for the wellbeing of research workers. In the late eighties and in the nineties research workers at the University of Manchester were issued with memos regarding how to look under your car for car bombs, and what to look for to recognise letter bombs or toxic substances in letters. At least these threats were directed to the workplace where adequate security made it difficult for those responsible. Imagine how easy it would be to target people at their homes! Although I am not a 'project leader' my skills and experience as a surgeon mean that I do a lot of the hands on work with animals. I feel that I make an invaluable contribution to our research into repair of the nervous system following injury or disease, which has a huge human and economic cost in this country. I have a nice home, a husband and we have three wonderful children who will be great Australian citizens. Would I put all this at risk? The simple answer is no. I feel that the Authority should scrutinize the applications for licences and their decision and ongoing monitoring/ inspections should be enough to put the public's mind at rest that the Animal Welfare Act is being abided by. Please remove from the proposed Act the provision for publication of research workers details in a public register.

Carole Bartlett  
Neuroscience Group.