

From: Peter Leedman [peterl@cyllene.uwa.edu.au]

Sent: Sunday, 13 November 2005 2:51 PM

To: RRAT, Committee (SEN)

Subject: National Animal Welfare Bill

To Senator Bartlett,

I write in regard to the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005 that you have recently read in the Senate.

I hope that you are able to generate a deeper understanding of the reality of the contribution of animal research to the practice of medicine during the debate on this Bill.

If this bill is introduced into Parliament as it is it has the potential to effectively cease all animal research for health and medical research purposes completely.

As you may well be aware after the second World War as a consequence of the Nuremberg Trials a Nuremberg Code was established to provide high quality ethical guidelines for the conduct of human research for medical purposes. A major tenant of that code was that trials in humans with new agents for clinical use should be effectively tested in animal models prior to human use. That has formed the foundation behind a huge research industry that has been the basis for almost all of our current medications in use today. Your Bill effectively has the potential to push our clinical practice away from a Code that has served very well the practice of medicine and research for over 50 years.

The Bill you wish to introduce would effectively make public the names and addresses of thousands of committed highly ethical researchers in this country. From experience overseas, it is quite clear that various groups who oppose the use of animals in any way for research purposes, are capable of personal attacks on such committed researchers. There are many examples of individual researchers being targeted by such groups. Do you wish for the researchers of this country to be placed at personal risk? Do you also wish for the entire research effort using animals in this country to potentially cease?

Of importance here is that the regulation of animal use in this country is tightly controlled by the highest of standards set by the NHMRC and upheld by Animal Ethics Committees all around Australia. Are you suggesting in your bill that this high quality set of standards from our peak health and medical research body is not performing up to international standards? If so, what is the evidence for this?

Additionally, why would you wish to introduce even more paperwork into a system that has tight and rigorous controls within these operational guidelines?

If animal research ceases in Australia because individual researchers feel the risk to their personal and private lives is too great, the only other alternative is to use humans in early stage testing (which we never do at present), which I am sure you are aware carries with it a much higher risk of toxicity.

I can imagine the community's response when they understand that as a consequence of the Animal Welfare Bill of 2005, animal research efforts in Australia have ceased

and they have now become the "front-line" for testing and development of new medicines.

I urge you to consider these above statements in detail as you progress the debate.

Yours sincerely,



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