

To: Ms Maureen Weeks,
Committee Secretary,
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee,
The Senate,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA ACT 2600

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

I would like to put a submission to this inquiry as I feel very strongly that the setting up of a national register for animals in scientific experiments would be an excellent way to go forward, in an effort to stem the rising number of animals that are used, which in my opinion is a disgrace to Australia in this day and age of amazing technological advances.

It is always difficult to get hold of figures relating to scientific experiments. Not only do we not know the numbers used, but we do not know, nation-wide, how many unnecessary duplications take place, and apart from being a terrible waste of money it is also a terrible waste of life and a source of extra pain and suffering that animals must bear.

A national register to which all States would be required to adhere should contain all relevant information about all experiments taking place during the year and be set up in cooperation with the institutions using animals. It could be a source of extremely useful information among all State laboratories and should go at least some way towards reduction of figures.

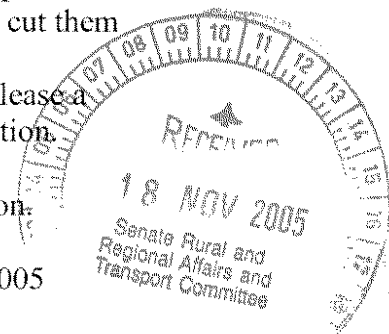
A variety of apparent safeguards for the protection of animals have been in place for a number of years but, faced with these rising figures, obviously they have all proved to be useless. Animal ethics committees, for instance, had the potential to reduce figures by the close examination of experiments by the committees and the throwing out of those which appeared unnecessary or to be duplications of others. Actually, it is almost impossible to know what goes on in the ethics committees conducted as they are in such a secretive manner, and in fact it is hard to understand anything at all about laboratory procedures as they are themselves conducted almost exclusively behind closed doors.

Anyway, whatever happened to the three R's – reduction, refinement, replacement – that we heard so much of about 20 years ago? As the political slogan once went "It's time": here it is the same thing. I appeal to the committee: let us take a step towards getting somewhere in this archaic mess of animal experiments. Let us try to cut them down and, if for no other reason, save a very great deal of money spent on unnecessary and unproductive animal experimentation, and in the process release a huge number of unfortunate animals condemned to a life sentence of vivisection.

I thank the committee of inquiry for the opportunity to present this submission.

Elizabeth Janiszewski, RMB326, Chandlers Hill, 5159, SA

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