

MEDIA RELEASE

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Non-human primate research rejected by National Australia Bank under new Animal Welfare Principles.

Humane Research Australia welcomes the release of NAB's forward-thinking Animal Welfare Principles which will guide their lending policy. Included in the Principles is the commitment not to fund 'use of endangered or threatened or non-human primates for any testing/research and experimental purposes'.

This Principle surpasses Australia's Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, which permits the use of non-human primates in research. Primates are used in a variety of research experiments in institutions around Australia - including brain, vision and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), studies, heart research and xenotransplantation research. These primates – macaques, marmosets and baboons – are sourced from three government-funded, research-specific breeding colonies located within Australia, although import of primates for medical research remains legal.

Freedom of Information Requests submitted by Humane Research Australia have uncovered neglect and suffering at Australian primate facilities, including a female macaque aged twelve discovered dead in a pool of blood after suspected of being bitten by a male macaque.

Aside from the clear ethical dilemma of using animals with high cognitive abilities and well-developed social structures as mere 'tools for research', the use of primates has been found to be poorly predictive of human outcomes and their use has proven to be ineffective at providing substantial contributions to biomedical research. The development of several international centres and university departments for the furtherance of non-animal alternatives in scientific testing around the world, including non primate alternatives, shows that there is interest in this option. HRA encourage the funding of alternatives research to further medical advances.

NAB's position on lending for the purpose of non-human primate research aligns with public opposition to primate research, with over 65, 000 signatories to a petition calling for a ban on primate experiments, and growing awareness of animal welfare issues and calls for ethical corporate behavior. We commend NAB for this action and encourage other financial institutions to follow their lead.

Humane Research Australia is calling for:

- the replacement of all primate experiments with more humane and scientifically-valid (non-animal) methods of research,
- an end to importation of primates for research,
- the establishment of a primate retirement sanctuary in Australia for ex-laboratory animals.

Humane Research Australia Campaigns and Communications Manager, Rachel Smith: *"HRA is delighted that NAB has recognised the importance of animal welfare, including animals used for research and testing, identifying non-human primate research as an unethical practice ineligible for financing. Our hope is that the Australian Government adopt similar principles to ensure tax-payers do not continue to fund inhumane and invalid primate research".*

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