



MEDIA RELEASE

24 APRIL 2008

Calling for Compassion on World Veterinary Day, 26 April 2008

The Australian Association for Humane Research is calling on veterinary students to make ethical choices with their chosen profession and object to “practicing” on healthy living animals.

AAHR Humane Education Officer, Carrie Barnes-Hobson says *“Trainee veterinarians enter their profession with the intention of helping animals. Killing healthy animals to obtain their training is a contradiction and sends a confusing message that can result in desensitisation and a loss of respect for life.”*

“There are already alternatives available in veterinary teaching that allow students to acquire an education equal to those that use animals in terminal surgery. Use of living dogs is therefore a failure to implement the “3R’s” (reduction, refinement and replacement) principle.”

In order to provide hands on experience, veterinary students should instead provide a desexing service to pounds and shelters thereby providing a real benefit for the individual animals. This ensures that students also gain the experience of observing and monitoring post-operative recovery. They may also assist with and perform supervised surgeries in private veterinary practices on patients in genuine need of assistance – as is practiced in UK veterinary colleges and how human doctors learn in teaching hospitals.

The concept of Conscientious Objection was pioneered by Dr Andrew Knight at Perth’s Murdoch University in November 1998. He successfully completed his veterinary qualifications without harming animals. In his objections he referred to numerous published studies which suggested that medical, veterinary, biology and pharmacology students who used alternatives to animal use in their work were at least as competent as the animal using counterparts.

“The duty of care that veterinarians have towards animals without having to ‘sacrifice’ is a much greater teaching method which also incorporates a higher level of compassion towards the patients as well as their chosen profession.” **Ms Barnes-Hobson concluded.**

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