



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW JUSTIFICATION OF ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS CONDEMNED

(Response to AAP report July 03, 2009 12:21pm)

Today's announcement by the NSW Dept of Primary Industries that the numbers of animals used in research were unlikely to fall in the near future is an example of the government's lack of commitment to the 3R's Principle – Reduce, Refine and Replace.

Other nations, including the UK, Europe and the United States, have government-funded centres dedicated to the development and validation of alternative methods yet no such initiatives exist within Australia.

Chief Executive Officer, Helen Marston, said today *"It's absurd that our government continues to support the use of animals in research when it has been clearly established that extrapolation of data from one species to another is too often misleading."*

"Species' differ anatomically, genetically and metabolically, which means that no two species will react the same way to a drug or treatment. It's therefore essential that such research is species-specific, thus avoiding such tragic outcomes from Thalidomide, Vioxx and TGN 1412 – drugs 'proven' safe through animal tests."

The United States' FDA (Food and Drugs Administration) - one of the biggest regulators of drug testing - state on their website: "The organization Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America estimates that only 5 in 5,000 compounds that enter preclinical testing make it to human testing, and only 1 of those 5 may be safe and effective enough to reach pharmacy shelves." This surely suggests that the current practice of testing pharmaceuticals on animals prior to human trials is an utter waste of time and resources; particularly when there are far more effective means of testing available.

The department's justification of animal use is therefore sadly ill-advised and misleading.

Suite 205, Toorak Corporate Centre, 19 Milton Parade, Malvern 3144
Ph: (03) 88235705 | Fax: (03) 8823 5755 | Email: info@aahr.org.au | Web: www.aahr.org.au