

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 2/3 June 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000534

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Animal Testing

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Rhiannon, Lee

Question:

- a) Have any researchers been prosecuted for animal cruelty over the past five years for not adhering to the Code of Practice?
- b) What is the process for making complaints about researchers not adhering to the Code to ensure animal cruelty is minimised?
- c) Have there ever been any complaints made? May I have details?
- d) What type of audits are done to ensure researchers adhere to the Code of Practice?
 - i) How often are these done?
 - ii) May I have details about the outcomes of any such audits?

Answer:

- a) State and territory governments have legislative responsibility for animal welfare, including the use of animals for scientific purposes. The *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (the Code) is variously adopted in all state and territory legislation. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) does not have access to information related to prosecutions for animal cruelty.
- b) State and territory governments are responsible for the management of complaints regarding non-compliance with the Code.
- c) The National Health and Medical Research Council does not have access to information related to complaints regarding non-compliance with the Code. The receipt and management of such complaints is the responsibility of the state and territory governments.
- d) Under the Code, institutions must ensure, through the operation of an animal ethics committee (AEC) that is directly responsible to the governing body of the institution, that all activities involving the care and use of animals comply with the Code.
 - i) and ii)
NHMRC does not have access to information related to the monitoring performed by individual AECs or the independent external review of individual institutions.