

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 16, 21 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000701

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Rhiannon, Lee

**Question:**

In June 2014 Budget Estimates I was advised the Code of Conduct for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes provided measures to avoid duplication of research involving animal experiments – this was in answer to my question about why a national database is not maintained to ensure animal experiment research is not duplicated and results made available to other researchers:

- a) What are those measures? How effective are they?
- b) Is there any interest by the NHMRC in measuring how effective the Code is in avoiding duplication of research involving animal testing?
- c) If not why not – given the NHMRC is in charge of the code?

**Answer:**

- a) The measure referred to were guidance provisions outlined in the *Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (8<sup>th</sup> ed. 2013)* (the Code).

The Code requires animal ethics committees to be satisfied that the use of animals is justified, there is no alternative to the use of animals (Replacement), the minimum numbers of animals are used (Reduction), and adverse impact on the animals is minimised (Refinement).

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) does not monitor the effectiveness of the Code. This is up to the states and territories which are responsible for the regulation of animal welfare in Australia.

- b) NHMRC has no legal mandate to require the collection of national statistics in relation to animal welfare. As such, it is unable to determine the national effectiveness of the Code in avoiding duplication of research involving animal testing.
- c) NHMRC provides national leadership in the form of developing and promulgating the Code and requiring adherence to it for research that it funds.

NHMRC led the development of the Code in concert with other Commonwealth agencies and each of the states and territories. However, as the states and territories are responsible for regulating animal welfare, it is their responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Code.