

# **Beyond Fragmented Government: Governance in the Public Sector**

**Keywords:** Public Transparency, Animal Research, Public Policy

**Paper title:** Animal research policy, public perceptions, and the problem of transparency

**Author:** Siobhan O'Sullivan

**Institution:** The University of Sydney

**Contact details:** [s.osullivan@econ.usyd.edu.au](mailto:s.osullivan@econ.usyd.edu.au)

0404 277 469

Siobhan O'Sullivan

Government and International Relations

H04 – Merewether Building

The University of Sydney

NSW 2006

# **ANIMAL RESEARCH POLICY, PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS, AND THE PROBLEM OF TRANSPARENCY\***

## **ABSTRACT**

For the last three decades the rhetoric from those who engage in, and those who regulate, animal research has asserted the need for animal research to be more transparent. From the perspective of both animal researchers, and government, transparency is thought to be helpful in garnering public support for animal experimentation, particularly in the face of attack from animal rights advocates. Underpinning this position is the notion that opposition to animal research is partly a result of public ignorance.

Sixteen years after the Australian Senate Select Committee into Animal Experimentation found that it is important for institutions to be 'open and forthcoming' about their animal use, and on the eve of a new Senate enquiry into animal research, this paper seeks to examine the extent to which animal researchers have addressed transparency concerns.

It will be argued that the animal research community has not adequately increased its level of public accountability. Significantly, nor have policy makers imposed legislative changes upon the research community, which would achieve this end. At the same time, public concern over the use of animals in research is significant.

---

\* I would like to thank Dr. Lyn Carson, without who the survey used in this paper would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Len Cantrill, David Smith and Kathy O'Sullivan. Finally, I would like to show my appreciation to the following individuals and organizations that assisted me in distributing my survey: Animals Australia, Australian Association for Humane Research, Deborah Brennan, Malcolm France, Glenys Oojes, Nick Turnbull and Ariadne Vromen.

Using original survey data, this paper contends that although 69.5 per cent of those surveyed state that they are either ‘very concerned’ or ‘somewhat concerned’ about animal research, community understanding of animal-based research is poor. These findings suggest that the animal research community has failed to ‘open the laboratory door’ in a meaningful way. However, it will also be argued that it is not self evident that enhanced transparency is in the best interest of any one particular stakeholder group.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Argument in Favour of Transparency in Animal Research**

A great deal of ink has been spilt over the issue of transparency and the use of animals in research. The issue may be couched in different ways. Some speak of holding the research community accountable for their actions. Others refer to the issue in terms of providing the public with the information, to which they are rightfully entitled, by virtue of funding arrangements. Others speak of educating the public regarding the benefits of animal based research and still others think of the issue in terms of protecting the interests of research animals through public debate or awareness. However, regardless of the terminology employed, or the perspective from which the issue is approached, transparency, its elusiveness, and the benefits it could bring, have been at the centre of the animal research debate for the last thirty years.

The tussle over transparency in animal research has engaged all three key players in the area<sup>1</sup>: those who oppose the use of animals in research, those who make their living from animal-based research, and public policy makers who mediate between the two. Relations between animal advocates and animal researchers have been likened to a state of war (Pifer, Shimizu and Pifer 1994) and in many senses that is an apt description. However, survey work into attitudes held by both animal researchers and animal rights activists, suggests that on some issues the views held by the two groups are not dissimilar (Paul 1995), and when it comes to the question of increased transparency, according to the rhetoric employed by both camps, there does appear to be a level of consensus.

Both researchers and activists appear to agree that enhanced transparency is in their best interest, and raising the level of transparency is a goal to which both parties claim to aspire. This bipartisan support for transparent animal research practices is also applauded by policy makers, who have strongly encouraged animal research institutions to move in that direction. In the following section, the attitudes towards enhanced transparency in animal research practices, espoused by each stakeholder group, are examined and reasons why each stakeholder group may consider it to be in their best interest are suggested.

### *Animal Advocates*

There can be little doubt that animal advocates, that is, people who actively seek to influence the manner in which humans may lawfully use non-human animals, are strongly in favour of knowing as much detail about animal research as possible. The word ‘detail’, does not denote that they are content to learn about animal research practices through journal articles authored

---

<sup>1</sup> The term ‘key players’ in this context is used to refer to human stakeholders only. Another possible stakeholder group are patient’s rights groups, however, their influence is limited and has not informed debate in this area.

by researchers. Rather, animal advocates are keenly interested in knowing what projects are being approved, by which institutions, and for what reason. They do not wish to access this information after the fact, but rather in a timely manner, preferably prior to the commencement of a protocol.

Animal advocates are also interested in learning who makes the decision to approve research, why scientists believe the research should be carried out, what species of animal will be used, and how the animals will be affected. Importantly, animal advocates also appear to want to know how the animal is treated while in the laboratory, how they live, how the research procedure will affect them, and what will happen to the animal once the protocol is complete. The detail of how a procedure is carried out is often of greater interest to the animal advocate, than the aim of the protocol, or the research findings. As Paul concluded, animal advocates tend to be focused on the suffering of the animal, where as animal researchers tend to prioritise the benefits that may flow from their research project (Paul 1995).

In October 2002 New Zealand Greens MP, Sue Kedgley, speaking in her capacity as Green Party Animal Rights Spokesperson, delivered a paper at a seminar hosted by the New Zealand Animal Rights Legal Advocacy Network in which she effectively captured many of the sentiments commonly expressed by animal advocates who campaign in opposition to the use of animals in research. In favour of increased public transparency, she argued, in part, that the problem is:

each year scientists and researchers in New Zealand carry out all manner of experiments, including cloning and genetically engineering animals, on about 300,000 animals a year. Of those 300,000 over 17,000 of these animals are subjected to severe or very severe suffering.

But we, ordinary New Zealanders, or even someone like myself who is an MP representing the public interest, have absolutely no idea what actual experiments are conducted on these 300,000 animals, or why? What happened to the 300 horses or 300 odd cats who were experimented upon last year? Did we really need to use 300 horses and 300 cats?

And was it really necessary to subject 17,265 animals to severe or very severe suffering?

We ordinary New Zealanders, have no idea because all the meetings of the Animal Ethics committees which approve experiments are conducted in secret... their meetings are not advertised, and members of the public cannot even obtain copies of the agendas or minutes of their meetings - much less the details of the experiments they approve, or the reasons for the research and experimentation.

The public cannot even find out who are members of Animal Ethics committees – even members who... are supposed to be representing the public (Kedgley 2002).

However, the animal rights community's concerns over insufficient transparency do not begin and end with the application process. Animal advocates want to see what takes place in laboratories, and they want the public to also be exposed to what many activists would consider the reality of animal suffering caused by some scientific research.

In 1996 independent filmmaker, Zoe Broughton worked as a laboratory technician for Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). She took the position to secretly film conditions inside the laboratory. Her footage resulted in two technicians being charged with 'cruelly terrifying dogs'. Broughton's is a well-known case because the resulting footage was widely distributed (Broughton 2001:31). However, animal groups regularly put time, energy and expense into obtaining footage and information from inside laboratories. At the same time that Broughton

worked at HLS UK, HLS laboratories in the US were also being infiltrated by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) (Broughton 2001:31). Recently PETA Europe also obtained footage from inside Covance Laboratory. However, in both cases the results have been less widely distributed because of legal action initiated once the infiltrations were uncovered (Broughton 2001:31 and Covancecruelty 2005).

Not all animal advocacy groups have the means or expertise to gain access to research facilities, but most, if not all, feel such activity is necessary in order to bring about greater transparency in animal research. Influential British anti-animal research organisation British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) states on their web site:

The animal research industry is responsible for the deliberate infliction of pain, suffering, distress and death on billions of animals every year around the world. By its very nature, it is an industry that remains closed to public scrutiny. It operates behind closed doors and in secrecy.

The BUAV, in its determination to break through this secrecy, not only pioneered the use of investigative work in the UK but also, at an international level, leads the field with its expertise to expose the plight of laboratory animals (BUAV).

Similarly, in Australia, Animal Liberation NSW has a message on their web site claiming:

Hundreds of thousands of animals are used in experiments each year in NSW - including pain experiments and poisons testing. But the details are hidden behind a veil of secrecy. And despite serious breaches of the Act, no researcher has ever been prosecuted under it! Why not???

Most teaching and research are funded by taxpayers' dollars. The taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent - and that legal requirements are being met (Animal Liberation NSW 1999).

### *Animal Researchers*

Influential sections of the animal research community also argue there is a need for enhanced transparency. Following the deliverance of Sue Kedgley MP's 2002 paper, the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART), whose mission statement is to 'provide leadership in developing community consensus on ethical, social and scientific issues relating to the use of animals in research and teaching' (ANZCCART), convened their 2003 conference in Christchurch, New Zealand. The conference was titled *Lifting the Veil*, and following the meeting, a press release was issued which stated that delegates had recommended that:

- increased transparency of animal research and testing procedures would be of value to the public, and that more information should be provided as long as such disclosure does not compromise personal safety of scientists. The preferred means for providing this information is by publication of a plain language summary of all research projects approved by animal ethics committees.
- annual statistics published by MAF should provide more detail on different types of animal research, testing or teaching.
- balanced information on the value and need for animal research and testing must be made available to the public at all levels (ANZCCART 2003).



Since that time, ANZZCART, through its publication *ANZCCART News*, has continued to air debate around the pros and cons of enhanced transparency. In recent months Graham Nerlich, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide argued that the research community must act in order to raise their level of public accountability, because if enhanced transparency does not come from within, it will be imposed on scientists meaning they may not be able to define their own terms of reference (Nerlich 2004:11-12). In response John Schofield, Director of Animal Welfare at the University of Otago argued that enhanced transparency must be avoided as it poses a threat to researchers and research (Schofield 2004:14-15). Such arguments are not unique. However, beyond such overtly political manoeuvring, there is another sense in which the animal research community often claims that enhanced transparency is necessary, and indeed in their best interest.

One of the most frequently recounted arguments in favour of enhanced transparency, put forward by the research community, is that animal rights extremists have hijacked the debate over the use of animals in research and the only way to bring reason back into the debate is to furnish the public with information about animal research. Underpinning this idea is a belief that animal rights advocates play on public ignorance, so the only way to counter the damage they are doing, is to increase the public's understanding of research practices. For example, writing in *BioScience* Miller and Strange argue that:

Because animal rights activists play off public ignorance, biologists should educate themselves about the movement and also educate the public about biological research. For example, people unfamiliar with science do not understand why repeating experiments is important, not redundant (Miller and Strange 1990: 431).

More recently, writing in the *Education Digest*, Morrison blamed the influence of animal activists on 'general scientific illiteracy' (Morrison 1992:57) and in a series of influential articles published in the UK edition of *New Scientist Magazine*, written by researchers, and based on interviews with 43 scientists who engage in animal based research, Birke and Michael concluded that:

Animal experimentation is a legitimate topic of public debate, and that the public has the right to know what is done in its name. We call for greater openness on the part of scientists and civil servants as the only effective way to allay public concern (Birke and Michael 1992a:25).

In their second article in the same series, however, they did note that many animal researchers feel concerned about being threatened or attacked if they publicly acknowledge their role in animal research (Birke and Michael 1992b).

### *Policy Makers*

Public policy makers have also strongly expressed the view that enhanced transparency should be the aim of all animal research institutions, and in support of that stance, policy makers often evoke similar arguments to those employed by researchers, namely, that opposition to animal research is in large part due to public ignorance, and the only way to address it is to allow the public to engage with research, through enhanced transparency.

In 1989, the Australian Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare handed down a report on animal experimentation. That report strongly and repeatedly called for information concerning

the use of animals in research to be made widely available for public consideration. The Committee stated that:

The evidence taken then [1984] made it clear to the Committee that publicly available information on the extent and nature of the use of animals in experiments in Australia was extremely limited (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:2).

The Committee went on to argue that:

it has been the secretive approach in the past and the reluctance to provide public information about their use of animals in experiments which has led to the public misapprehension about the nature of animal experimentation in this country. Secrecy breeds suspicion and the media feed on suspicion. What might have been a misunderstanding becomes a crisis (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:6).

The Committee then went on to conclude that:

All people and bodies involved in animal experimentation and in its administration and control need to be accountable for their action, otherwise the system may be brought into disrepute (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:245).

And:

The ethics committee is also a key element in the system for public accountability. By having animal welfare and community views on an ethics committee, the community has more confidence that the ethical attitudes of the community are being reflected in the judgements and decisions of the committee (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:262).

## **How Far have we come?**

With such strong support from all quarters one would expect that on the issue of enhanced transparency we would have come a long way in the last twenty years, and that public policy which comprehensively raises the level of public transparency in animal research, would be in place. Yet, calls for enhanced transparency continue to echo around the world. This section will consider ways in which transparency may be argued to have been enhanced in Australia since the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare handed down their findings. Some counter arguments, which question whether enhanced transparency has been achieved in a meaningful way, will also be considered.

### *Changes in Australia since the 1989 Senate Enquiry into the use of Animals in Research*

The 1989 Committee report made 20 recommendations. Their recommendations were wide in scope. However, the most relevant to the current discussion called for the publication of national statistics on animal use and the expanding and strengthening of the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) System (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989).

Writing in 2003 Rickard argues that all but a handful of the Committee's recommendations have been implemented (Rickard 2003:2). Rickard also argues that it was the highly polarised views held by the research community, versus those of the animal advocacy community, which lead governments and research institutions to move towards a more transparent and

publicly accountable model of animal research in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Rickard 2003:1). His analysis suggests that policy makers and institutions imposed enhanced transparency upon themselves prior to the Senate Select Committee's findings being handed down. This analysis is supported by the Committee's report which tracked the progress in developing what it considered to be a more accountable system, a process which began in earnest at the beginning of the 1980s (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989).

According to the Committee's report the shift towards enhanced transparency, which has taken place since the 1980s, is embodied in the practice of 'enforced self regulation'. This means that an AEC must approve all research protocols, prior to research commencing, and that some other authority ensures the appropriate functioning of the AEC.

#### *The Animal Ethics Committee System and Animal use Statistics in Australia*

At the time the Senate Select Committee handed down their findings there was a question mark over the reliability of the newly developed AEC system. The Committee noted that:

The history of ethics committees in Australia, as evidenced by the Committee, is one of varying levels of success, with some acting merely as a façade to keep authorities and the community at bay (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:228).

The Committee went on to observe that:

There has been reluctance on the part of the institutions to appoint non-scientists to ethics committees. With few exceptions, ethics committee membership has included the minimum

number of animal welfare or community representatives (Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare 1989:235).

The AEC system has come a long way since that time and it is most likely that the vast majority of research protocols are approved by an AEC, which is properly constituted, and which takes the task seriously. Where a proper AEC system is not in place, it would be widely construed as a serious breach of statutory requirements.

However, although the AEC system has developed strongly, it is not necessarily self-evident that it allows for a reasonable degree of transparency. The AEC system has consistently been presented as one of the pillars of enhanced dialogue between the research community, and the public, yet the effectiveness of the system in furnishing the community with timely, detailed, and meaningful information about the practice of animal research, is questionable.

The structure and function of Australian AECs is outlined in the *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (the Code). The Code requires that AECs consist of a veterinary scientist, an animal researcher, a person with a demonstrated commitment to animal welfare and an independent person who does not have a research background or affiliation to the AEC's research institution. It is the inclusion of an independent, normally referred to as a 'Category D' member, which is often seen by policy makers, and the animal research community, to be the lynch pin which allows the public to engage in the animal research process. However, beyond the involvement of 100 - plus individuals who sit as Category D members on AECs around Australia, the ability for interested parties to learn about the detail of animal research remains restricted.

AEC meetings are not public forums and the detail of what is decided and why is not publicly available. However, of even greater concern to the current discussion is the high level of secrecy imposed on participants by the AEC system. All AEC participants are subject to institutional confidentiality (Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 2004:12) and in NSW, members of the Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP)<sup>2</sup> and others involved in administering the Act ‘shall not disclose any information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of this Act’ accept under limited circumstances (NSW Government 1985). This means that if an issue of concern does arise, only a handful of people in Australia would be made privy to the detail of that problem.

Furthermore, the *NSW Animal Research Act 1985*, read in conjunction with the *NSW Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* does not make it clear whether instances of animal cruelty which take place within research facilities, but not within the context of an approved research protocol, may be reported to the RSPCA. In the period 2002 – 2003, the NSW RSPCA undertook 112 prosecutions for animal cruelty (cited in Moore 2005). In NSW no prosecution has even been brought against an individual involved in animal research. This may be because no act of cruelty has even been perpetrated by an individual involved in animal research, however, animal advocates and interested members of the public have no way of knowing whether this is the case or not.

The second pillar of transparency is the provision of statistical data by research institutions, on the number of animals used in research, species type, and the extent to which the procedure affected them. That information is conveyed to state government authorities. A consistent, reliable, single data source reporting on all animal research around Australia is still

---

<sup>2</sup> ARRP is the body which oversees the NSW AEC system. I have been a member of ARRP since 2003.

being developed. However, even once a national database is in place, statistics on their own reveal very little about the research process. Most problematically, the Code and the AEC system both require that the cost to the animal be weighed against the benefit that may result from the research. When statistics are considered in isolation it is impossible to form a clear picture as whether decisions made by AECs were reasonable or not. The public knows that new drugs come onto the market and that animals are used in research, but there is no way of putting these two pieces of the puzzle together.

In the UK, where both the government and the research community also articulate a desire for enhanced transparency in animal research, the Home Office is developing a system whereby information on every approved research protocol will be published and publicly available. An anonymous, abridged form of all research licences will soon be available from the Home Office website. Interestingly, moves to remove the confidentiality clause from the UK animal research legislation were obstructed by animal researchers (Home Office 2004:6).

### **Knowledge levels and attitudes towards the use of animals in research in Australia**

Some survey work dealing with the issue of animal based research has been done around the world, however, very limited survey work has included the views of the non-aligned public (Pifer, Shimizu and Pifer 1994) and very little survey work of any sort has been conducted in Australia on this issue (Rickard 2003:2). The remainder of this paper will present original survey data, collected in order to better understand what the public thinks about the use of animals in research, and how much they know about the practice.



## *Survey Method*

The data presented in this paper was collected as part of a larger survey<sup>3</sup>. Anonymous feedback was sought from four sample groups. One group was made up of early career animal researchers. They were surveyed on the second afternoon of a two-day compulsory induction program undertaken in order to allow them to use animals in research at a postgraduate level at Sydney University. The total number surveyed was 89<sup>4</sup>.

The second group was made up of members of the animal welfare organisation Animals Australia (AA). AA is an umbrella organisation that represents 40 animal groups around Australia. AA was chosen to participate in the survey because it is a reasonably moderate organisation<sup>5</sup> and it participates in the AEC system. The survey was distributed to AA members via the organisation's magazine *Animals Today*. Participants were required to meet the cost of postage to return the survey. There was a 21 per cent return rate from AA members. The total number of surveys returned was 231.

The third group was made up of members of a specialist anti-vivisection group called Australian Association for Humane Research (AAHR). AAHR was selected because of its specialist focus on animal research issues. The survey was distributed to members via their regular newsletter. Participants were required to meet the cost of postage to return the survey. There was a 39 per cent return rate from AAHR members. The total number of surveys returned was 196.

---

<sup>3</sup> The University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee approved this survey work.

<sup>4</sup> Regrettably, the survey size was limited because the research was self-funded and self administrated. However, I would like to thank the University of Sydney's Discipline of Government and International Relations for meeting the cost of photocopying the survey.

<sup>5</sup> The NSW RSPCA was approached but declined to participate in this research.

The final group was a control group made up of people without any particular affiliation with either animal research or animal advocacy. They were surveyed at two different first year, Government and International Relations lectures at Sydney University. The total number of surveys returned was 176.

Participants were given a two-page survey. The survey combined questions where participants were asked to rank their attitudes from 'very strong' to 'limited', open sections where participants were invited to expand on their thoughts, and a series of multiple choice questions intended to test their level of knowledge.

### *Survey Findings*

A Morgan Gallop Poll commissioned by Meat and Livestock Australia concluded that the level of concern about animals, among the public, had increased between 1994 and 2000 and rated as the most concerning issue was the use of animals in research with 54 per cent of respondents mentioning the issue in 1994 and 62 per cent mentioning it in 2000 (cited in Richard 2003:2).

This finding is broadly consistent with the findings of the survey being considered here. As would be expected, members of animal groups expressed the greatest concern about the use of animals in research, with 97 per cent of AA participants and 97.5 per cent of AAHR participants indicating that they were 'very concerned,' or 'somewhat concerned' about the use of animals in research. Of greater interest to the current research however is that 69.5 per cent of the non-aligned group claimed that they were very concerned or somewhat concerned

about the use of animals in research. That concern level, however, was lower than the level of concern expressed by the early career animal researcher. Among early level researchers 93.5 per cent stated they were either very concerned or somewhat concerned.

When asked if their concern had resulted in a change in behaviour, 94 per cent of AA members, 96.5 per cent of AAHR members, 33.5 per cent of the non-aligned group and 61.5 per cent of early level researcher responded 'yes'. When asked if their concern had resulted in them joining an AEC, 11 members of AA answered yes, seven member of AAHR also answered yes, one participant from the non-aligned group had also joined an AEC, but no animal researchers had done likewise.

The most popular way in which the public changed their behaviour in response to concerns about the use of animals in research was by choosing 'cruelty free' products, which effectively constitutes a boycott of animal research activity. This was also the most popular response by members of both animal groups and the second most popular response by animal researchers. Ninety three per cent of AAHR members boycotted products tested on animals, whereas 3.5 per cent participated in the AEC process.

When asked what it was about the use of animals in research that they objected to, the non-aligned group responded that they object because 'animals suffer as a result' (57.5 per cent), 'animal researchers are largely unaccountable for their treatment of animals' (34 per cent) and 'such use is immoral' (32 per cent). However, the second most popular response, given by the public, regarding their attitude towards the use of animals in research, was in support of the statement 'modern medicine would not be where it is today if it were not for such use [of animals in research]' (50.5 per cent).

As was to be expected, the animal researcher who had undertaken a day and a half training on the use of animals in research demonstrated the highest level of knowledge about the detail of animal research. Participants were asked to answer five true or false questions. The questions were:

- a) Animal Research in NSW is regulated by Animal Ethics Committees
- b) You can use a pound dog in research in NSW as long as you have proper approval
- c) Australia has a Code of Practice for animal research but it doesn't apply in NSW
- d) Analgesic is always used in research where animals may experience pain
- e) Animal researchers are required to show a commitment to the principles of Reduction, Refinement and Replacement (3Rs)

All survey participants from the early animal researcher's group completed the question section and the results were: 17 per cent answered five questions correctly, 48.5 per cent answered four questions correctly, 29 per cent answered three questions correctly, 3.5 per cent answered two correctly, two per cent answered one correctly and none scored zero.

By contrast, 46 per cent of the non-aligned group did not make an attempt at the quiz questions. Of those who attempted, 7.5 per cent answered five questions correctly, 13.5 per cent answered four questions correctly, 23 per cent answered three questions correctly, 24 per

cent answered two questions correctly, 26.5 per cent answered one question correctly and five per cent answered no questions correctly.

When asked where they received their information about the use of animals in research, the most popular response from the non-aligned group was the popular media (76.5 per cent). As cited above, the Senate Select Committee's findings suggested that the media played a role in strengthening public opposition to the use of animals in research. However, a media survey conducted in 2004<sup>6</sup> showed that over a period of a month *The Sydney Morning Herald* carried nine stories that mentioned research animals, *The Daily Telegraph* carried two, *The Sun Herald* carried one and *The Sunday Telegraph* carried none. However, of the total twelve stories run on the issue, all were written in support of research and were focused on a new research discovery or advancement. None were critical or made mention of animal suffering.

## **CONSLUSIONS**

The research community, the animal advocacy community, and policy makers, all claim to be in support of enhanced transparency. Yet, the degree to which we have developed an adequately transparent system in Australia is debatable. Beyond questions concerning the form research transparency has taken in Australia, and the effectiveness of that system, it would also seem that the logic underpinning the calls for transparency coming from both the animal researchers', and the animal advocates' camps, are essentially in conflict.

---

<sup>6</sup> The survey was conducted in June 2004.

If both groups claim to be in support of enhanced transparency, then it stands to reason that both groups consider transparency to be in their best interest. However, the best interest of the research community and the best interest of the animal advocacy community are diametrically opposed. To put it simply, animal researchers appear to believe enhanced transparency will result in greater public support for their activities. The animal advocacy community appears to believe that enhanced transparency will result in greater opposition to the use of animals in research. One of these groups must be wrong.

The data presented here does not provide categorical answers to the question asked above, namely, in whose best interest is enhanced transparency? However, it does provide some interesting food for thought. It suggests that those who have been most exposed to the use of animals in research, or who have thought most about the issue, are the more concerned than those who have not. It also suggests that those who have been most exposed to the issue are also the most likely to change their behaviour, the most common form of objection being to boycott products tested on animals.

Although both the research community and the animal protection communities both claim to be in favour of enhanced transparency, the research community has not moved swiftly to 'open the laboratory door'. This suggests that if enhanced transparency is to occur it is most likely to come about as a result of changes to public policy. That means that those who inform that structure of animal research policy need to decide what they consider the value of transparency in animal research to be. The animal advocacy community believes that enhanced transparency will result in public opinion more strongly opposing the use of animals in research. The research community believe that enhanced transparency will result in stronger public support for research, yet appears unwilling to actually test that hypothesis. If

policy makers do not move to enforce enhanced transparency it is likely we will never know who is right – the animal advocates or the animal researchers. However, if policy makers do force enhanced transparency upon the research community the public attitude which will flow from that change is likely to be a fair and reasoned response to the reality of animal research and therefore arguably the best result for a democratic society.

## REFERENCES

Animal Liberation NSW, (1999), *Demonstration Against Animal Research*, viewed 26 May 2005, <<http://www.animal-lib.org.au>>

Australian Government and the National Health and Medical Research Council, (2004), *Australia code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 7<sup>th</sup> edition*, Canberra, Australian Government.

ANZCCART, (2003), *Media Release: Scientists to push for more public information on animal research*, viewed 26 May 2005, <<http://www.rsnz.org/advisory/anzccart/releaseSept03.php>>

ANZCCART, (nd) *Mission Statement*, viewed 26 May 2005, <<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART>>

Birke, L. and Michael, M. (1992a), "The researcher's dilemma", *New Scientist*, 1815, 25-28

Birke, L. and Michael, M. (1992b), "Views from behind the barricade", *New Scientist*, 1815, 29-35.

Broughton, Z. (2002), "Seeing is Believing", *The Ecologist*, vol. 31 i2.

BUAV, (nd), *Undercover*, viewed 26 May 2005 <<http://www.buav.org/undercover/index.html>>



Covanecruelty, (2005), *Court Rules that PETA Europe Should be Allowed to Show Video of Monkey Abuse Inside Covance Lab*, viewed 26 May 2005,

<<http://www.conancruelty.co.uk/coutRules.asp>>

Home Office (2004), *Animal Welfare – Human Rights: protecting people from animal rights extremists*, London, Home Office Communications Directorate.

Kedgley, S. (2002), “Lifting the Veil on Animal Experimentation Secrecy”, *Seminar of the Animal Rights Legal Advocacy Network*, viewed 26 May 2005,

<<http://www.greens.org.nz/searchdocs/speech6317.html>>

Miller, J. A. and Strange, C. (1990), “Taking the Offensive for Animal Research”, *BioScience*, v40 n6.

Moore, C. (2005), ‘Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill’, *NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard*, 23/3/05, viewed 26 May 2005,  
<<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20050323005>>

Morrison, A. R. (1992), “What’s wrong with ‘animal rights’”, *The Education Digest*, vol75.

Nerlich, G. (2004), “Letters to the Editor”, *ANZCCART News*, Vol. 17 No. 1

Paul, E. (1995), “Us and Them: Scientists’ and Animal Rights Campaigners’ Views of the Animal Experimentation Debate”, *Society & Animals*, Vol.3, Number 1, viewed 25 May

2005, <<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa3.1/paul.html>>

Pifer, L, Shimizu, K., and Pifer, R., (1994), "Public Attitudes Toward Animal Research: Some International Comparisons", *Society & Animals*, Vol. 2, No. 2, viewed 26 May 2005  
<<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa2.2/pifer.html>>

Rickard, M. D. (2003), "Meeting community expectations for animal-based science: an Australian perspective", *ANZCCART News*, Vol. 16, No. 3.

Schofield, J (2004), "Letters to the Editor", *ANZCCART News*, Vol. 17, No. 2

Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare (1989), *Animal Experimentation: Report by the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare*, Canberra, Australian Government Printing Service.