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## MEDIA RELEASE

### NEW GUIDELINES IMPROVE ANIMAL WELLBEING

World first guidelines that focus on the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes have been released by the NHMRC.

The groundbreaking *Guidelines to Promote the Wellbeing of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes: The Assessment and Alleviation of Pain and Distress in Research Animals* focus on all aspects of the care of animals used in research.

The Guidelines were developed by animal care experts, researchers and Animal Welfare Committee members on behalf of the National Health and Medical Research Council. They are designed to help institutions ensure they minimise pain and distress in animals used for scientific purposes.

The Guidelines have already attracted international interest and will be distributed to research institutions in the UK, Asia and Europe. They will also be presented at the upcoming International Animal Welfare Conference\* later this year.

In launching the Guidelines, Professor Warwick Anderson, NHMRC CEO, said “The Guidelines are designed to minimise the use of animals in scientific research through focusing on the 3 Rs - the replacement of animal research with other types of research when possible, reduction of the number of animals used in research and refinement of research techniques to minimise pain and distress. When it is necessary to study animals in medical research, all involved have an obligation to care for the animals in the best ways possible.”

“The new Guidelines also provide institutions with strategies to identify, minimise and manage pain and distress, in line with the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*. All Australian research institutions are required to follow this Code. Compliance is monitored by Animal Ethics Committees and enforced under state and territory laws.

“Minimising any pain or distress is obviously better for the animals but it also increases the reliability and validity of research results.”

The Guidelines are available on request or at: [www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ea18syn.htm](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ea18syn.htm)

\* The International Animal Welfare Conference is being hosted by the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Advisory Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> August - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008.

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