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Action Officers	I L H
Response due	

Animal Welfare Committee

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http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ethics/committees/animal/animal_home.cfm

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

7th August, 2014

Dear Minister,

I write in response to your letter (14SEC1006) regarding the plan to abolish all Statutory Committees (including Animal Ethics Committees) as proposed by the Premier on the 8th of July. Many thanks for inviting me to respond to proposed changes.

I am the Chair of the Animal Welfare Committee at Flinders University and therefore represent a State Government Committee that may be abolished in this reform. I write in response to the questions you have posed for consideration.

The welfare of animals used in research is very important to the South Australian community and I would strongly recommend against abolishing AECs altogether as this would represent a backward step in animal research and the protection of animals. The Animal Ethics Committee at Flinders University adds value in maintaining a research environment that is mindful and respectful to animal welfare as well as being accountable to the community.

If abolished by the State Government attention to animal welfare is likely not to be lost altogether for the University would maintain its own committee and constitute policies in relation to membership appointments. This has several advantages in relation to having direct power over the policy and practice of the appointment to AEC membership, performance and indeed dismissal where appropriate. However there is a risk that over time attention to (and funding for) animal research governance would diminish if Government oversight was withdrawn.

There are several advantages to maintaining the current system of Governance:

- The statutory nature of the committee at the present time ensures consistency of AEC constitution and performance by objective and impartial oversight.
- It eliminates bias and ensures gender balance
- Appointments are made according to the ethical guidelines laid out in the Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013)
- Most importantly it ensures a focus on the welfare of animals, increases public confidence in the governance of research involving animals and provides credibility in the face of public dissent regarding the use of animals in research.

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I urge you to consider that the current 12 AECs in South Australia cost the Government very little as the costs of the committee management are borne by the institutions. However they currently provide protection for animals, advance best research practice and reassure the public that animals are not being used needlessly and that the welfare of animals is both important and monitored.

Yours sincerely,



A/Prof Sheryl de Lacey
Chair, Animal Welfare Committee



Cc Professor David Day, DVCR

