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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Level 17
25 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 1671
Adelaide SA 5001
DX 667
Tel (08) 8226 0168
Fax (08) 8226 0320
www.pir.sa.gov.au

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

Dear Minister

I am writing in response to your letter to the Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) Animal Ethics Committee requesting comment on the proposed abolishment of all Boards and Committees, specifically the PIRSA Animal Ethics Committee.

Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) oversee the use of animals in research and teaching. Their role includes approving and monitoring the use and supply of animals for these purposes. AECs must also ensure that all activities they supervise comply with the animal research legislation, including the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

The PIRSA Animal Ethics Committee oversees the welfare of animals in South Australia that are used in research or teaching in South Australian Government owned or managed facilities. Across Australia no animal research or teaching may be carried out without the approval of the responsible AEC.

Approval from a properly constituted animal ethics committee is a stringent requirement of all Australian research funding agencies. These agencies will not fund research on animals without animal ethics approval.

PIRSA is of the view that consideration be given to retaining the PIRSA Animal Ethics Committee in its current format at this time. However, it is considered that there is scope for future reform of the number and activity of animal ethics committees. For example, SARDI and University of Adelaide scientists when working on joint projects require the approval of Animal Ethics Committees for both organisations. Streamlining these activities would be of benefit to both agencies.

Yours sincerely

Scott Ashby
CHIEF EXECUTIVE