

8 July 2024



Position Statement - Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia

The Academy's Position

Scientists and scientific organisations should be transparent and open about the use of animals in research and teaching and must maintain the highest ethical standards for this work.

The Australian Academy of Science supports the Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia and was an Inaugural Supporter at the launch of the Openness Agreement on 10 August 2023.

The Openness Agreement

The Openness Agreement is an initiative of the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART). ANZCCART was established in 1987 to provide a focus for consideration of the scientific, ethical and social issues associated with the use of animals in research and teaching.

The Openness Agreement is a voluntary pledge that can be signed by organisations wishing to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring transparency in the use of animals for research or teaching. Similar transparency agreements have now been [adopted in 10 countries](#), modelled on the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#) in the United Kingdom.

By supporting the agreement, the Academy is making a tangible commitment to improving transparency and openness in science and provides a signal to the broad research sector. Increased public understanding of the use of animals in research, its governance and the benefits will increase trust in the community and the social license of this research.

Supporting openness and transparency in animal research

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework that is designed to protect animals used in research and teaching in Australia. Animal research is regulated under state and territory laws. Institutions must submit annual reports to their government regulatory body providing information about the number of animals used. Research using animals cannot be carried out without the approval of an Animal Ethics Committee. Beyond this framework, there is a community need to be informed about how and why animals are used. The Openness Agreement presents an opportunity to address this need.

Supporting openness and transparency in animal research is consistent with the NHMRC [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#), which promotes the ethical, humane and responsible care and use of animals. Supporting the openness agreement is also consistent with previous Academy position statements [openness in research](#) and [responsibility of science](#)

Statement of Authorisation

This position statement has been developed in consultation with members of the National Committee for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the National Committee for History and Philosophy of Science, and Fellows with expertise in animal welfare.

This position statement was authorised by the Academy Council at its meeting of 26 June 2024.

Relevant Position Statements

[Freedom and responsibility of science](#) – August 2023

[Open Science](#) – June 2021

Other Relevant Links

[Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia](#) – ANZCCART

[Statement of the Royal Society's position on the use of animals in research](#) – The Royal Society

[Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#) – Understanding Animal Research

[Transparency Agreements in Europe](#) – European Animal Research Association

[Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) – NHMRC

[Information paper: The implementation of the 3Rs in Australia](#) – NHMRC