



## POSITION STATEMENT

# Research Involving Animals

## Our position

The Leukaemia Foundation's goal is zero lives lost to blood cancer by 2035. To help us reach it, we fund life-saving research into the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and care of people with blood cancer.

As a funder of medical research, the Leukaemia Foundation supports projects at various stages of research, from early phase discovery projects right through to clinical trials. Many of the research projects we support use tissue cultures, computer modelling, or other lab-based models and do not involve the use of animals.

When these alternative methods are not suitable, researchers may need to use animals in their studies.

If any of the research we fund does involve animals, it must comply with all the strict regulations of the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#). This code sets out how animal models may be used for scientific purposes and is enforced by law through legislation in each state and territory.

The use of animals in research is not a decision taken lightly. Under the NHMRC regulations all researchers must plan their studies to replace the use of animal models with other methods if available or involve as few animals as possible, applying the highest standards to animal welfare.



**Alignment with Patient First Strategy Pillar:**  
*Optimising Organisational Effectiveness and Visibility*

## What we do

The Leukaemia Foundation is the Australian charity stopping blood cancer from wrecking lives.

We exist for every Australian affected by any type of blood cancer, including leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

The Leukaemia Foundation offers expert support, funds leading-edge research and campaigns to make change for Australians facing blood cancer.

Our goal is zero lives lost to blood cancer by 2035.

Our values power our purpose and drive us toward our goal: we care deeply, we're bold, and we always step up and make it count for people living with blood cancer.

## Why we do it

Your blood is a remarkable thing. It keeps you alive by giving your body what it needs, taking away what it doesn't and fighting off infection.

Blood cancer stops your blood from doing what it needs to keep you alive and healthy.

It develops in the places of your body where blood is made, but its exact cause is unknown.

Another 53 Australians are diagnosed with blood cancer each day, joining more than 135,000 people living with the devastating impact of our second most diagnosed cancer.

A range of things affect someone's chance of surviving blood cancer and it can be incurable. Sadly, another 16 Australians will lose their life to blood cancer each and every day.

# Frequently asked questions

## ***Why are animal models used in medical and scientific research? Is there an alternative?***

While new technologies have allowed tissue cultures, computer modelling, and other alternatives to be used in place of animal models or reduce the number of animals used in some preliminary studies, the use of animal models is still necessary to understand the biology of disease and are considered an essential step in preliminary research to progress drug development into human clinical trials.

Over the last century, most major scientific and medical advances of note would not have been possible without the use of animal models. For example, many life-saving drugs such as insulin, antibiotics, vaccines, anti-rejection (transplant) drugs and many anti-cancer treatments, including effective cures and treatments for blood cancer, were all developed using knowledge gained from some animal studies.

For research to progress into advanced phase clinical trials, under Australian Government guidelines, animal models must have been used to test new treatments.

***The Leukaemia Foundation believes every effort should be made to reduce the number of animals involved in the studies we fund, and to promote welfare and wellbeing.***

## ***What safeguards are in place to ensure proper research standards and that animals are protected?***

Research and studies involving animal models is highly regulated in Australia and many countries overseas. In Australia, research must adhere to strict guidelines set by the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#) which are enforced by law through legislation in each state and territory.

The Code of Practice includes a requirement for researchers to scientists to consider the:

- Replacement of animal models with other methods or models
- Reduction of the number of animal models used; and
- Refinement of techniques used to reduce the adverse impact on animal models.

For studies using animal models, scientists must first obtain ethics board approvals through the relevant institution and university they are associated with before any research is conducted. The role of these ethics boards is to ensure that there is a valid need for the use of animals, the planned experiments are valid and justify the use of animal and that only the minimum number of animal models are used to achieve the required outcome.

Scientists must also adhere to providing detailed information about when, how, and why the animal models are to be used, and how they are to be cared for before, during and after the study.

The promotion of welfare and wellbeing for animal models used in studies is essential to the overall success of a study. Any improper treatment of an animal model will result in disciplinary action in line with the NHMRC and the revoking of funding. *continued over ►*

For more information about Australian guidelines on research involving animals visit the NHMRC at <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/animal-ethics>

***The Leukaemia Foundation will only fund research projects that adhere to the standards set out in National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes and have obtained approval from an independent animal ethics committee (AEC).***

### ***Why does the Leukaemia Foundation support research that involves animals?***

Since 2002, the Leukaemia Foundation has supported Australian blood cancer research by investing over \$54.5 million in research.

As a funder of medical research, the Leukaemia Foundation supports projects at various stages of research, from early phase discovery projects right through to clinical trials. Many of the research projects we support use tissue cultures, computer modelling, or other lab-based models and do not involve the use of animals.

The use of animals in experiments is not a decision taken lightly. Under the NHMRC regulations all researchers must plan their studies to replace the use of animal models with other methods if available or involve as few animals as possible, applying the highest standards to animal welfare.

For research to progress into advanced phase clinical trials, under Australian Government guidelines, animal models must have been used to test new treatments.

### ***When will the Leukaemia Foundation stop supporting the use of animals in research studies?***

We believe every effort should be made to replace or reduce the number of animals involved in the studies we fund, and to promote welfare and wellbeing. Many of the research projects we support use tissue cultures, computer modelling, or other lab-based models and do not involve the use of animals.

When these alternative methods are not suitable, researchers may need to use animals in their studies.

In order for research to progress into advanced phase clinical trials, under Australian Government guidelines, animal models must have been used to test new treatments.

Scientific methods are continually evolving, and the Leukaemia Foundation is informed by the leading experts in the field.

The Leukaemia Foundation would fully support any robust, widely validated and approved system to replace the use of animal models in research.

#### REFERENCES

1. NHMRC Animal Ethics, <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/animal-ethics>
2. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes>
3. Guidelines to promote the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes: The assessment and alleviation of pain and distress in research animals (2008) <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/guidelines-promote-wellbeing-animals-used-scientific-purposes>

## **More questions? Get in touch**

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