

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALSWashington  
1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETALos Angeles  
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETANorfolk  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETAInfo@peta.org  
PETA.org

December 10, 2025

Alan Singh  
Executive Director  
Research Quality and Advice Branch  
National Health and Medical Research CouncilVia e-mail: [Alan.Singh@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:Alan.Singh@nhmrc.gov.au)

Dear Mr. Singh:

Thank you for your August 20, 2025, response<sup>1</sup> to the letter from PETA U.S. and PETA Australia, co-signed by the Alliance for Hope International,<sup>2</sup> regarding two NHMRC-funded experiments at Monash University involving strangulation, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and the forced swim tests (FST)<sup>3,4</sup> conducted on rats.

In your reply,<sup>5</sup> you state that your previous “response from March 17, 2025, remains valid,”<sup>6</sup> and that NHMRC’s policy is “that it does not fund research involving animals unless the work is of high quality as determined by NHMRC’s peer review process and the work has been approved by an animal ethics committee (AEC).”<sup>7</sup>

We note, however, that your website officially discourages new research funding applications for the FST.<sup>8</sup> Despite this clear policy direction, funding was

<sup>1</sup>Email from Singh A at NHMRC to PETA regarding PETA’s July 22, 2025, rebuttal letter. August 20, 2025. Accessed September 19, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-08-20-nhmrc-email-to-2nd-rebuttal-re-funding-strang-tbi-fst-at-monash.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Wisniewska M to Singh A at NHMRC regarding strangulation, TBI, and FST use on animals at Monash. Accessed September 19, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-07-22-rebuttal-to-nhmrc-response-re-rat-strangulation-study.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>Sun M, Symons GF, Spitz G, O’Brien WT, Baker TL, Fan J, Martins BD, Allen J, Giesler LP, Mychasiuk R, van Donkelaar P, Brand J, Christie B, O’Brien TJ, O’Sullivan MJ, Mitra B, Wellington C, McDonald SJ, Shultz SR. Pathophysiology, blood biomarkers, and functional deficits after intimate partner violence-related brain injury: Insights from emergency department patients and a new rat model. *Brain Behav Immun*. 2025; Jan 123:383-396. Accessed November 5, 2025. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0889159124006342>.

<sup>4</sup>Sgro M, Kodila Z, Salberg S, Li CN, Smith MJ, Freeman J, Vlassopoulos E, Harris S, Shultz SR, Yamakawa GR, Noel M, Mychasiuk R. Exposure to perinatal trauma modifies nociception and gene expression in the prefrontal cortex and hypothalamus of adolescent rats. *J Pain*. 2025; Mar 28:104762. Accessed November 5, 2025. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39730020/>.

<sup>5</sup>Email from Singh A at NHMRC. August 20, 2025.

<sup>6</sup>Reply letter from Singh A at NHMRC to PETA regarding funding for strangulation and TBI research. March 17, 2025. Accessed September 10, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-03-17-nhmrc-reply-to-rebuttal-re-funding-strangulation-and-tbi-at-monash.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup>Email from Singh A at NHMRC. August 20, 2025.

<sup>8</sup>National Health and Medical Research Council. December 13, 2023 (updated January 24, 2024). *Statement on the forced swim test in rodent models*. Australian Government. Accessed September 10, 2025. <https://www.nhrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/statement-forced-swim-test-rodent-models>.

## Entities:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

approved for the experiments in question, which include the FST.<sup>9</sup> We urge the NHNRC to reevaluate its review process to ensure consistency with its stated policy on FST.

Finally, while we understand that you may not be able to share specific correspondence regarding our complaint, we would like to pose a more general question: Just as NHMRC has taken a commendable step in discouraging the use of the widely discredited FST in new projects, would the Council consider a similar action—such as restricting funding—for future experiments involving any degree of strangulation and/or TBI on animals?

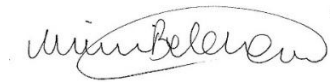
Given the significant public concern surrounding the use of strangulation on animals in experimentation,<sup>10,11,12</sup> we believe this presents an important opportunity for the NHMRC to reaffirm its leadership in promoting humane and scientifically sound research practices.

You may contact me directly via e-mail at [MaggieW@peta.org](mailto:MaggieW@peta.org). Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Maggie Wiśniewska, PhD  
Science Policy Advisor  
International Laboratory Methods Division  
PETA U.S.



Mimi Bekhechi  
Senior Policy Advisor to  
PETA Australia

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<sup>9</sup>Sgro et al. 2025.

<sup>10</sup>Stock P. February 14, 2025. Domestic violence study that strangled rats should not have been approved, animal advocates argue. *The Guardian*. Accessed September 10, 2025.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/14/rats-strangled-in-part-government-funded-australian-domestic-violence-study-ntwnfb>.

<sup>11</sup>Animal-Free Science Advocacy. (n.d.). January 31, 2025. *Controversial study sparks outrage: Simulated non-fatal strangulation on rats to study human intimate partner violence (IPV)*. Accessed September 10, 2025.  
<https://animalfreescienceadvocacy.org.au/controversial-study-sparks-outrage-simulated-non-fatal-strangulation-on-rats-to-study-human-intimate-partner-violence-ipv/>.

<sup>12</sup> Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. March 25, 2025. *Nonprofit science advocacy group calls for retraction of intimate partner violence study involving animal trauma training*. Accessed November 5, 2025.  
<https://www.pcrm.org/news/news-releases/nonprofit-science-advocacy-group-calls-retraction-intimate-partner-violence>.