ANZCCART National Statistics Project

2026 Trial Results and Recommendations

Coverage of statistics

ANZCCART's National Statistics trial sought to collect statistics on mice and rats used for biomedical research across all Australian states and territories during 2024.

Most statistics were either taken from statistics already published by regulators or were supplied by regulators on request. Where this was not possible, statistics were obtained directly from institutions.

The results comprise a nearly full set of statistics from all eight states and territories leaving only two (known) institutions from which statistics were not available.

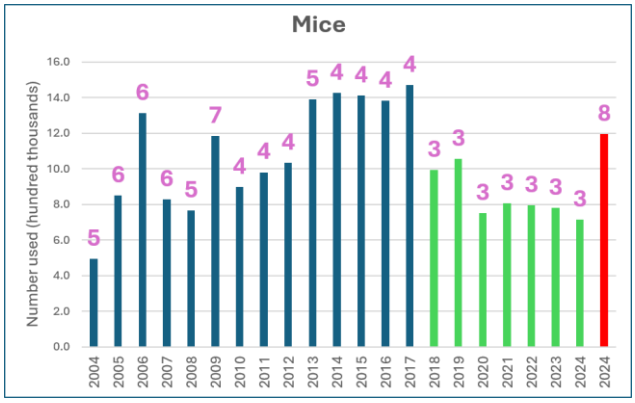
Statistics have been pooled and are therefore completely de-identified in terms of personnel, projects, institutions and jurisdictions.

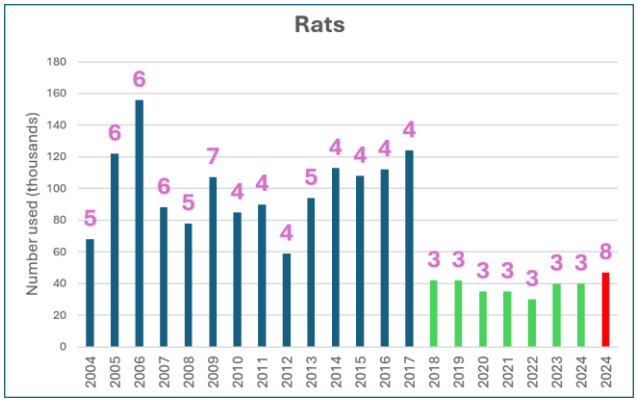
Total numbers of animals

Pooling of statistics from all sources across the eight states and territories found that a total of 1,193,619 mice and 46,961 rats were recorded in 2024. The represents an overall total 1,240,580 rodents of which approximately 96% were mice and 4% were rats.

To provide some context, statistics collected by Animal-Free Science Advocacy[1] from 2004 to 2017 are presented in the graphs below along with total numbers from three jurisdictions that published annual statistics in the years between the AFSA and ANZCCART compilations[2]. The number of jurisdictions from which statistics were available each year are also shown above each bar. It is seen that this number varied considerably with only the ANZCCART trial including statistics from all eight jurisdictions.

It can also be seen that the animal numbers reported in the three jurisdictions from 2018 to 2024 (green bars) showed a drop during the COVID pandemic (2020 – 2022). While this might be expected, it appears that the number of rats has since recovered to pre-COVID levels whereas the number of mice has not.





Blue bars are from statistics collected by Animal Free Science Advocacy. **Green** bars are statistics pooled from three jurisdictions where statistics were publicly available. The **red** bar represents statistics compiled in the ANZCCART trial. **Purple** numbers represent the number of jurisdictions from which the statistics were obtained.

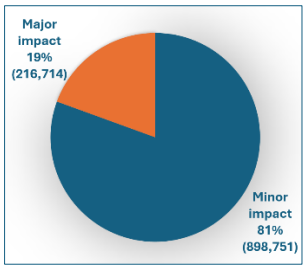
[1] AFSA – formerly known as Humane Research Australia
[2] NSW, Victoria and Tasmania, 2018 to 2024

Animal Welfare Impact

Not all sources provided statistics on animal welfare impact. This resulted in slightly lower numbers being reported in this category compared to the overall total number of animals.

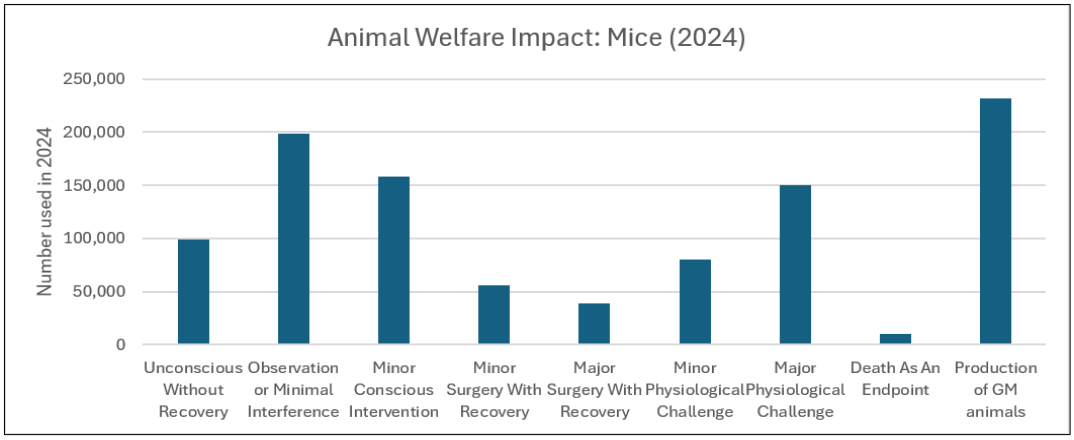
There was also an important difference between jurisdictions in the reporting of animal welfare impact: in some jurisdictions the statistics represented the number of individual animals whereas in others, the statistics represented the number of procedures – a figure which is likely to be higher.

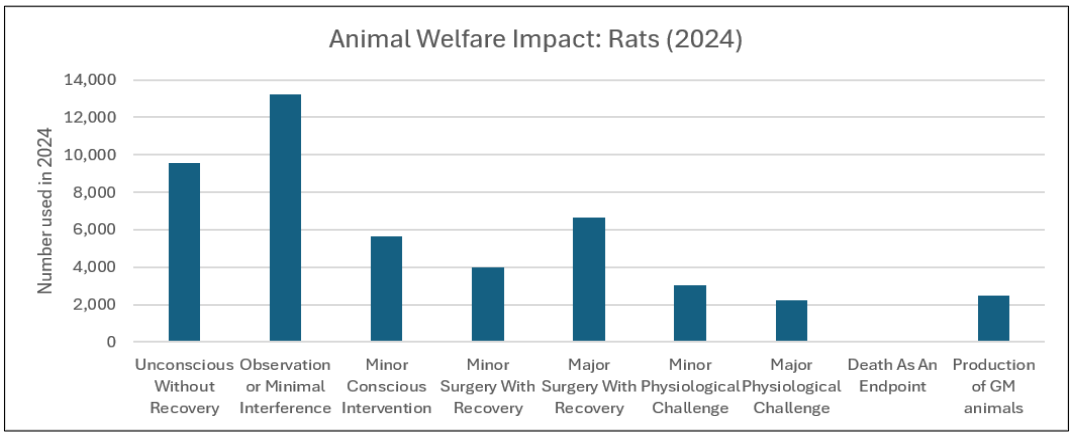
The combined statistics from mice and rats show that 81% underwent procedures that could be regarded as having a minor animal welfare impact and 19% a major impact (i.e. 'Major surgery with recovery', 'Major physiological challenge' and 'Death as an endpoint').



The largest number of **high impact procedures involving mice** was in the **Major Physiological Challenge** category. Most jurisdictions define this as the animal remaining conscious and experiencing at least a moderate or longer-term impact on its welfare.

The largest number of **high impact procedures involving rats** was in the **Major Surgery with Recovery** category. Most jurisdictions define this as the animal undergoing a surgical procedure under general anaesthesia.

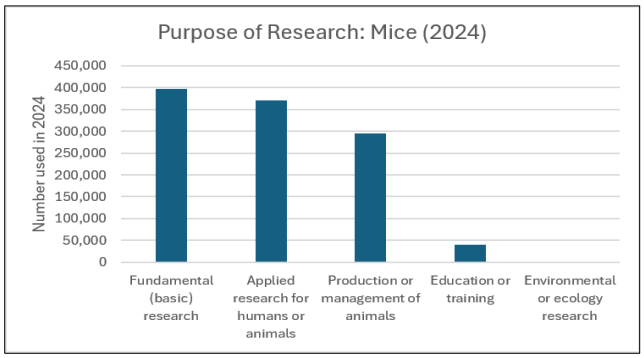


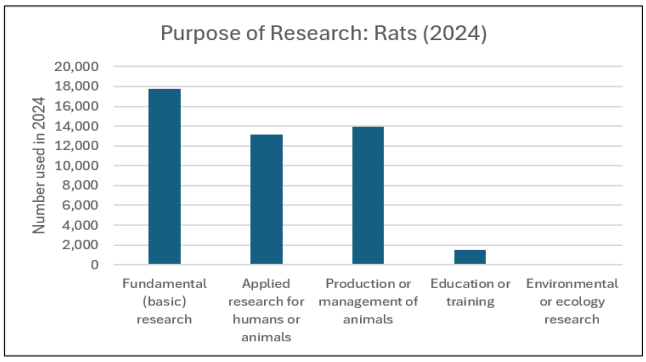


Purpose of Research

As with the statistics on animal welfare impact, not all sources provided statistics on the purpose of the research for which animals were used. This again resulted in slightly lower totals in this category compared to the overall totals.

The pattern for both species was roughly similar across the 'purpose of research' categories, with the largest number being in the 'Fundamental (Basic) Research' category in each case.





2027 trial and recommendations

This trial has produced the first compilation of statistics on the use of animals in research and teaching across all eight Australian states and territories. Although the trial was limited to just mice and rats used in biomedical research, it has identified a pathway that should be suitable for compiling more comprehensive statistics.

ANZCCART believes that establishing consistent year-on-year reporting of national statistics is important for informing policy and supporting transparency. It also aligns with priority objectives in the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy, and it is noted that despite being recommended by a senate committee nearly 40 years ago, Australia's ongoing lack of national statistics sets it apart from all comparable countries.

An expanded trial is therefore planned for 2027. The new trial will cover the 2025 reporting year and will again focus on animals used in biomedical research although in addition to mice and rats, it will also include guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs, cats and non-human primates. Consideration will also be given to including another area of research such as captive wildlife or agriculture.

Since the current trial identified some important gaps and inconsistencies between statistical sources, the following **recommendations** are presented for incorporation into the 2027 trial where possible or as high priority goals in the longer term:

1. **Ensure statistics are provided by all relevant institutions**. A small number of institutions did not provide statistics for this trial. Since these institutions have large animal research programs, the total animal numbers reported here are an underestimate and this needs to be addressed to enable valid year-on-year comparisons in the future.
2. **Ensure all sources provide statistics in categories according to 'animal welfare impact' and 'purpose of research' and not just total animal numbers**. Some individual institutions only provided total animal numbers. However, the Code already requires AECs and/or researchers to keep records that would encompass the statistics necessary to split total animal numbers into categories of 'animal welfare impact' and 'purpose of research' (e.g. clauses 2.3.29, 2.4.32 and 3.2.2). It should therefore be feasible for all sources to provide statistics in these categories.

3. **Include animals that are 'bred but not used'**. Wastage resulting from animals bred but not used for research is a major ethical concern and has received adverse attention in the media yet it is not always clear how many animals fall into this category. Clearly identifying the number of animals bred but not used will avoid an important cause of underestimation of animal numbers and would help monitor progress in reducing wastage.
4. **Count the number of animals rather than the number of procedures.** The manner in which animals are counted currently differs between jurisdictions: some count individual animals whereas others count the number of procedures. Both have merits but the former is recommended because it is generally simpler to implement and interpret.
5. **Define animal welfare impact in terms of actual (rather than anticipated) impact.** National statistics in virtually all overseas jurisdictions define animal welfare impact in terms of actual rather than anticipated harms. This is likely to be a more accurate representation of animal welfare impact because it can account for factors such as the use (or not) of pain management.
6. **Clarify the category of '*animal management and production*'.** Significant inconsistencies need to be resolved regarding the meaning of animals used for 'management and production' – in some instances it relates to animals used for research into animal husbandry, whereas in others, it relates to the breeding of animals specifically for research purposes.
7. **Clarify the reporting of genetically modified lines.** There are inconsistencies between jurisdictions in the categories for reporting the generation, breeding and use of genetically modified animal lines. This needs to be addressed because it can significantly affect the distribution of statistics across categories of 'animal welfare impact' and 'purpose of research'.
8. **Include other key categories of interest.** Statistics in several other categories of significant interest are already collected in some, but not all, jurisdictions. This shows that collection across all jurisdictions should be feasible. Examples include the use of animals for regulatory testing, diagnostic procedures, production of biological products and vertebrate pest control research, and the fate of animals at the end of their use in research (including rehoming). Another area of strong interest among stakeholders but not yet pursued extensively is the collection of statistics on specific high impact procedures. These include withholding pain relief, traumatic brain injury models, smoking/vaping models, the forced swim test, xenotransplantation and ascites-production of monoclonal antibodies. Collecting statistics in these categories would address areas of considerable public interest and help identify priorities for refinement and replacement of animals in research.
9. **Make data available in a format that allows comparisons within a category.** Presenting statistics in a manner that allows comparisons within a category is a simple means of providing greater context and assisting interpretation. For example, splitting the category of 'Major physiological challenge' into categories according to purpose of research could highlight research areas where efforts to reduce animal welfare impact should be focused.
10. **Harmonisation of statistics across all jurisdictions.** Strong frustration has been expressed consistently by the many institutions that have to report statistics on collaborative research to interstate regulators. Differences in reporting requirements across jurisdictions mean that interstate collaborations may require the reporting of statistics in up to eight different formats. This imposes a significant administrative burden for no benefit, and diverts resources from initiatives that could contribute to improved animal welfare and ethical outcomes.

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5 November 2026