



# Australian Openness Agreement on Animals in Research & Teaching

Summary of Annual Reports from 2025

## Executive summary

This summary presents findings from annual reports and public-facing content from 53 Signatories and Supporters of the Australian Openness Agreement during 2025.

All organisations indicated their intention to remain signed to the Agreement and the increase in new Signatories and Supporters has nearly doubled the total since the launch in 2023.

89% of the organisations' websites included an email address for public enquiries within one click of their openness webpage. Information about the regulation of animal research was presented by 74% of organisations.

Animal research was mentioned in communications to donors and supporters by 34% of organisations.

Common examples of information and initiatives from Signatories included:

- Images or video of animals in research programs (71%).
- Use of specific non-animal technologies (53%).
- Acknowledgement of animal care and veterinary staff (47%).
- Hosting secondary or tertiary students (40%).
- Tours of animal facilities (37%).

Less common initiatives (<20%) among Signatories included:

- Listing the species and number of animals used each year.
- Creation of a memorial to acknowledge animals used in research.
- Publishing a summary of the Independent External Review.
- Participation in a program to rehome animals after research.
- Internal grants or awards offered to researchers for advancing the 3Rs.

No organisations reported difficulties arising directly from becoming a Signatory or Supporter of the Openness Agreement although some reported that factors outside their control (especially staff restructure or turnover) had hindered progress with openness.

Other feedback included suggestions to support organisations work towards greater openness. These and other elements will be explored over the coming months as part of ANZCCART's commitment to review the Openness Agreement within its first three years.

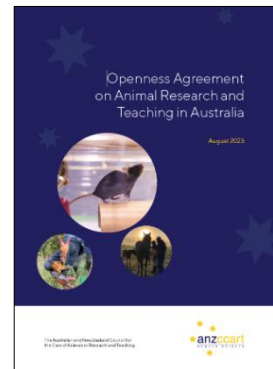
# Introduction

The [Australian Openness Agreement](#) on Animals in Research and Teaching is a voluntary pledge that may be signed by organisations wishing to demonstrate a public commitment to greater openness.

Organisations may sign as a **Signatory** (those that conduct animal research) or a **Supporter** (those with indirect involvement such as funders or professional associations).

Signatories and Supporters are asked to report each year on activities and experiences relating to openness.

This report highlights public-facing initiatives and feedback reported by organisations that had been Signatories or Supporters for 12 months or more at 31 October 2025. Also included is an update on overall participation and content from optional reporting by organisations that had been signed for less than 12 months.



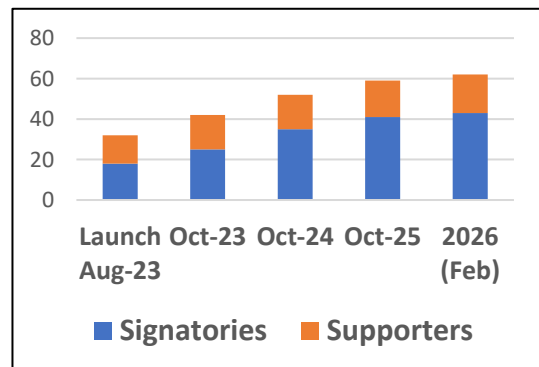
## Important note

The information presented here is drawn from content of annual reports and from reviews of Signatory and Supporter webpages. It is possible, however, that not all openness initiatives have been captured. The Openness Agreement is due for review during 2026 and this will include an examination of how the annual reporting process may be improved and facilitated.

## Overall participation

63 organisations (44 Signatories and 19 Supporters) had signed the Agreement as of March 2026.

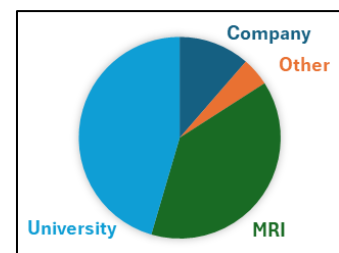
This continues a year-on-year increase from the 32 inaugural organisations (18 Signatories and 14 Supporters) that had signed the Agreement at the time of its launch in August 2023.



## Signatories

The majority of Signatories are universities (n=20), followed by Medical Research Institutes (17).

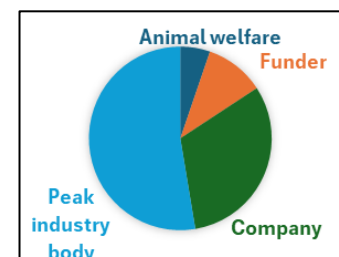
The full list of Signatories is available [here](#).



## Supporters

The largest proportion of Supporters comprised peak industry bodies (10) followed by companies (6).

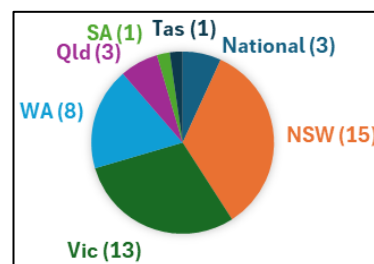
The full list of Supporters is available [here](#).



## Location

There is at least one Signatory in each state although none in the ACT or NT.

By their nature, nearly all Supporters operate nationally.



## Reports received

50 out of 52 organisations that had been Signatories or Supporters for at least 12 months provided a report or feedback, with most using the optional reporting template; reports from two organisations were still pending at the time this summary was finalised. Reports were also received from a further 3 Signatories that had signed less than 12 months previously thereby bringing the total to 53 organisations.

All reporting organisations confirmed their intention to remain as Signatories or Supporters.

## Information on websites

The following sections highlight findings on openness webpages and other online content from the 53 organisations.

The **figures in bold** refer to the **total number of organisations** and where applicable, the figures in brackets break this total down into the number of Signatories and Supporters respectively.

### Basic features

- An email address for enquiries about animal research is within one click of Openness page: **47** (32+15).
- A list of FAQs is provided to supplement information about animal research: **9** (8+1).
- The ANZCCART Signatory or Supporter logo is displayed: **17** (15+2).



### Information about animals (Signatories only)

- Content includes images or video of animals in research programs: **25**.
- All species used in research are clearly listed: **7**.
- The number of animals of each species used is shown: **4**.

### Information relating to animal care (Signatories only)

- Animal care staff and veterinary support are acknowledged: **18**.
- The organisation participates in a program to rehome animals after research: **6**.

### Operational and regulatory information

- Information about animal research regulations is presented: **39** (33+6).

- A summary of the Independent External Review and/or AEC reports to institution is available: **5** (applies to Signatories only).
- The organisation is accredited by AAALAC International: **2** (applies to Signatories only).

## Tours and onsite initiatives (Signatories only)

Several organisations reported onsite engagement with the broader community through activities such as:

- Hosting students (e.g. work experience, TAFE and undergraduate placements): **15**.
- Animal facility tours for external parties (examples included public open days, tours for community groups and school group visits): **14**.
- Animal facility tours for internal staff not involved in animal research: **14**.
- Displaying a public monument to acknowledge animals used in research: **5**.

## Communications

Signatories and Supporters employed various types of communication to improve openness towards internal and/or external stakeholders:

- Content relevant to openness was presented in webinars, conferences or other public forums: **37** (28+9).
- Internal communications were used to promote awareness of animal research among non-research staff: **30** (Signatories only).
- Animal research was mentioned in online or mainstream media reports: **22** (20+2).
- Animal research was mentioned in communications to donors and supporters: **18** (15+3).
- Animal research was mentioned in podcasts or social media posts: **14** (11+3).
- Communications training was provided to support researchers wishing to discuss their work publicly: **11** (9+2).

## The 3Rs

Many organisations promoted awareness of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of the use of animals) and a substantial proportion of Signatories provided examples of the 3Rs that had been implemented within their own organisation:

- General reference was made to the 3Rs: **26** (20+6).
- Specific examples of 3Rs initiatives utilised by the organisation were provided:
  - Replacement: **20** (19+1).
  - Reduction: **13** (12+1).
  - Refinement: **13** (12+1).
- Specific incentives were offered to researchers within the organisation to advance the 3Rs (grants, awards etc): **7** (Signatories only).
- A statement indicating that the use of animals for testing cosmetics is not conducted by the organisation and is prohibited in Australia: **5** (Signatories only).

## Difficulties encountered

No organisations reported difficulties arising directly from becoming a Signatory or Supporter of the Openness Agreement.

However some organisations reported factors largely outside their control that had hindered progress with openness:

- Staff restructure or staff turnover: 9 (Signatories only).
- Hesitancy among some research staff or management: 3 (2 + 1).
- Confidentiality constraints: 3 (Signatories only).
- Unexpected disruptions: 3 (Signatories only).
- Resource constraints: 3 (Signatories only).

## Additional comments

All organisations indicated their intention to continue as a Signatory or Supporter.

Fifteen organisations provided additional comments comprising clarifications, feedback or specific suggestions to refine the Openness Agreement program. Most of these organisations indicated a positive experience as seen in the following examples (included with permission):

- “We talk openly about our animal research during donor meetings...and in the three years I've worked in fundraising, I'm yet to receive a negative question.”
- “We fully intend to continue...in 2026, not just because we believe it's important for non-researchers to know how animals are used in research, but also because it's important for our researchers to know that we are proud of the work they do.”
- “We are grateful to ANZCCART for encouraging greater openness through its leadership of the Openness Agreement and we look forward to maintaining our participation which has continued since we signed as an inaugural Supporter.”
- “This exercise of reflecting has been informative and has helped identify areas for improvement and continued progress towards openness.”
- “We have encountered no difficulties in meeting our goals as a Supporter of the Openness Agreement.”
- “We have been fortunate to have active support from the executive level”.
- “[We remain] committed to supporting the openness agreement as an important initiative for institutions to engage more openly about their research involving the use of animals.”
- “We have enjoyed this process and we look forward to further progress in the area”.

One organisation provided an extensive commentary. This argued for clearer guidance from ANZCCART regarding their prioritisation of and distinction between the goal of internal cultural change and that of improved public understanding of animal research. It also sought guidance on engaging with collaborating institutions who are not Signatories, and suggested ANZCCART could supply more resources to assist organisations with openness initiatives.

Proposed improvements included suggestions for ANZCCART to provide:

- More examples of best practice and case studies in openness.
- Periodic updates on news, upcoming activities and newly signed organisations.

- Workshops or mentorship opportunities.
- Measures to facilitate the annual reporting process.

## Conclusions and next steps

For many organisations, signing the Openness Agreement followed extensive internal consultation and reflected a significant change in long-standing communication practices. It is therefore encouraging that all organisations reported an intention to remain as Signatories or Supporters.

It is also encouraging that no organisations reported adverse consequences from being a Signatory or Supporter.

Given the diversity of organisations that have signed the Agreement, it is not surprising to see a wide range in the steps being taken towards greater openness. Indeed, this diversity is acknowledged in the Agreement itself which rather than being prescriptive, allows organisations to choose their own approach depending on their activities and capacity.

The most consistent theme emerging from feedback was a desire for more guidance from ANZCCART. We will therefore be providing Signatories and Supporters with regular information including best practice examples and updates. This will be intentionally concise but organisations are welcome to contact ANZCCART for further information at any time.

A workshop or webinar will also be considered if there is a topic of wide interest, however experience has suggested that one-on-one consultations are likely to be a more effective approach given the widely differing needs among Signatory and Supporter organisations.

Finally, the Openness Agreement includes a commitment by ANZCCART to conduct a review within three years of its launch. This review will therefore take place during 2026. Opportunities for consultation and input will be announced around the middle of the year.

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31 March 2026