

Vice-Chancellor's Office

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16 October 2013

Stephen Manson  
National Office Manager  
New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society (Inc.)  
PO Box 9387  
Tower Junction  
CHRISTCHURCH 8149

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982, received by Lincoln University on 16 September 2013.

You asked "if the Lethal Dose 50 (LD50) test has been carried out at the University at any point in the last five years and if the University Animal Ethics Committee has given any approvals for the LD50 test to be carried out during that time".

Lincoln University has a long established position of not publicly releasing details on animal manipulations involved in research. This in no way should be construed as an acknowledgement that LD50 testing has been carried out at the University.

Lincoln University is withholding the information under section 6(d) of the Official Information Act 1982, as the University considers that making details on animal manipulation available would be likely to endanger the safety of staff. Researchers involved in animal manipulations have specifically requested that such information is not released, because their safety would be threatened, given inappropriate use of similar information in the past. In no situation will Lincoln University jeopardise the safety of its staff. Under section 6(d), the University is not required to consider whether the interest in withholding is outweighed by countervailing public interest considerations.

The information is also withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the Official Information Act 1982, protecting University employees from improper pressure or harassment. Lincoln University objects to the public disclosure of material that identifies specifically, or can assist to identify, individual staff members and locations of animal manipulations. Lincoln University is of a size that public release of such material will more easily lead to the identification of staff, if they had not already been specifically identified in the report. Given past experience, this identification would open staff up to improper pressure and harassment from certain members of the public. Improper pressure and harassment would affect the way staff perform their duties and would therefore have a detrimental effect on the conduct of public affairs by the University. This would also lead to difficulties in recruiting suitable staff to monitor the compliance of projects in respect to animal welfare. Lincoln University has an obligation to prevent staff in any situation to receive improper pressure or harassment.

The University does not accept that any public interest in animal manipulations at an institution may outweigh the right of its staff to be protected from improper pressure of harassment. In the University's view, the public interest is served by the annual notification of the numbers of animals used in research, testing and teaching through the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee Annual Report. The University ensures that any research, testing or teaching involving live animals complies fully with the requirements of Part 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and is approved by an Animal Ethics Committee.

Please note that you are entitled, under section 28 of the Official Information Act 1982, to have this response reviewed by the Office of the Ombudsmen.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Andrew West**  
Vice-Chancellor