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Animal testing figures shock the Greens

The Greens are condemning latest figures on animal testing.

Data released by the National Animal Ethics Council shows more than 318,000 animals were experimented on last year - an increase of over 20 percent from 2005. Of those, more than five percent suffered at a severe or very severe level.

Committee Chairman John Martin says most of those were rodents and were used to test animal health products. He says 87 percent of animals used in testing experienced little or no suffering. Mr Martin says the principal purposes of testing in 2006 were animal husbandry, basic biological research and veterinary research. He says it is important to remember that the treatment and cure for many diseases in the world rely on animal research, and research is not just about developing new drugs for humans, as many of the drugs tested on animals are developed for animals.

Green MP Sue Kedgley says the rise is appalling and is dismissing the contents of the NAEC report as spin. She says it sheds no light on why institutions continue animal experiments when alternatives are available. Ms Kedgley is scathing of the report's claims there is a focus on reducing animal testing. She says the numbers clearly do not bear this out.

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