

## Otago Polytechnic and Equibreed ART Ltd share the 2024 Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield 3Rs Award

Otago Polytechnic's Te Kura Oraka Kararehe | School of Animal Health, and Lee Morris of Equibreed ART Ltd have been recognised for their outstanding work in implementing the 3Rs principles (replacement, reduction, refinement) at their respective organisations.

The two organisations are co-recipients of the 2024 Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield 3Rs Award, jointly presented by the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) and the New Zealand Board of the Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART (NZ)).

The concept of the 3Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement) is to improve animal welfare and replace and reduce the use of live animals where possible, refine study design, handling, and housing of animals to improve life experiences.

"These principles are championed by NAEAC and ANZCCART (NZ), and evidence of significant developments in relation to the 3Rs are recognised through this prestigious New Zealand award given to these two worthy applicants," says NAEAC Chair Professor Nat Waran.

Otago Polytechnic's project addresses the critical challenge of ensuring veterinary nursing and allied animal healthcare learners graduate with the necessary competencies, while maintaining high standards of animal ethics. Their primary focus is to balance teaching safe, ethical, and effective handling and procedural skills, and recognising and mitigating animal stress, with ethical objectives and obligations.

Since winning the John Schofield 3Rs Award in 2016, Otago Polytechnic has made significant progress in enhancing the application of the 3Rs. As a signatory of the ANZCCART Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in New Zealand, it has furthered its commitment to transparency and ethical practices.

Otago Polytechnic plan to use the award to continue a range of initiatives, including advanced training modules, staff development, research and continuing education, and outreach activities as well as enhancing dialogue on animal ethics.

Equibreed ART Ltd's project focuses on understanding, diagnosing and reducing early embryonic death in horses. To date it has developed an *in vitro* model using tissue from mares that were euthanized for other reasons. It will use the award to pursue the next phase of this project. This involves optimising a method for freezing tissue material that can then be used to create embryos *in vitro*. This project will effectively reduce the number of live animals needed for this type of research.

"On behalf of the ANZCCART (NZ) Board, I congratulate the Otago Polytechnic Animal Health and Care team and Lee Morris of Equibreed on their outstanding contributions to the implementation the 3Rs principles at their organisations. It is wonderful to see such excellent work and I hope it encourages other organisations to share the work they are doing around the 3Rs", says the ANZCCART NZ board chair, Emeritus Professor Pat Cragg.

As well as congratulating the co-recipients, each receiving a \$5,000 award, NAEAC and ANZCCART (NZ) also commend all applicants on the quality of their submissions.

## **Background to NAEAC, ANZCCART**

NAEAC is a statutory committee established under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to provide advice to the Minister responsible for animal welfare on issues relating to the use of animals in research, testing, and teaching.

ANZCCART is an independent body which was established to provide leadership in considering ethical, social, cultural and scientific issues relating to the use and welfare of animals in research and teaching. In New Zealand, ANZCCART comprises representatives from research, animal welfare, animal ethics and scientific communities, and is a standing committee of the Royal Society Te Apārangi.

## **More information**

Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching [ANZCCART | NZ](#)