

DAF ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

For the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

This publication has been compiled by Lex Turner, Agri-Science Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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Summary

In Queensland, the use of animals for scientific purposes is regulated by both the ***Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*** [the Act] and the ***Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*** [the Code]. The Act requires that prior to the use of an animal for scientific purposes, a person must be registered as a scientific user and must gain the approval of an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) constituted under the Code.

During the reporting period, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) maintained two AECs, the Staff Access (SA) AEC and the Community Access (CA) AEC.

The Staff Access AEC dealt predominantly with applications from departmental staff who sought to conduct activities at departmental sites, co-operator (for example, private landholder) sites and collaborator (for example, university) sites. The Staff Access AEC also considered applications from external applicants wishing to conduct an activity involving the use of animals on a departmental site.

The Community Access AEC dealt predominantly with applications from non-departmental investigators who sought to conduct scientific activities involving the use of animals in Queensland and by departmental staff who sought to conduct fish and pest animal related activities.

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1 AEC Membership as at 1 July 2020

Table 1 – AEC membership summary

Category	Number	Organisation
Category A member (veterinary science)	6	3 x DAF, 3 x External
Category B member (research)	7	2 x DAF, 5 x External
Category C member (animal welfare)	4	All External
Category D member (general community)	5	All External
Animal carer	1	DAF
Total	23	

2 Meetings and inspections

Table 2 – AEC meetings and inspections

AEC	Ordinary meetings	Special meetings	Site inspections
Staff Access	11	3	11
Community Access	11	2	11

In addition to dealing with business during meetings, each AEC has an Executive which may consider minor amendments to approved projects, adverse event reports and other matters out of session. The Executive cannot approve new applications. All Executive decisions are ratified at the next meeting of the AEC.

3 Applications

DAF AECs consider project applications lodged by DAF staff, staff from other departments, and a range of external entities including local authorities, small companies and individuals whose activities (e.g. teaching, wildlife surveys, product efficacy trials, trials for product registration and workshops to demonstrate techniques) require AEC approval. The external applicants have found it impractical to establish their own AECs and difficult to access other institutions' AECs. The Act requires that all applicants be registered as scientific users or be retained by a registered scientific user. The Register of Scientific Users is maintained by Animal Biosecurity and Welfare [ABW], Biosecurity Queensland.

Table 3 – Applications considered during 2019/20 by AEC decision outcome

	Number
Approved	46
Approved with Conditions	102
Deferred subject to modification as at 30 June 2020	1
Not approved	0
Other (e.g. withdrawn)	0
TOTAL	149

Table 4 – Applications considered during 2019/20 by Project Purpose

	Number	Percentage
The understanding of human or animal biology	1	0.7%
The maintenance and improvement of animal or human health and welfare	26	17.4%
The improvement of animal management or production	14	9.4%
The achievement of educational objectives	11	7.4%
Environmental study	97	65.1%
Not allocated	0	
TOTAL	149	

Table 5 – Applications considered during 2019/20 by Project Category

	Number	Percentage
Observational studies involving minor interference	20	13.4%
Animal unconscious without recovery	9	6.0%
Conscious intervention (minor) without anaesthesia	105	70.5%
Operative procedures (minor) with recovery	6	4.0%
Surgery with recovery	3	2.0%
Minor physiological challenge	5	3.4%
Major physiological challenge	1	0.7%
Death as an end point (not euthanasia)	0	
Not allocated	0	
TOTAL	149	

In addition to assessing 149 new applications throughout 2019-20, DAF AECs reviewed and assessed 534 reports on animal use from existing applications. This included 312 annual reports, 131 completion reports and 91 adverse event reports which are required by both the Act and Code and comprises the statutory monitoring obligations of the AECs. The DAF AECs also had responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of active projects by inspecting sites and projects and obtaining other information as needed.

DAF AECs are also required to assess amendment requests to approved projects. Amendment requests may range from minor to major alterations to a project's approval. Throughout the reporting period 120 amendment requests were assessed by the DAF AECs.

4 Number of animals used for scientific purposes*

Table 6 – Number of animals by key groups and in order of number

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Amphibians:Amphibians	2,244,394	Amphibians:Amphibians	2,244,394
Birds:Exotic wild	267	Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1,773,549
Birds:Native captive	40	Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	400,869
Birds:Native wild	277,025	Fish:Aquatic Animals	324,654
Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	400,869	Birds:Native wild	277,025
Cats:Domestic Mammals	709	Cattle:Domestic Mammals	31,678
Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	438	Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	14,301
Cattle:Domestic Mammals	31,678	Pigs:Domestic Mammals	8,800
Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	272	Lizards:Reptiles	6,027

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Dasyurids:Native Mammals	394	Macropods:Native Mammals	4,899
Dogs:Domestic Mammals	917	Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	1,810
Fish:Aquatic Animals	324,654	Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	1,714
Goats:Domestic Mammals	179	Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,633
Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	469	Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	1,372
Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	43	Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	931
Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	83	Dogs:Domestic Mammals	917
Horses:Domestic Mammals	300	Snakes:Reptiles	904
Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	149	Koalas:Native Mammals	851
Koalas:Native Mammals	851	Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	820
Lizards:Reptiles	6,027	Other reptiles:Reptiles	799
Macropods:Native Mammals	4,899	Cats:Domestic Mammals	709
Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	91	Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	530
Monotremes:Native Mammals	116	Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	469
Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	1,372	Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	438
Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	10	Dasyurids:Native Mammals	394

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	51	Horses:Domestic Mammals	300
Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1,773,549	Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	272
Other reptiles:Reptiles	799	Birds:Exotic wild	267
Pigs:Domestic Mammals	8,800	Goats:Domestic Mammals	179
Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	931	Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	149
Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	1,810	Monotremes:Native Mammals	116
Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	820	Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	91
Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	14	Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	83
Rats:Lab Mammals	58	Wombats:Native Mammals	60
Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,633	Rats:Lab Mammals	58
Snakes:Reptiles	904	Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	51
Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	14,301	Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	43
Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	1,714	Birds:Native captive	40
Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	530	Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	14
Wombats:Native Mammals	60	Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	10

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Total	5,102,220	Total	5,102,220

*Animal use figures relate to the 2019 animal use statistic report submitted by the DAF AEC to Biosecurity Queensland.

5 Other AEC compliance requirements

Comments from the AEC members regarding any administrative or other difficulties experienced and any comments regarding matters that may affect the DAF ability to maintain compliance with the Code were collated and reported to the DAF Director-General.

Two cases of possible non-compliance by applicants were reported to the Animal Ethics regulator during the reporting period.

No emergencies or grievances were recorded in the reporting period. Two complaints regarding the cost of Scientific Use Registration were received from representatives of two different non-profit groups who were using animals for scientific purposes. The Animal Ethics regulator was contacted but were unable to change their fee structure. The customers were informed of the outcome of their complaints. A complaint was received regarding the range of government organisations/sections that needed to be contacted to do scientific work with native animals. The complainant suggested one government site or group should handle all the different areas that are presently required. The complainant was informed that a major restructure across departments and government sections would be needed to achieve one contact point for external clients and this was not likely to happen unless there was a greater benefit.

The DAF AEC maintained its membership in compliance with the Code during the reporting period.

One training opportunity was provided to DAF AEC members with six members attending. Normal levels of training were not available due to Covid restrictions.

This report has been prepared for the Director-General, DAF in accordance with Section 2.3.28 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*.



Staff Access AEC Chair:

Lex Turner

Community Access AEC Chair:



Lex Turner

Principal Animal Ethics Officer:



Lex Turner

Date: 15 October 2020