



DPI Animal Ethics Committees Annual Report Summary 2023-2024

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024



This publication has been compiled by Lex Turner of Agri-Science Queensland, Department of Primary Industries.

© State of Queensland, 2025

The Department of Primary Industries proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders) and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the country on which we live and work. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and commit to ongoing reconciliation. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence.



Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.

You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The Queensland Government shall not be liable for technical or other errors or omissions contained herein. The reader/user accepts all risks and responsibility for losses, damages, costs and other consequences resulting directly or indirectly from using this information.



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 Primary Industries (DPI) maintained two AECs, the Staff Access AEC and the Community Access AEC.

The Staff Access AEC dealt predominantly with applications from government staff who sought to conduct activities at departmental sites, co-operator sites (e.g. private landholders) and collaborator sites (e.g. universities). 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-government 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.



Contents

1. AEC Membership as at 1 July 2024	5
2. Meetings and inspections	5
3. Applications	5
4. Number of animals used for Scientific purposes*	8
5. Other AEC compliance requirements.....	10
6. Signatures	11

List of tables

Table 1 AEC membership summary.....	5
Table 2 AEC meetings and inspections.....	5
Table 3 Applications considered during 2023/24	6
Table 4 Project Purpose summary	6
Table 5 Project Category summary	7
Table 6 Number of animals by key groups and in order of number	8
Table 7 Signatures.....	11



1. AEC Membership as at 1 July 2024

Table 1 AEC membership summary

Category	Number	Organisation
Category A member (veterinary science)	6	1 x DPI, 5 x External
Category B member (research)	7	2 x DPI, 5 x External
Category C member (animal welfare)	5	All External
Category D member (general community)	6	All External
Animal carer	1	DPI
Total	25	

2. Meetings and inspections

Table 2 AEC meetings and inspections

AEC	Ordinary meetings	Special meetings	Site inspections
Staff Access	10	1	16
Community Access	11	2	14

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

DPI AECs consider project applications lodged by DPI 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, DPI.

Table 3 Applications considered during 2023/24

Applications considered during 2023/24	DPI applications	External applications	Total
By AEC decision			
Approved	12	54	66
Approved with Conditions	7	101	108
Deferred subject to modification as at 30 June 2024	0	2	2
Not approved	0	0	0
Other (e.g. withdrawn)	0	0	0
TOTAL	19	157	176

Table 4 Project Purpose summary

Project Purpose	Number	Percentage
The understanding of human or animal biology	2	1%
The maintenance and improvement of animal or human health and welfare	23	13%
The improvement of animal management or production	14	8%
The achievement of educational objectives	24	14%
Environmental study	113	64%
Not allocated	0	0%
Total considered	176	



Table 5 Project Category summary

Project Category	Number	Percentage
Observational studies involving minor interference	22	13%
Animal unconscious without recovery	14	8%
Conscious intervention (minor) without anaesthesia	130	74%
Operative procedures (minor) with recovery	6	3%
Surgery with recovery	3	2%
Minor physiological challenge	1	1%
Major physiological challenge	0	0%
Death as an end point (not euthanasia)	0	0%
Not allocated	0	0%
Total considered	176	

In addition to assessing 176 new applications throughout 2023/24, DPI AECs reviewed and assessed 697 reports on animal use from existing applications. This included 387 annual reports, 165 completion reports and 145 adverse event reports which are required by both the Act and Code and comprises the statutory monitoring obligations of the AECs. The DPI AECs also had responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of active projects by inspecting sites and projects and obtaining other information as needed.

DPI 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 162 amendment requests were assessed by the DPI 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	37,944	Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1,175,201
Birds:Exotic captive	17	Fish:Aquatic Animals	1,145,647
Birds:Exotic wild	4,353	Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	860,922
Birds:Native captive	508	Birds:Native wild	431,129
Birds:Native wild	431,129	Macropods:Native Mammals	69,775
Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	860,922	Amphibians:Amphibians	37,944
Cats:Domestic Mammals	435	Cattle:Domestic Mammals	37,849
Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,852	Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	34,158
Cattle:Domestic Mammals	37,849	Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	12,365
Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,655	Lizards:Reptiles	10,903
Cephalopods:Aquatic Animals	15	Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	6,992
Dasyurids:Native Mammals	1,476	Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	4,829
Deer:Domestic Mammals	1	Birds:Exotic wild	4,353
Dogs:Domestic Mammals	1,597	Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,852
Exotic Zoo Animals:Exotic Zoo Animals	21	Other reptiles:Reptiles	2,759
Fish:Aquatic Animals	1,145,647	Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,655
Goats:Domestic Mammals	309	Koalas:Native Mammals	2,378
Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	13	Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,184
Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	84	Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,811
Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	63	Dogs:Domestic Mammals	1,597
Horses:Domestic Mammals	155	Dasyurids:Native Mammals	1,476



Ranking by animal group
Ranking by number of animals

Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	46	Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,108
Koalas:Native Mammals	2,378	Snakes:Reptiles	1,068
Lizards:Reptiles	10,903	Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	911
Macropods:Native Mammals	69,775	Monotremes:Native Mammals	713
Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	46	Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	613
Mice:Lab Mammals	16	Birds:Native captive	508
Monotremes:Native Mammals	713	Cats:Domestic Mammals	435
Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	12,365	Wombats:Native Mammals	418
Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	10	Goats:Domestic Mammals	309
Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,811	Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	288
Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1,175,201	Horses:Domestic Mammals	155
Other reptiles:Reptiles	2,759	Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	84
Other:Aquatic Animals	4	Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	63
Pigs:Domestic Mammals	50	Pigs:Domestic Mammals	50
Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	4,829	Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	46
Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	6,992	Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	46
Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	613	Exotic Zoo Animals:Exotic Zoo Animals	21
Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	288	Birds:Exotic captive	17
Rats:Lab Mammals	11	Mice:Lab Mammals	16
Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,108	Cephalopods:Aquatic Animals	15
Snakes:Reptiles	1,068	Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	13
Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	34,158	Rats:Lab Mammals	11
Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	911	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
Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,184	Other:Aquatic Animals	4
Wombats:Native Mammals	418	Deer:Domestic Mammals	1
Total	3,856,702	Total	3,856,702

*Animal use figures relate to the 2023 animal use statistic report submitted by the DPI 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 DPI ability to maintain compliance with the Code were collated and reported to the DPI Director-General.

One case of possible non-compliance by an applicant was reported to the Animal Ethics regulator during the reporting period.

Two complaints were received by the AEC during the reporting period. Both complaints were from non-departmental people. The complaints were investigated by the AEC as required and sent to Biosecurity Queensland for further consideration. All the complaints were finalised.

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

Three DPI AEC members attended formal training opportunities during the year.



6. Signatures

Table 7 Signatures

This report has been prepared for the Director-General, DPI 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
11 December 2024

Community Access AEC Chair

Lex Turner
11 December 2024

Principal Animal Ethics Officer

Lex Turner

Date: 11 December 2024