



DAF Animal Ethics Committees Annual Report Summary 2022-2023

For the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023



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

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The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 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.

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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 AEC and the Community Access 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 2023

Table 1 AEC membership summary

Category	Number	Organisation
Category A member (veterinary science)	6	1 x DAF, 5 x External
Category B member (research)	7	2 x DAF, 5 x External
Category C member (animal welfare)	5	All External
Category D member (general community)	8	All External
Animal carer	1	DAF
Total	27	

2. Meetings and inspections

Table 2 AEC meetings and inspections

AEC	Ordinary meetings	Special meetings	Site inspections
Staff Access	10	1	12
Community Access	11	2	16

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, workshops to demonstrate techniques) require AEC approval. The external applicants have found it impractical to establish their own AEC 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, DAF.

Table 3 Applications considered during 2022/23

Applications considered during 2022/23	DAF applications	External applications	Total
By AEC decision			
Approved	21	42	63
Approved with Conditions	9	94	103
Deferred subject to modification as at 30 June 2023	0	0	0
Not approved	0	0	0
Other (e.g. withdrawn)	0	0	0
TOTAL	30	136	166

Table 4 Project Purpose summary

Project Purpose	Number	Percentage
The understanding of human or animal biology	0	0%
The maintenance and improvement of animal or human health and welfare	15	9.0%
The improvement of animal management or production	15	9.0%
The achievement of educational objectives	17	10.2%
Environmental study	119	71.7%
Not allocated	0	0%
Total considered	166	



Table 5 Project Category summary

Project Category	Number	Percentage
Observational studies involving minor interference	16	9.6%
Animal unconscious without recovery	12	7.2%
Conscious intervention (minor) without anaesthesia	126	75.9%
Operative procedures (minor) with recovery	5	3.0%
Surgery with recovery	1	0.6%
Minor physiological challenge	4	2.4%
Major physiological challenge	1	0.6%
Death as an end point (not euthanasia)	1	0.6%
Not allocated	0	0%
Total considered	166	

In addition to assessing 166 new applications throughout 2022-23, DAF AECs reviewed and assessed 569 reports on animal use from existing applications. This included 333 annual reports, 147 completion reports and 89 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 154 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	20,752	Fish:Aquatic Animals	10,328,838
Birds:Exotic captive	45	Other native mammals:Native Mammals	3,847,914
Birds:Exotic wild	2,027	Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	991,414
Birds:Native captive	121	Birds:Native wild	254,589
Birds:Native wild	254,589	Cattle:Domestic Mammals	55,540
Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	991,414	Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	30,421
Camels:Exotic Feral Mammals	3	Macropods:Native Mammals	25,816
Cats:Domestic Mammals	484	Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	23,663
Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,622	Amphibians:Amphibians	20,752
Cattle:Domestic Mammals	55,540	Lizards:Reptiles	8,497
Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,315	Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	4,822
Cephalopods:Aquatic Animals	2	Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	3,312
Dasyurids:Native Mammals	1,028	Other reptiles:Reptiles	2,643
Dogs:Domestic Mammals	2,135	Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,363
Fish:Aquatic Animals	10,328,838	Dogs:Domestic Mammals	2,135
Goats:Domestic Mammals	40	Birds:Exotic wild	2,027
Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	24	Koalas:Native Mammals	1,631
Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	45	Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,622



Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	89	Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,391
Horses:Domestic Mammals	162	Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,315
Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	52	Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,131
Koalas:Native Mammals	1,631	Dasyurids:Native Mammals	1,028
Lizards:Reptiles	8,497	Snakes:Reptiles	1,008
Macropods:Native Mammals	25,816	Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	744
Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	254	Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	742
Mice:Lab Mammals	7	Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	505
Monotremes:Native Mammals	426	Cats:Domestic Mammals	484
Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	23,663	Monotremes:Native Mammals	426
Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	6	Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	254
Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	2,363	Horses:Domestic Mammals	162
Other native mammals:Native Mammals	3,847,914	Birds:Native captive	121
Other reptiles:Reptiles	2,643	Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	89
Other:Aquatic Animals	1	Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	52
Pigs:Domestic Mammals	20	Birds:Exotic captive	45
Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	4,822	Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	45
Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	3,312	Goats:Domestic Mammals	40
Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	505	Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	24
Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	744	Rats:Lab Mammals	21
Rats:Lab Mammals	21	Pigs:Domestic Mammals	20



Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Sheep:Domestic Mammals	1,131	Mice:Lab Mammals	7
Snakes:Reptiles	1,008	Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	6
Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	30,421	Camels:Exotic Feral Mammals	3
Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	742	Cephalopods:Aquatic Animals	2
Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	1,391	Other:Aquatic Animals	1
Total	15,617,665	Total	15,617,665

*Animal use figures relate to the 2022 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.

Six cases of possible non-compliance by an applicant were reported to the Animal Ethics regulator during the reporting period.

No emergencies or grievances were recorded in the reporting period. Five complaints were received by the AEC during the reporting period. Three of the complaints were from government staff members and two complaints were received from non-departmental people. The complaints were investigated by the AEC and sent to Biosecurity Queensland for further consideration. All the complaints were finalised with varying outcomes.

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

Six DAF AEC members attended formal training opportunities during the year.

6. Signatures

Table 7 Signatures

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
7 December 2023

Community Access AEC Chair

Lex Turner
7 December 2023



Principal Animal Ethics Officer

Lex Turner

Date: 7 December 2023