

DAF ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

**For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021**

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 2021

*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
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	

## 2 Meetings and inspections

*Table 2 – AEC meetings and inspections*

AEC	Ordinary meetings	Special meetings	Site inspections
Staff Access	11	2	8
Community Access	11	3	6

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 2020/21 by AEC decision outcome**

	<b>Total</b>
Approved	58
Approved with Conditions	111
Deferred subject to modification as at 30 June 2021	1
Not approved	0
Other (e.g. withdrawn)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>

**Table 4 – Applications considered during 2020/21 by Project Purpose**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The understanding of human or animal biology	2	1.2%
The maintenance and improvement of animal or human health and welfare	32	18.8%
The improvement of animal management or production	12	7.1%
The achievement of educational objectives	21	12.4%
Environmental study	102	60.0%
Not allocated	1	0.6%
<b>TOTAL CONSIDERED</b>	<b>170</b>	

**Table 5 – Applications considered during 2020/21 by Project Category**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Observational studies involving minor interference	20	11.8%
Animal unconscious without recovery	5	2.9%
Conscious intervention (minor) without anaesthesia	131	77.1%
Operative procedures (minor) with recovery	8	4.7%
Surgery with recovery	0	
Minor physiological challenge	1	0.6%
Major physiological challenge	0	
Death as an end point (not euthanasia)	4	2.4%
Not allocated	1	0.6%
<b>TOTAL CONSIDERED</b>	<b>170</b>	

In addition to assessing 170 new applications throughout 2020-21, DAF AECs reviewed and assessed 589 reports on animal use from existing applications. This included 336 annual reports, 155 completion reports and 98 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 152 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	11907	Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	2082463
Birds:Exotic captive	26	Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1391604
Birds:Exotic wild	145	Fish:Aquatic Animals	414399
Birds:Native captive	402	Birds:Native wild	303975
Birds:Native wild	303975	Cattle:Domestic Mammals	41213
Birds:Poultry (stock animals)	2082463	Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	24342
Camels:Exotic Feral Mammals	2	Amphibians:Amphibians	11907
Cats:Domestic Mammals	554	Pigs:Domestic Mammals	8800
Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	782	Macropods:Native Mammals	7630

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Cattle:Domestic Mammals	41213	Lizards:Reptiles	4854
Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	373	Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	3991
Dasyurids:Native Mammals	703	Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	1914
Deer:Domestic Mammals	2	Dogs:Domestic Mammals	1783
Dogs:Domestic Mammals	1783	Koalas:Native Mammals	1028
Fish:Aquatic Animals	414399	Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	842
Goats:Domestic Mammals	62	Snakes:Reptiles	823
Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	733	Cats:Exotic Feral Mammals	782
Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	32	Sheep:Domestic Mammals	775
Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	159	Goats:Exotic Feral Mammals	733
Horses:Domestic Mammals	150	Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	704
Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	35	Dasyurids:Native Mammals	703
Koalas:Native Mammals	1028	Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	643
Lizards:Reptiles	4854	Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	558
Macropods:Native Mammals	7630	Cats:Domestic Mammals	554
Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	305	Birds:Native captive	402



Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Mice:Lab Mammals	88	Cattle:Exotic Feral Mammals	373
Monotremes:Native Mammals	188	Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	371
Native rats and mice:Native Mammals	3991	Other reptiles:Reptiles	331
Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	15	Mice:Exotic Feral Mammals	305
Other exotic feral mammals:Exotic Feral Mammals	704	Monotremes:Native Mammals	188
Other native mammals:Native Mammals	1391604	Hares:Exotic Feral Mammals	159
Other reptiles:Reptiles	331	Horses:Domestic Mammals	150
Other:Aquatic Animals	2	Birds:Exotic wild	145
Pigs:Domestic Mammals	8800	Rats:Lab Mammals	96
Pigs:Exotic Feral Mammals	643	Mice:Lab Mammals	88
Possums and gliders:Native Mammals	1914	Goats:Domestic Mammals	62
Rabbits:Exotic Feral Mammals	558	Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	47
Rats:Exotic Feral Mammals	47	Horses:Exotic Feral Mammals	35
Rats:Lab Mammals	96	Guinea Pigs:Lab Mammals	32
Sheep:Domestic Mammals	775	Birds:Exotic captive	26
Snakes:Reptiles	823	Other domestic mammals:Domestic Mammals	15

Ranking by animal group		Ranking by number of animals	
Animal group	Number of animals	Animal group	Number of animals
Turtles and tortoises:Reptiles	24342	Wombats:Native Mammals	12
Whales and dolphins:Native Mammals	371	Camels:Exotic Feral Mammals	2
Wild dogs and foxes:Exotic Feral Mammals	842	Deer:Domestic Mammals	2
Wombats:Native Mammals	12	Other:Aquatic Animals	2
<b>Total</b>	4,309,863	<b>Total</b>	4,309,863

\*Animal use figures relate to the 2020 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.

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

No emergencies or grievances were recorded in the reporting period. Three complaints were received by the AEC during the reporting period. One complaint regarding the welfare of animals at a site was received. The complaint was investigated by Biosecurity Queensland and the AEC inspected the facility. No action was considered necessary after the inspections. Another complaint was received regarding the competence of an investigator who obtained an AEC approval. No specific information was provided and no detail confirming a problem was found. The project will be monitored but no action has been taken. A

further complaint of poor animal training processes and an animal discipline welfare issue was reported at an animal unit. The issue was investigated by the organisation involved and the AEC inspected the project. More detailed animal training and animal discipline guidelines are being developed.

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

No training opportunities were provided to DAF AEC members 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: 16 August 2021**