



**DPIRD Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)**

**Terms of Reference**

### July 2023

The following Terms of Reference have been endorsed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia’s (DPIRD) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). They should be read in conjunction with the Committee’s Operating Procedures; DPIRD’s Animal Ethics Committee policy; and the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013*.

## Background

DPIRD’s ability to use animals for scientific purposes is subject to licensing under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (the Act). A condition of licensing is conformation with the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013* (the Code).

The Code requires that DPIRD establishes an AEC to ensure that, on behalf of the institution, all activities relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes are conducted in compliance with the Code. DPIRD expects the AEC and its members to comply with these Terms of Reference.

These Terms of Reference are available to staff via the DPIRD Intranet and they shall be provided to members of the public on request. They may from time to time be placed on the DPIRD public website or other public venues deemed appropriate.

## Terms of Reference

1. The DPIRD AEC shall approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held, and used for scientific purposes on behalf of the institution; such guidelines usually take the form of Standard Operating Procedures or other Work Instructions.
2. The DPIRD AEC shall monitor the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals acquired, bred, held, or used for scientific purposes.
3. Members of the DPIRD AEC shall be appointed for a four-year term, confirmed by a written offer of appointment and acceptance. Category A, B, C and D members shall be subject to a maximum two consecutive terms of appointment, with the option of extension to be considered by the Chair and license holder. The Chair shall be appointed for such term as DPIRD determines.



DPIRD may, after due enquiry, terminate at any time, by notice in writing, the membership of a member who, in DPIRD’s opinion, has failed to: 

1. Comply with the Committee’s Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures;
2. Sufficiently maintain the good character required by DPIRD;
3. Adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement, signed by members upon acceptance of appointment;
4. Without good reason, attend three meetings in succession or at least fifty percent of meetings in each year of appointment.
5. DPIRD AEC committee members are required to declare any conflict of interest which may arise. Conflict of interest shall be a standing item at AEC meetings. Where a conflict of interest arises, at the discretion of the Chair and in discussion with the Committee, it may be appropriate for members concerned to be excluded from the decision-making process and/or leave the meeting during the decision-making process. The conflict and the manner in which it was resolved shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.
6. DPIRD AEC shall examine and approve, approve subject to modification, or reject proposals for activities involving the use of animals for scientific purposes.
7. DPIRD AEC shall approve only those studies for which the use of live animals is essential and justified, and which conform to the requirements of the Code. This should take into account consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific or educational value.
8. Where the AEC detects that activities are non-compliant with the Code including AEC approval conditions, the AEC must ensure that such activities cease immediately and remedial action is initiated. This may include intervention and/or withdrawal of AEC approval for that project. Any intervention in a project shall ordinarily be via the PI or the teacher; if the PI or Teacher is unavailable intervention may be via the nominated Emergency Contact person. Emergency intervention shall be reported to investigators who shall be required to supply written reports with explanations promptly to the AEC.
9. DPIRD AEC shall examine and comment on all DPIRD plans and policies that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes.
10. The DPIRD AEC Executive Officer shall maintain a register of all proposals and trials submitted to the AEC, including the outcomes of the Committee’s deliberations.
11. The DPIRD AEC shall provide an annual report on its activities to the DPIRD Executives timed to coincide with the annual renewal of DPIRD’s scientific use license. This report shall include: 
12. numbers and types of projects assessed and approved or rejected;
13. the physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the institution;
14. activities that have supported the educational needs of the AEC members, and of personnel involved in the care and use of animals; administrative or other difficulties being experienced;
15. any matters that may affect the institution’s ability to maintain compliance with the Code and if necessary, the provision of suitable recommendations.
16. The DPIRD AEC shall oversee the care of animals held on DPIRD properties listed on the Scientific Use License that are not currently in approved projects via Standard Operating Procedures in accordance with the Code, or other Work Instructions.

The DPIRD AEC shall perform all other duties required by the Code.

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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