



National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

General Meeting via Videoconference (Zoom)

Thursday, 14 May 2020
1.00 pm – 5.00 pm

MINUTES

Present

Grant Shackell, Arnja Dale, Craig Gillies, Rachel Heeney, Bronwen Connor, Jacquie Harper, Mike King, Nita Harding, Rob Hazelwood, Dianne Wepa.

In Attendance

s 9(2)(a) (Secretary), s 9(2)(a) (Senior Adviser, Animal Welfare), s 9(2)(a) (Policy Analyst, Regulatory Reform and Animal Welfare Policy), s 9(2)(a) (Manager, Animal Welfare).

Apologies

An apology for lateness (due to technical issues) was received from A Dale.

Welcome

G Shackell opened the meeting at 1.08 pm with a karakia and introduced himself to attendees via a pepeha. In addition to committee members and the secretariat, s 9(2)(a) and s 9(2)(a) were also welcomed to the meeting.

Any Other Business Part One (Open to the Public)

No additional items of business were identified for discussion under Part One of the agenda.

Any Other Business Part Two (Public Excluded Agenda)

No items of business were identified for discussion under Part Two of the agenda.

PART ONE (OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

O 1. Confirmation of previous minutes

The draft minutes of the general meeting held on 19 February 2020 were reviewed. There were no amendments.

Moved (B Connor/C Gillies):

That the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2020 be adopted as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

The motion was put: carried.

O 2. Action list review

The committee reviewed progress with the actions agreed to at previous meetings. The following updates were provided:

Amend the operational plan to include the development of one-page flow diagrams (action 3): G Shackell reported that he would add this to the operational plan.

NAEAC to update *Good Practice Guide for the use of animals in research, testing and teaching* (GPG) with R Hazelwood's list of records (action 5): R Hazelwood reported that these had been included in the latest amendments to the Guide.

Review *A Guide for Lay Members of Animal Ethics Committees* and incorporate material into the GPG (action 6): It was noted this action was still pending. However, information from the fish occasional paper had been incorporated into the current draft under revision.

Send R Hazelwood a list of changes required to the GPG (action 7): G Shackell reported he had sent R Hazelwood the list of changes required to the Guide. However, the compliance text and decision trees to be supplied by A Dale were still pending.

Write item for *Welfare Pulse* on the public attending committee meetings (action 8): G Shackell reported that he had drafted an article for *Welfare Pulse* on behalf of both advisory committees – NAEAC and the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC).

Provide NAEAC's feedback to the Sustainable Food & Fibre (SFF) Futures Fund team (action 13): While this action was still pending, s 9(2)(a) reported that she and s 9(2)(a) did have a good meeting with the relationship manager of the SFF Futures Fund prior the February general meeting. s 9(2)(a) advised that MPI would report back to NAEAC in due course.

Circulate details of 2020 John Schofield implementation award (action 14): s 9(2)(a) reported she had not yet circulated details of the award.

O 3. Impact of Covid-19

J Harper asked committee members if they had received any information relating to the impact of Covid-19 on research, testing and teaching facilities and their animals.

B Connor reported that at the s 9(2)(ba)(i) two separate shifts of staff had maintained the animal unit during lockdown. If one team were to become sick, they would be stood down allowing the second team to continue looking after the animals. It was probable that a small number of animals were euthanased during the period.

R Hazelwood reported that at his organisation the animals were unaffected.

C Gillies reported that some studies with kiwi would have been impacted by the lockdown. This is because some juvenile kiwis required their transmitters to be changed and getting enough people into the field to carry out the task during the lockdown proved difficult. It had never occurred to s 9(2)(ba)(i) staff what the consequences might be for kiwi if the transmitters could not be removed. It was a matter that would be raised with the Kiwi Recovery Group.

G Shackell asked committee members whether NAEAC should be communicating with code holders about the impact of Covid-19 on their organisation.

While some organisations no doubt had great response plans in place, R Hazelwood considered it would be useful to remind code holders to be prepared for any eventuality. M King agreed it would be useful asking people about their experiences, framing any questions in a way that assured code holders that NAEAC was only trying to help. N Harding considered that the issue related to contingency planning if staff were unable to get on site.

It was agreed to include an item on Covid-19 in the next AEC newsletter and separately, to canvass code holders and animal ethics committees (AECs) asking them to note their experiences during lockdown.

s 9(2)(a) reminded committee members that s 9(2)(a) presented on animal welfare and emergency management at a previous AEC workshop and could look at NAEAC's letter before it was sent. The role of MPI's regional animal welfare coordinators, in relation to the collection of intelligence on the ground, was noted.

Actions:

G Shackell to include item on Covid-19 in next AEC newsletter.

G Shackell, s 9(2)(a) to write to code holders/AECs asking them about their experiences during the lockdown period.

Prior to the next agenda item, R Hazelwood took the opportunity to introduce himself to the newest members of the committee since he had been unable to attend the February general meeting.

O 4. Review of NAEAC work plan

The committee reviewed its 2020 work plan. G Shackell asked A Dale when she wanted to talk to the committee about the '4th R' (Respect). A Dale asked that this topic be added to the next meeting agenda and confirmed she would have a paper to circulate prior to that.

Other matters of business to consider included: meeting with the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART); supporting MPI with the Significant Surgical Procedures (SSP) regulations; reviewing one code of ethical conduct; planning and running the AEC workshop; advertising the next round of the Aotearoa New Zealand Three Rs awards; and attending the AEC site visit (if it were possible to reschedule it).

Since the AEC site visit could not go ahead in May as planned, G Shackell asked committee members if they should try and reschedule for later in the year. As NAEAC was only reviewing one code of ethical conduct this year (at their 1 September general meeting), the second code review date of 6 October that NAEAC tentatively set last year could be used to travel to Auckland. s 9(2)(a) reminded committee members that travel might still be restricted at that time due to Covid-19. MPI would have to investigate what options were available closer to the time.

G Shackell invited committee members to consider topics for future mini-tutorials. M King reported he was interested in hearing about the management of animal colonies – efficiencies between animal breeding and culling. N Harding suggested a session on the alternatives to carbon dioxide use as a euthanasia method.

Actions:

s 9(2)(a)

to add '4th R' to September meeting agenda.

A Dale to circulate paper on 4th R prior to next meeting.

MPI to investigate whether site visit can go ahead on October.

NAEAC/MPI to investigate speakers for nominated mini-tutorial topics.

O 5. Update on review of *Culture of Care*

The current version of the publication with committee member comment was circulated prior to the meeting. s 9(2)(a) reminded committee members that the committee agreed to revise the document after reviewing the AEC induction pack at the February general meeting. If committee members were happy with the suggested changes, s 9(2)(a) could finalise the document and send to NAEAC or a member of NAEAC for one final review before passing to MPI Communications for publication.

A Dale suggested that it might be appropriate to add the '4th R' to the publication. There was also some discussion as to whether it should be added to the GPG. It was agreed to defer discussion of this agenda item to later in the meeting. Subsequently, this was not discussed and therefore this remains to be resolved.

O 6. Update on review of the *Good Practice Guide* including incorporation of *A Guide for Lay Members of Animal Ethics Committees*

As noted previously under agenda item O2, the Guide for Lay Members was the next document to be incorporated into the GPG. The committee had some discussion as to whether the GPG should be one

huge electronic document containing all of NAEAC's advice and publications or whether the GPG could link to some documents separately. A final decision regarding this matter was not reached.

O 7. Update on review of operation of Part 6 of the Act

G Shackell invited A Dale and s 9(2)(a) to provide an update on the subcommittee's work in relation to the review of the operation of Part 6 of the Act. s 9(2)(a) thanked subcommittee members for their contribution to date including former NAEAC member Malcolm Tingle who had done the core of the ground work. s 9(2)(a) reported that:

- MPI's internal audit team would be performing a desktop audit of the animal welfare team's processes before the end of June 2021.
- The draft decision document that MPI wanted NAEAC to use for future code reviews had been drafted and would be discussed separately under the next agenda item. The purpose of the document being to make sure all of NAEAC's feedback and or concerns were documented in one place.
- MPI had started the process of engaging with NAEAC on the applications received for new accredited reviewers as well as renewals for current accredited reviewers. s 9(2)(a) thanked NAEAC members for their recent feedback which she considered was very helpful. To help assist new reviewers into their role, s 9(2)(a) reported that MPI was looking to develop an induction pack for them – similar to what NAEAC supplied to new AEC members.
- MPI would consider approving codes of ethical conduct for a period of three years as opposed to five.

G Shackell asked the subcommittee if they could draft a report summarising the work underway including timeframes as there had been little detail actually provided on what work was underway and how it was progressing.

s 9(2)(a) and s 9(2)(a) agreed to draft the report for NAEAC. N Harding and M King agreed to assist the subcommittee in their work if required.

Action – s 9(2)(a) to draft progress report for NAEAC.

O 8. Review of code of ethical conduct decision document

The committee reviewed the draft code of ethical conduct decision document that was circulated prior to the meeting. There were no amendments. The committee agreed that using templates for documenting decisions was a good idea. It would provide clarity to MPI and would help NAEAC keep a record of discussions relating to each code. G Shackell reported that templates could be used for all sorts of decisions in the future.

s 9(2)(a) agreed to finalise the template and add to NAEAC's working documents folder in Piritahi.

D Wepa left the meeting due to a prior commitment at 2.15 pm.

Action – s 9(2)(a) to add code of ethical conduct decision document to Piritahi.

O 9. Update on NAEAC's annual report for 2019

Prior to the meeting s 9(2)(a) reported that the annual report had been formatted by MPI Communications and proof read by s 9(2)(a) and herself and would be sent to the Minister once the aide-memoire had been drafted. s 9(2)(a) had also sought committee feedback on whether or not they wanted to issue a media release when the report was published on MPI's website.

The committee agreed it would issue a media release. G Shackell reported that it could highlight NAEAC's work in relation to regulations, zebrafish and Three Rs funding.

s 9(2)(a) reported that the Minister was preoccupied with matters relating to drought and Covid-19 currently so there was a possibility that the report may not reach the Minister straight away.

Actions:

MPI to send annual report to the Minister.

MPI/NAEAC to draft and issue media release.

O 10. AEC workshop planning

In light of Covid-19, G Shackell sought feedback from NAEAC members as to whether the workshop should still go ahead. The committee agreed that it should.

Further to the ideas documented at the February general meeting, the theme, speakers and structure of the day required further development. The following suggestions were made:

- The value of consistency – what does this mean? Quantifying benefit;
- Contingency planning presentation (by s 9(2)(a)) leading onto a workshop session to help people with their planning for emergencies;
- Depopulation of large numbers of animals;
- Short talks from research organisations (e.g. crown research institute, commercial company and one university) sharing their learnings from Covid-19 lockdown;
- Compliance talks – process for referring non-compliances to the appropriate authorities. Include a panel discussion and perhaps have s 9(2)(a) lead.
- Have breakout groups split into their different roles.
- Have part of the day as an electronic meeting e.g. in-person meeting supplemented with electronic session as well.
- Have the whole day as an electronic meeting given increased use of technology during Covid-19 and/or have Zoom clusters based in Hamilton, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for example. This would allow those external statutory members who were not usually funded to attend to participate remotely.

Based on the above discussion it was agreed to hold the workshop entirely by videoconference (i.e. Zoom). The workshop would run in two, two-hour sessions – 10 am to 12 pm and then 1 pm to 3 pm. Speaker sessions would be limited to 10 minutes. M King agreed to be on a subcommittee with G Shackell and s 9(2)(a) with J Harper and R Heeny in support. G Shackell asked committee members to send him their feedback on workshop content by Thursday 4 June 2020.

Action – NAEAC members to send G Shackell workshop content feedback.

O 11. Update on ^{s 9(2)(a)} ' Fish paper

The committee reviewed the fish paper circulated prior to the meeting. There were no amendments. It was agreed that the version circulated could now be sent to MPI Communications for layout and subsequent publication as an occasional paper.

It was agreed to send ^{s 9(2)(a)} a letter, thanking him for his efforts in producing the paper.

Actions:

NAEAC to send M Burdass thank you letter for drafting fish paper.

MPI to publish fish paper.

O 12. MPI summary of CEC approvals, notifications and revocations

^{s 9(2)(a)} provided an update on code approvals and notifications since the last meeting. Two new arrangements and one termination were noted. In light of the Government's decision to amalgamate all polytechnics into one new entity effective 1 April 2020, the current codes of ethical conduct for four polytechnics needed to be transferred to the new entity.

^{s 9(2)(a)} asked the committee whether they wanted her to continue circulating the separate list of code holders and parented organisations and if so, at what frequency. R Hazelwood reported that the list was very useful especially before code reviews and was happy for it be circulated once a year. Other members were also in favour of quarterly reporting alongside the summary of code of ethical conduct approvals, notifications and revocations that were circulated before each meeting. NAEAC asked ^{s 9(2)(a)} to update this document in time for each meeting and load an electronic version on Piritahi. A hard copy would only be required before each code meeting.

^{s 9(2)(a)} reported that ^{s 9(2)(b)(ii)} had formally advised MPI that they would not be renewing their code of ethical conduct. As such, it would lapse at the end of the year.

The meeting was adjourned for a 10 minute break at 3.20 pm.

D Wepa re-joined the meeting at 3.28 pm.

O 13. AEC application form

B Connor reported that she had been looking at a colleague's AEC application to another university and noticed that certain basic questions appeared to be missing. These included justification for animal use, Three Rs consideration and welfare monitoring/human endpoints. B Connor asked whether there should be a recommended standardised AEC application form for all code holders.

It was noted that NAEAC's GPG already had an example of a template for animal use application in it. G Shackell was happy to remind code holders to refer to this template in the next AEC newsletter.

C Gillies asked whether accredited reviewers looked at the application form during their review. N Harding confirmed that they did and it was normal practice to select a number of applications and review them to make sure the right questions were being asked.

M King asked whether a blank application form could be one of the documents that accompanied the draft code of ethical conduct when it was submitted to MPI. s 9(2)(a) reported that that was possible but for a more systematic approach recommended that the reviewers' checklist be amended to include a question about the application form containing the right information.

MPI agreed to send out the review report for the code holder in question and minutes from the discussion of that code. In the meantime, G Shackell would add this topic to the next AEC newsletter.

Actions:

s 9(2)(a) *to send review report and minutes to NAEAC.*

G Shackell to mention AEC application form in next AEC newsletter.

O 14. NAEAC flowchart guideline for grading

B Connor reported that she was currently on study leave and had not yet had the time to draft the flowchart guideline for grading.

O 15. Revision of ANZCCART euthanasia guidelines for Good Practice Guide

At the February general meeting B Connor volunteered to revise the 2001 edition of the ANZCCART publication *Euthanasia of Animals for Scientific Purposes* for the GPG as it referred to carbon dioxide as an acceptable method of euthanasia.

Revised, draft guidelines were circulated prior to the meeting. After some discussion it was agreed to move carbon dioxide from the 'acceptable' column to the 'acceptable with reservations' column as current scientific evidence suggests this method of euthanasia is painful and should be replaced with alternatives. B Connor referred to a paper on this and agreed to circulate it to the committee.

As B Connor's expertise lay with rodents she asked other committee members to help complete the tables for other species. N Harding agreed to look at information relating to cattle. Species such as fish, cats, dogs and horses should also be included, as too vertebrate pest species. In regards to vertebrate pests, C Gillies agreed to locate some material that could be used to complete the guidelines, when he was able to return to the office.

Actions:

B Connor to add fish, cats, dogs, horses and pest species to the guidelines.

B Connor to circulate paper on carbon dioxide.

N Harding and C Gillies to update draft guidelines in relation to dairy cattle and vertebrate pest species.

G Shackell to include link to carbon dioxide paper in next AEC newsletter.

O 16. MPI update

The MPI update circulated prior to the meeting was noted. s 9(2)(a) provided an update on the postponement of the significant surgical procedures criteria and regulations due to Covid-19.

O 17. NAEAC correspondence

G Shackell reported on the various communications he had had with AECs and external organisations since the last meeting. The following interactions were noted:

- Rehoming laboratory animals offer from the New Zealand Anti-vivisection Society during Covid-19 lockdown period;
- AEC query relating to detector dogs;
- AEC query relating to drug testing which applicant would not provide detail on;
- AEC query relating to human ethics committees;
- Request from MPI Compliance to provide an "impact statement" in relation to the effects or risks associated with carrying out research, testing or teaching without AEC approval; and
- AEC query relating to a minor breach of an AEC approved application.

It was agreed to add these to the correspondence log. MPI agreed to provide feedback in relation to the last query noted as the AEC had also contacted MPI for advice.

Actions:

G Shackell to add queries to correspondence log.

MPI to advise NAEAC of its response to the AEC query relating to an approval breach.

There being no other items of business to discuss, the chair thanked committee members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 4.34 pm.