

NAEAC

The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee



The Waran Report

September 2023

A Note from Nat

I can't quite believe it's September already – and we are now counting down to Christmas once again. It has been an eventful and busy year so far for NAEAC members with a number of activities, including a successful visit to AECs and facilities in Palmerston North, CEC reviews, and planning for our AEC Chairs online meeting. Our sub-committees have been busy reviewing the Good Practice Guide and the CEC template, developing our understanding of Mātauranga Māori in relation to animal use, and supporting the MPI team in advancing the 3Rs through various initiatives including the 3Rs award and encouraging improved sharing of best practice in relation to implementation of the 3Rs through celebrating the work of AECs and associated animal users.

This year marks the end of our current strategy, and we will by our end of year meeting have completed the work to develop our new 2024 -2028 Strategy with a strong focus on ensuring quality, trust, and leadership, and supporting the work of the Animal Ethics Committees. We are looking forward to hearing from the Animal Ethics Committee Chairs when we meet in October, and being able to present some of the data from the expanded 3Rs section of the annual Animal Use Statistic Report as well as consider other initiatives we could help facilitate.

Meanwhile, I hope that you enjoy a productive and relatively less eventful last few months of 2023.

Ngā mihi nui

*Professor Nat Waran
NAEAC Chair*



NAEAC Annual Report 2022

The NAEAC Annual Report for 2022 has been finalised and is now available on the NAEAC website.

You can find it [here](#).

Upcoming meetings

NAEAC holds 4 ordinary meetings each year.

Remaining meetings for 2023:

- 29th November

Want to attend as an observer?

For details about meeting attendance contact the NAEAC Secretary at

naeac@mpi.govt.nz

Public attendance guidelines can be found here:

[NAEAC Public Attendance Guidelines](#)

Spotlight on AEC Chairs

Gabriella Gronqvist - Kaiawhina AEC

Gabi has a broad background within animal welfare, behaviour and clinical research, having worked with everything from primates to companion and production animals. Gabi obtained her PhD at Massey University in 2016, where she studied the effect of maternal nutrition on ewe and lamb behaviour and triplet survival. Prior to this she investigated the effects of enrichment on captive Gibbons while completing her MSc at Roehampton University in London.

Most recently, Gabi has worked within the animal health industry, running veterinary clinical trials across New Zealand and Australia. Her current main job is to manage the Whenua Haumanu project. This is the most comprehensive programme on regenerative agriculture in New Zealand and is a partnership between Massey University and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Gabi has always had an interest in animal welfare and especially around animal welfare policy in New Zealand. When the opportunity came up to take on the role of chair, she jumped at it. What she enjoys most about this role is being able to advocate for better animal welfare and the practical implementation of the 3R's, while assuring that research studies maintain a high degree of scientific rigour. The increased focus of implementing the 3R's is something Gabi is very excited about. She worries, however, that the key regulatory and funding bodies in New Zealand aren't making the 3R's enough of a priority. She thinks that more collaborative effort among researchers, institutions, regulatory bodies, and animal welfare organisations are needed in the RTT space in New Zealand.

NAEAC AEC Site Visits 2023

Every year, NAEAC members attend a number of AEC Site Visits around New Zealand. This enables NAEAC to connect with AEC members, to tour facilities being used for research, testing, and teaching, and get an understanding from animal technicians on the work being conducted and how they are working to incorporate the 3Rs.

This year, NAEAC visited a number of AECs and facilities in Palmerston North, and were very impressed by the creative means by which researchers were working to implement the 3Rs, the passionate animal technicians, and high quality of care provided within the facilities.

Accredited Reviewers

Accredited reviewers play a critical role in assessing code holder compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the organisation's code of ethical conduct.

Farewells

We would like to commend Dr Virginia Williams for her excellent contribution as an accredited reviewer over the last 20 years. Virginia has officially resigned as of 17 July 2023.



Appointments

We would like to congratulate Dr Ronald Thornton on his new appointment as an accredited reviewer as of 15 June 2023.



For more information regarding accredited reviewers please visit the [MPI website](#) or contact MPI (animal.welfare@mpi.govt.nz).

Advances in the 3Rs

Can the 3Rs still guide the morally acceptable use of animals for scientific purposes, and if so, how?

This question forms the basis of a paper published in *Frontiers of Veterinary Science* in June 2023.

The authors consider that simply measuring total animal numbers used for research distracts from the need for a more nuanced understanding of how the 3Rs principle can have a genuine influence in research and testing.

Their paper focuses on answering three questions to identify core perspectives in the debate over the advancement of the 3Rs.

1. *What scientific innovations are needed to advance the goals of the 3Rs?*
2. *What can be done to facilitate the implementation of existing and new 3R methods?*
3. *Do the 3Rs still offer an adequate ethical framework?*

Read more [here](#).

Further reading

[Successfully reducing animal testing: The 3Rs principle in fish research \(phys.org\)](#)

[European scientists continue to support an EU roadmap to accelerate the transition to non-animal science | Eurogroup for Animals](#)

NAEAC Meetings Interesting Excerpts

A highlight of NAEAC's year so far has been our visit to Palmerston North, where NAEAC members were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with, and hear about, the work of the recipient of the 2022 3Rs Award, a biennial award jointly offered by NAEAC and ANZCCART (NZ).

Neil Ward and team developed a web-based database providing an effective communication platform for Massey based researchers to enable them to share animal tissues and potential surplus animals. With the potential to reduce animal use, this tool aligns with the 3R principles and improved animal welfare.

Neil told NAEAC members about how he and his colleagues conceived of the idea, the support received from the University, and the plan to be able to open this platform to other researchers around the country.

NAEAC looks forward to hearing how this and other 3R projects progress and we hope to be able to provide an opportunity for AEC members to share more about the work they do in 2024. These sorts of 'sharing' platforms could have a significant impact on animal use in the future.



Pictured: Neil Ward and Prof Nat Waran

Does it need ethics approval?

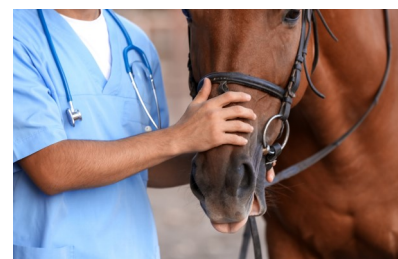
Spotlight on Training for Significant Surgical Procedures

NAEAC and MPI often receive enquiries on whether or not a certain procedure, protocol or training process would be considered a manipulation and therefore require approval by an animal ethics committee (AEC).

For example, MPI recently had an enquiry relating to the training of non-veterinarians to achieve competency in performing surgical reproductive procedures in horses and whether this should be done under AEC approval.

While NAEAC and MPI provide advice regarding animals used in research, testing and teaching, under the Animal Welfare Act (1999), the AEC is the regulator. AECs provide in-depth review of proposed animal work and determine if it meets the bar to be considered a manipulation (and therefore require ethics approval). This means that anyone who is providing training for procedures involving animals should contact an AEC to discuss their training programme and confirm whether or not ethics approval is required.

NAEAC also has a [resource available on its website](#) to help assess the need for ethics approval.



Animal Use Statistics 2021

All code holders are required to keep records as specified in the Animal Welfare (Records and Statistics) Regulations 1999. MPI collects annual statistics on the use of animals in research, testing, and teaching (RTT) in New Zealand, and publishes this as an annual report. While previously published within the annual report of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC), animal use statistics are now produced as a stand-alone document. The 2021 Animal Use Statistics are now available on the MPI website [here](#).

Forecasting for 2022

MPI launched a new system for the collection of animal use statistics in late 2022. In addition to the information that is required under the Animal Welfare (Records and Statistics) Regulations 1999, organisations were asked to describe how they implemented the 3Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement) in 2022.



Despite these being optional questions, numerous organisations provided information around their incorporation of the 3Rs. Moving forward, NAEAC and MPI will be working together to analyse the information that was received.

The results will be shared in a newly expanded 3Rs section in the 2023 MPI annual animal use statistics report. This will include a 'spotlight' to celebrate a specific piece of 3Rs work (with permission from the organisation) as well as aggregate data across organisations to increase openness and transparency regarding the 3Rs in New Zealand.

Want to know more?

Check out the NAEAC website to learn more about the work of the committee and how you can get involved.

www.naeac.org.nz

Need to get in touch?

Send us an email:

naeac@mpi.govt.nz

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