



## ANIMAL WELFARE

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

# Annual Report

## 1 January to 31 December 2023

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee  
C/- Ministry for Primary Industries  
P O Box 2526  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand

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**March 2024**

# NAEAC

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

## Chairperson's Comment

Kia ora koutou

Another year has gone by and another busy one for NAEAC. Through the usual NAEAC programme of work we achieved good progress in relation to the strategic plan set way back in 2019 particularly in key areas of focus related to ensuring the robustness of New Zealand's animal ethics system and revising the NAEAC documentation that supports the system.

Work this year has included a number of new Code of Ethical Conduct (CEC) reviews, a successful Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) Chairs online training day, our sub-committees have reviewed and updated the Good Practice Guide, the CEC Template, developed our understanding of Mātauranga Māori in relation to animal use, and supported the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) team in advancing the 3Rs through various initiatives, including the 3Rs Award.



We recognise the importance of maintaining a social licence to use animals in research, teaching and testing and how that relies upon ensuring the public's confidence that animal welfare is safeguarded. In 2023 NAEAC has continued to encourage transparency around animal use within the research, teaching and testing environment as well as encouraging organisations to promote their progress in the 3Rs. We have been able to explore progress in the use of animal alternatives, methods for reducing animal use, and refinements in animal use through data collected in an expanded 3Rs section of the annual Animal Use Statistics Report.

The AEC Chairs online training was well attended with presentations covering a number of the key responsibility areas such as dealing with non-compliance and AEC membership. The training event also involved a good discussion regarding the role of the AECs in promoting the 3Rs, with the MPI team showcasing the data they had collected from various AECs via the extended annual statistics reporting.

Issues of interest for 2023 included continued discussion regarding Zebrafish Larvae being recognised as sentient animals under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, and the importance of encouraging transparency through organisations signing up to the (ANZCCART) Openness Agreement initiative.

2023 also marked the last year of our current strategy, and we have now completed the work to develop our new 2024 -2028 Strategy with a strong focus on ensuring quality, trust, and leadership, supporting the work of the various national AECs, and advising the Minister in relation to developments in the RTT space.

Finally - NAEAC is grateful for the ongoing support provided by the Animal Welfare team of MPI, which ensures that the committee stays informed and runs smoothly. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the individual NAEAC committee members who each bring a different perspective as well as a willingness to engage in robust discussions to ensure the quality of the outcome.

Ngā mihi



Professor Nat Waran

## Membership

| Committee Members   | Expiry of Appointment |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Professor Natalie K Waran BSc (Hons), PhD</b><br>Director - Good Life For Animals Centre, Companion Animals New Zealand<br>(Independent Chairperson)   | 31.10.24              |
| <b>Dr Jacquie L Harper BSc (Hons), PhD</b><br>General Manager – Research and Innovation, Bragato Research Institute<br>(Elected Deputy Chairperson 2023)  | 31.10.25              |
| <b>Dr Angenita (Nita) B Harding BVSc, MBA (Dist)</b><br>Veterinarian  | 31.10.25              |
| <b>Ms Rachel A Heeney BSc, Dip Tchg</b><br>Head of Biology - Epsom Girls Grammar School<br>(Nominated by the Ministry of Education)   | 31.10.24              |
| <b>Dr Michael R King B Appl Sc (Hons), PhD</b><br>Senior Lecturer - Bioethics Centre, University of Otago<br>(Nominated by the Health Research Council of New Zealand)                                      | 31.10.25              |
| <b>Dr Dianne T H Wepa RSW, PhD</b><br>Senior Lecturer, Adjunct - Auckland University of Technology  | 31.10.24              |
| <b>Professor Laura Bennet MA, PhD</b><br>Professor of Physiology - Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, The<br>University of Auckland  | 31.10.24              |
| <b>Dr Janine A Duckworth BAg Sc (Hons), PhD</b><br>Scientist - Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd   | 31.10.24              |
| <b>Dr Joanne Holter BVSc, PDip (Business)</b><br>Technical Market Development Manager New Zealand - MSD Animal<br>Health<br>(Nominated by Agcarm Inc)   | 31.10.25              |
| <b>Dr Jessica Walker BSc, MSc, PDip (Higher Education), PhD</b><br>National Science Manager - Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention<br>of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA)<br>(Nominated by the RNZSPCA) | 31.10.25              |

## Fees

Government policy requires disclosure of fees paid to members of statutory boards and committees. The daily fee paid to committee members during 2023 was \$400 for members and \$550 for the chairperson.

Members are paid the fee for attending meetings, with an allowance for preparation time. Members are also reimbursed for travelling expenses. In addition, the chairperson and, on occasion, other members may be paid additional fees for representing the committee at other meetings or for carrying out significant extra work on the committee's behalf.

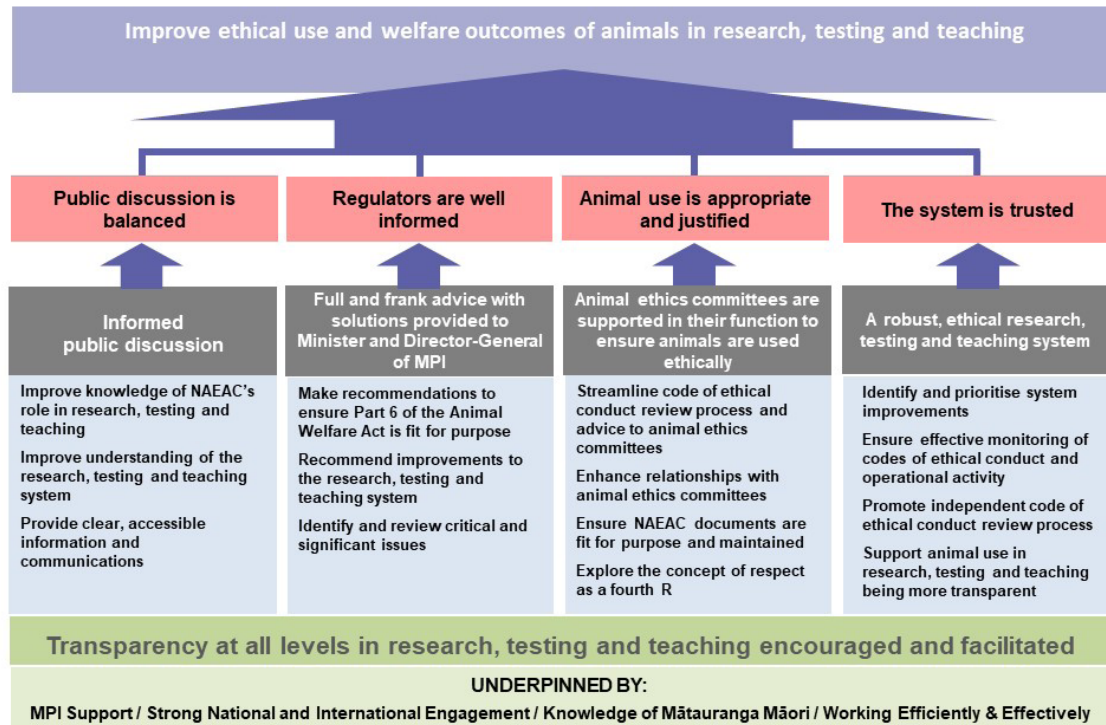
|                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Total gross fees paid                | <b>\$48,625.00</b> |
| Total reimbursed travelling expenses | \$3,595.99         |
| <b>Total for 2023</b>                | <b>\$52,220.99</b> |

| <b>Member</b>    | <b>Fees paid during 2022 (gross)</b> |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Natalie Waran    | \$5,225.00                           |
| Jacquie Harper   | \$6,075.00                           |
| Nita Harding     | \$6,400.00                           |
| Michael King     | \$4,200.00                           |
| Joanne Holter    | \$4,800.00                           |
| Jessica Walker   | \$4,400.00                           |
| Dianne Wepa      | \$2,100.00                           |
| Rachel Heeney    | \$5,825.00                           |
| Laura Bennet     | \$3,200.00                           |
| Janine Duckworth | \$6,400.00                           |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>\$48,625.00</b>                   |

## Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

NAEAC’s current strategic plan is included below. Progress on the associated operational workplan is discussed and reviewed regularly.

### National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) STRATEGY 2019-2023



**Looking forward:** The 2019-2023 strategic plan was reviewed during 2023 and an updated strategy for 2024-2028 was approved by NAEAC at its November 2023 general meeting. This will be published in early 2024.

## Statutory Activities

Section 63 of the Animal Welfare Act details the statutory functions of NAEAC.

This section of the Annual Report addresses NAEAC’s work in 2023 under each of the functions listed in the Act.

### Advice to the Minister on ethical and animal welfare issues arising from research, testing, and teaching

NAEAC did not provide any advice to the Minister in relation to animal welfare issues arising from research, testing, and teaching during 2023.

No requests for such advice were made to NAEAC in 2023.

### Recommendations to the Minister under section 3(3) (relating to manipulation)

No recommendations were made to the Minister under section 3(3) of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 during 2023.

## Recommendations to the Director-General under section 85 (relating to use of non-human hominids)

No recommendations were made to the minister under section 85 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 during 2023.

## Provision of advice and information on the development and review of codes of ethical conduct

NAEAC reviewed 8 codes of ethical conduct during 2023:

- Lincoln University
- Te Pūkenga
- Veterinary Health Solutions
- Massey University
- Auckland Zoo
- AgResearch
- Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research
- Schering-Plough Animal Health Ltd.

## Recommendations to the Director-General concerning the approval, amendment, suspension, or revocation of any code of ethical conduct

In relation to the codes of ethical conduct reviewed in 2023: The committee's advice to the Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries was that the codes be approved under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, subject to minor changes recommended by NAEAC, excluding Veterinary Health Solutions as the Code Holder chose to let its code of ethical conduct lapse.

## Recommendations to the Minister concerning the setting of standards and policies for codes of ethical conduct

No recommendations were made to the Minister relating to setting standards or policies for the development of codes of ethical conduct.

## Provision of information and advice to animal ethics committees

NAEAC continued to provide information to animal ethics committees (AECs) in a variety of ways.

### Online / via E-mail

Routine advice is provided on an as *required* basis to individual enquiries to the secretariat, the Chair, and members of the committee.

NAEAC has several documents published on its webpage and these are updated regularly.

### NAEAC newsletters

Two NAEAC newsletters were published in 2023 and are found on the NAEAC website [here](#). The newsletters contain a Chair's update, a profile of a member of NAEAC or an AEC, excerpts from meeting minutes, along with articles and information of interest to AECs.

## **AEC Chairs Meeting**

NAEAC held its biennial AEC Chairs meeting on 27th October 2023. NAEAC hosts these meetings as part of its commitment to support AECs and provides an opportunity for AEC Chairs to exchange information and discuss issues with NAEAC and other Chairs.

This year's half-day online meeting featured presentations by NAEAC members on the composition of AECs and how this underpins a well-functioning AEC, and on how AECs should be dealing with non-compliances, including possible actions and relevant outcomes.

NAEAC was also fortunate to have Gail Anderson from ANZCCART introduce ComPass; a free online course for Australian and New Zealand students, researchers, teachers, and members of AECs covering legislative requirements and welfare issues relating to animal use in RTT.

The MPI Animal Welfare Science Team gave a preview of the first ever 3Rs dataset that was collected alongside the 2022 animal use statistics. This presentation highlighted how organisations across New Zealand have implemented the 3Rs in their RTT work. This segued into a discussion session on animal ethics committees and the 3Rs, which focused on the following questions:

- Are you actively upskilling your AEC in the 3Rs? If so, what steps are you taking to achieve this?
- What would you like to see NAEAC achieve in this area?
- How much weighting are you putting on 3Rs in ethics applications? What are the barriers to weighting it more heavily?

This session stimulated useful discussion regarding what organisations are learning as they approach the implementation of the 3 Rs.

## **Code holder and AEC visits**

Once a year, NAEAC visits code holders (and other organisations with an arrangement to use these codes), to meet their AECs and view research facilities. This enables NAEAC to connect with AEC members, to tour facilities being used for research, testing, and teaching, and get an understanding from animal facility staff on the work being conducted and how they are working to incorporate the 3Rs.

The visits are not an audit exercise, and the facilities nor the code holder or AEC are under review during the visit. Rather, these visits aim to:

- Familiarise NAEAC members with RTT work being carried out;
- Allow NAEAC members to understand the challenges and experiences of AEC members to inform the NAEAC AEC Workshops and AEC Chair's Meetings;
- Provide an opportunity to discuss various aspects of welfare, research, or teaching strategy;
- Educate code holders and AEC members about the role of NAEAC within the RTT system; and
- Provide code holders and AEC members a forum for asking any questions they may have of NAEAC.

In 2023, Code holders in the Palmerston North area were contacted, and very informative visits were hosted by:

- Massey University
- AgResearch
- Estendart Research Centre

NAEAC 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.

## **AEC attendance**

To support NAEAC's relationship with AECs and its ongoing commitment to professional development, as well as to understand how different AECs operate under their respective codes of ethical conduct, the Committee encourages its members to attend AEC meetings. NAEAC members attend/visit strictly on an observer/familiarisation basis to support the Committee's functions as outlined under the Act and ensure and identify topics which may be of use for the NAEAC AEC Workshops and AEC Chair's Meetings.

During 2023 NAEAC members visited the following AECs:

- Lincoln University
- University of Otago
- AgResearch
- NZASE
- NIWA
- Landcare Research Ltd.
- Invetus Ltd
- Massey University
- University of Canterbury

## **Recommendations for approval by the Director-General of persons suitable for appointment as accredited reviewers**

NAEAC made one recommendation for an accredited reviewer to be appointed in 2023, and two recommendations for reappointment.

## **Consideration of the reports of independent reviews of code holders and animal ethics committees**

The independent reviewer reports on performance against the expiring code were provided alongside the draft code of ethical conduct that were reviewed by NAEAC. Reports are referred to when NAEAC makes its recommendation to the Director-General on whether a draft code is suitable for approval.

## **Recommendations to the Minister under section 118(3) (relating to the power of the Minister to approve research or testing)**

Under section 118 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, the Minister may authorise any person or organisation to carry out research or testing without the approval of an animal ethics committee where the Minister is satisfied that such research or testing is necessary in the national interest. Under subsection 3 the Minister is required to consult with NAEAC before exercising these powers.

No requests for such advice were made to NAEAC in 2023.



## Other Activities

### Openness Initiatives

Transparency is crucial for animal use in research, testing and testing and maintaining a social license to operate. NAEAC is fully supportive of the Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) Openness Agreement initiatives, and initiatives to support it, and continued to encourage code of ethical conduct holders to participate in 2023.

### Promoting the 3 Rs

The 3 Rs principles (replacement, reduction, and refinement) provide a framework for performing more humane RTT with animals.

The 3 Rs refer to:

- **replacement** of animals with a less sentient or non-sentient alternative wherever possible;
- **reduction** in the numbers of animals to the minimum necessary to achieve a robust result; and
- **refinement** of procedures and animal environments to minimise pain or distress.

NAEAC was involved in various work initiatives to promote the 3 Rs in 2023, including:

- Presenting Neil Ward from Massey University, the 2022 recipient of the Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield Three Rs Implementation Award, with a certificate at NAEAC's May meeting, and hearing from him on the topic of his application, *Tissue Sharing by Website*.
- Engaging with MPI to support the MPI-led initiative on capturing 3 Rs related data in the Animal Use Statistics captured annually by MPI.
- Leading a focused discussion-session on AECs and the 3 Rs at the NAEAC AEC Chairs meeting on 27th October.
- Inviting and hearing from members of the Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) on their free online 'Competency Passport' course at NAEAC's August general meeting. This free online course covers the Australian Code and the NAEAC Good Practice Guide, as well as welfare issues relating to animal use in research and teaching. It includes modules relating to the 3 Rs.
- Inviting and hearing from the Executive Director of the New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society (NZAVS), on the NZAVS Striking At The Source campaign at NAEAC's November general meeting. The committee heard on the three key requests NZAVS campaigned to the New Zealand government on, related to the replacement of animals in science.
- Planning updates for the NAEAC website to make information relating to the 3 Rs more visible.

### NAEAC awards

#### AEC Service Award

From time to time, NAEAC makes awards to AEC members on the nomination of their organisation or AEC to recognise an outstanding contribution.

No nominations for Service Awards were made to NAEAC in 2023.

## **The Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield Three Rs Implementation Award**

The Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield Three Rs Implementation Award is a biennial award, with the next award cycle occurring in 2024. The 2022 recipient, Neil Ward from Massey University, was presented with the award at NAEAC's general meeting in May 2023, for the project "*Tissue Sharing by Website*".

## **Mini tutorials**

NAEAC keeps up committee members' professional development by using both formal and informal 'mini tutorials'. During 2023 NAEAC hosted one mini-tutorial. Dr Gail Anderson presented to the committee on an introduction to 'ComPass' at the August NAEAC general meeting in 2023. NAEAC committed to include a review of the training material with a New Zealand lens into their workplan for 2024.

## **Requests for advice**

During 2023, NAEAC was asked for advice on several occasions by members of AECs, members of the public, and people involved in RTT. The requests covered a wide range of subjects, including:

- questions from AECs wanting to clarify operational matters;
- queries relating to the need for ethical approval;
- questions relating roles on an AEC;
- questions regarding amendments to an approved code of ethical conduct.

## **New work streams**

### **The 2024-2028 NAEAC Strategic Plan**

The current NAEAC strategic plan for the period 2019-2023 was reviewed by a NAEAC subcommittee over three meetings in 2023. A draft updated strategic plan for the period 2024-2028 was developed and approved by NAEAC at its November general meeting. The 2024-2028 strategic plan will be finalised in early 2024 and will inform NAEAC's operational workplan for the associated time period.

### **Updating the Code of Ethical Conduct Template and Application Pack**

The NAEAC Operation of Part 6 Subcommittee worked closely with the Secretariat to update the template and application pack for a code of ethical conduct. The subcommittee sent out a survey to current code holders for feedback on the existing template. The template was re-drafted based on feedback, areas of duplication were removed, and sections were re-ordered and clarified to provide clearer guidance to end users. The draft CEC Application Pack was approved by NAEAC at its November meeting and will be published online and shared to stakeholders in early 2024.

### **Reviewing the NAEAC Good Practice Guide**

The NAEAC Publications subcommittee completed a thorough review of the NAEAC Good Practice Guide for the Use of Animals in Research, Testing, and Teaching in 2023. Common themes requiring elaboration were identified during NAEAC's review of Codes of Ethical Conduct. Support for the review was provided by MPI to ensure that the content of the Guide aligned with the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

The Secretariat are currently completing a co-opted, additional review of the Guide, to align it with the updated CEC Application Pack, and with the intention to streamline the process for future reviews and ensure all NAEAC guidance documents are aligned moving forward. NAEAC anticipate publishing the updated Good Practice Guide online in early 2024.

## Joint Meetings

NAEAC did not participate in any joint meetings in 2023.

## Committee members' activity at conferences/meetings

During their day to day working lives, NAEAC members frequently attend conferences and meetings outside of their direct committee responsibilities.

Conferences attended by committee members in 2023 were:

- Mike King:
  - Participant in capacity as an ANZCCART (NZ) Board Member; ANZCCART Openness Signatories workshops.
  - Attendee; Animal Welfare Network Aotearoa Social Licence Workshop.
  - Presenter; Promoting Ethical Antimicrobial Stewardship via Species-Specific Development and Use. Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law 2023 Conference, Brisbane.
  - Presenter; Social license is a problem for one digital health. Data Justice in One Digital Health. Hong Kong University Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Hong Kong.
- Natalie Waran:
  - Presented internationally on improving the welfare of sport horses and the industries social licence to operate.
- Jessica Walker:
  - Attendee in capacity as an AEC member; ANZCCART 2023 conference, Adelaide.
- Laura Bennet:
  - Workshop attendee, student fellow mentor; The Fetal and Neonatal Workshop of Australia and New Zealand, Melbourne, Australia, March 2023.
  - Symposium organiser and invited symposium speaker; The 100th anniversary of the Japanese Physiological Society, Kyoto, Japan, March 2023.
  - Invited plenary speaker; The 59th Annual Congress of Japan Society of Perinatal and Neonatal Medicine, Nagoya, Japan, July 2023.
  - Invited Faculty speaker and international mentor for the department mentoring scheme; The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Mie University Hospital, Mie, Japan, July 2023.
  - Journal Deputy Editor presenter role; The Journal of Physiology editorial workshop, July, London, UK.
  - NZ Physiological Society president role, student/fellow mentor; The Medical Sciences Congress including the Physiological Society of NZ meeting, Queenstown Science week, Queenstown NZ, Aug/Sept 2023.
  - Conference organising committee chair, student/fellow mentor; The Fetal and Neonatal Physiology Society, Queenstown NZ, September, 2023.
  - Symposium organiser, and President of the Physiological Society of NZ and fellow of the International Union of Physiological Society committee roles, student/fellow mentor; The Federation of Oceanic and Asian Physiological Societies meeting, Daegu, Korea, November 2023.
  - Invited international reviewer; The Japanese National Institutes of Physiological Sciences, Okazaki, Japan, November 2023.

## Retiring Members

No committee members retired in 2023.

NAEAC

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National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee