



National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

NAEAC is a statutory committee, established under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) and supported by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). NAEAC's role is to advise the Minister responsible for animal welfare on welfare issues arising from the use of animals in research, testing and teaching (RTT). Its other functions include giving advice on the codes of ethical conduct that govern live animal use in RTT and providing information to the bodies that administer the codes (animal ethics committees (AECs)). NAEAC holds four quarterly general meetings each year and special meetings when required.

Selected items discussed at the 8 February 2019 general meeting included the following:

- **Election of deputy chairperson:** The Act requires NAEAC to elect one of its members as its deputy chairperson, at its first meeting each year. Arnja Dale, the SPCA nominee on the committee, was elected to the role of deputy chairperson for 2019.
- **Strategic and operational plans:** NAEAC reviewed its draft operational plan for the next 5 years. The committee's vision and strategic plan was approved in November 2018 and is available for viewing on the MPI website: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/national-animal-ethics-advisory-committee/>
- **2018 AEC workshop:** The committee reviewed feedback from the November 2018 AEC workshop. In order to ascertain why some AECs did not send representatives, NAEAC agreed to send out a short survey to identify what the perceived barriers to participation might be (e.g. location, money, programme content etc.)
- **Mini-tutorial:** Tara Jackson, Executive Director of the New Zealand Anti-vivisection Society (NZAVS) attended the meeting to give a mini-tutorial on humane education. NZAVS do not believe that animals need to be used for teaching/dissection in New Zealand and are trying to ascertain which schools are using animals so that they can promote non-animal alternatives.
- **Zebra fish:** The Animal Welfare Act defines adult fish as animals but excludes those in the larval stage. Current practice in New Zealand has been to consider that zebra fish are animals covered by animal welfare legislation from the start of their juvenile stage at about 28 days. The vast majority of research using zebra fish is undertaken prior to this age and so is not presently covered by the Act. At the meeting, MPI provided an update on the matters that would need to be considered if NAEAC wanted to recommend an amendment to the definition of *animal* under the Act.
- **The Three Rs:** In July 2018, NAEAC launched two new awards (funded by institutions that use animals for RTT) to recognise the 'Three Rs' (*reduction* and *replacement* of animals used in RTT and *refinement* of experimental techniques to minimise pain or distress). The Massey-SPCA Desexing Clinic was selected as the recipient of the inaugural Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield Three Rs Implementation Award last year. The deadline to receive applications for the \$50,000 research grant was extended until 14 April 2019. At the meeting, NAEAC discussed which organisations should be informed/reminded about the grant.