

**ANIMAL WELFARE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

2004 – 2005

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GPO BOX 4621
DARWIN NT 0801

Phone: (08) 8924 4036
Fax: (08) 8924 4069

Elliot McAdam MLA
Minister for Local Government
Parliament House
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you, on behalf of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, established under the *Animal Welfare Act*, the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2005 as required by regulation 13 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Chairperson

29 September 2005

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2004 - 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairperson's Overview	4
Legislative Charter	5
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee	5
Functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee	5
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Membership	6
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Alternate Members	8
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Meetings	9
Administrative Support	10
Activities	10
Codes of Practice	11
Education and Promotion	13
Conclusion	13

CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 5th Annual Report for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This report summarises the activities and achievements of the Advisory Committee during the 2004/2005 reporting year.

One of the key roles of the Advisory Committee has been to advise the Minister for Local Government on animal welfare legislation and investigate and report on animal welfare matters referred to it by the Minister. Some of the issues referred to the Advisory Committee by the Minister during the year include: the approval for membership of the Pet Industry Association of Australia on the Advisory Committee and recommendations made by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare.

Another function of the Advisory Committee has been to participate in the development of codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice. During 2004/2005 the Advisory Committee considered the adoption of a number of codes of practice relating to the welfare of animals including the adoption of Codes of Practice for the use of Glue Boards and Gels and Metal Toothed Rodent Traps; and the Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock.

The year also saw my appointment as the new Chairman of the Advisory Committee, additional to my role representing the interests of the Australian Veterinary Association. My appointment was to replace the retiring, long term Chairman, Professor Charles Webb, a representative of the Charles Darwin University. I would like to thank Professor Webb for the valuable contribution he made to the Advisory Committee since its inception in 2000 and to animal welfare in the Northern Territory.

In closing I wish to thank the members for their valued contributions and support during the past year as Chairman of the Committee.

Dr. Stephen Cutter

LEGISLATIVE CHARTER

A Bill for the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 19 August 1999 and was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 20 October 1999. Assent to the Act was given by the Administrator on 10 November 1999 and was brought into effect on 27 March 2000.

The objectives of the Act are to –

- ensure that animals are treated humanely;
- prevent cruelty to animals; and
- promote community awareness about the welfare of animals.

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is a statutory body established by the Minister for Local Government under section 69 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* and is responsible to the Minister.

The Act provides for an Advisory Committee of at least eight members appointed in writing by the Minister in accordance with regulation 6 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee are;

- (a) advising the Minister about animal welfare legislation and other matters relevant to animal welfare;
- (b) investigating and reporting on matters relevant to animal welfare referred to it by the Minister;

- (c) participating in the development of codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice;
- (d) providing advice to bodies, organisations or the general community on programs for the improvement of community awareness about animal welfare; and;
- (e) any other functions prescribed by the Animal Welfare Regulations.

No further functions have been prescribed under the Animal Welfare Regulations.

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee consists of nine members appointed by the Minister for Local Government pursuant to regulation 6 of the Animal Welfare Regulations. The members were nominated by, and represent the interests of the following organisations –

- Animal welfare organisation incorporated in the NT (RSPCA NT Inc);
- Australian Veterinary Association Ltd;
- Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;
- Agency having the responsibility for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* (Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport);
- Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines;
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc;
- Charles Darwin University;
- Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife Commission); and
- Pet Industry Association of Australia

Membership of the Advisory Committee as at 30 June 2005 was as follows:

Dr. Stephen Cutter (Chairperson)

Dr. Cutter was appointed as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on 2 November 2004. Dr. Cutter is the Australian Veterinary Association's representative on the Advisory Committee and is the RSPCA appointed Veterinary Surgeon in Darwin.

Alison Boardman

Ms Alison Boardman was re-appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004. Ms Boardman is the Secretary of the RSPCA (NT) Inc, which represents an animal welfare organisation incorporated in the Territory.

Mr Stuart Kenny

Mr Kenny was re-appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2005 to represent the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc. Mr Kenny is the Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc.

Prof. Robert Wasson

Professor Wasson was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2005. Professor Wasson is the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Charles Darwin University and replaces outgoing Chairman, Professor Charles Webb.

Mr Graham Franklin

Mr Franklin was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 17 March 2005. Mr Franklin is the Director Animal Welfare and Water Safety, representing the Agency having responsibility for the administration of the Act, namely the Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport. He replaces Mr Bill Stuchbery, former Director of Local Government who represented the Department on the Advisory Committee since 2000.

Dr Kevin de Witte

Dr de Witte was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004 and represents the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines.

Dr De Witte is the Regional Veterinary Officer in Katherine and is the Northern Territory's representative on the National Consultative Council on Animal Welfare (NCCAW).

Mr Philip Hauser

Mr Hauser was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004 and represents the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife Section). Mr Hauser has been a ranger for over twenty years and is actively involved in wildlife and park management activities, including feral animal control and urban wildlife management programs.

Mrs Judy Joyce

Mrs Joyce was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004. Mrs Joyce is an Alderman with the Palmerston City Council and represents the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory.

Mr Scott Andresen

Mr Andresen was appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004. Mr Andresen is the member representing the Pet Industry Association of Australia and operates a retail pet business in Alice Springs.

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ALTERNATE MEMBERS

The Animal Welfare Regulations provide for the Minister to appoint alternate members of the Advisory Committee.

The alternate members and their representative body for the year ending 2004/2005 are listed below.

Mr. Steve Walton	RSPCA (NT)
Ms. Dorothy Fox	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Ms. Amanda Shipway	Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport
Dr. Mauricio Perez-Ruiz	Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines
Mr. John Armstrong	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Ms. Hemali Seneviratne	Charles Darwin University
Dr. Michael Letnic	Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife)
Ms. Lyndall Squires	Pet Industry Association of Australia

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There is a statutory requirement under Regulation 11 of the Animal Welfare Regulations for the Advisory Committee to hold at least two meetings each year. Two meetings were held in Darwin during the year ending 2004/2005.

- 1st Meeting - 9 February 2005
- 2nd Meeting - 10 June 2005

The member's attendance at meetings during 2004/2005 is listed in the table below.

Organisation	Name of Member	Meetings Attended
Charles Darwin University	Robert Wasson	0
	Hemali Seneviratne (Alternate)	0
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NT) Inc.	Alison Boardman	2
	Steve Walton (Alternate)	0
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd Northern Territory Division	Stephen Cutter	2
	No nominee (Alternate)	0
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Judy Joyce	2
	Dorothy Fox (Alternate)	0
Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport	Bill Stuchbery/Graham Franklin	1
	Amanda Shipway (Alternate)	1
Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines	Kevin de Witte	2
	Mauricio Perez-Ruiz (Alternate)	0
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc	Stuart Kenny	0
	John Armstrong (Alternate)	0
Department Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts	Philip Hauser	2
	Dr. Michael Letnic (Alternate)	0
Pet Industry Association of Australia	Scott Andresen	1
	Lyndall Squires (Alternate)	0

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The Executive Officer, Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs provides executive support and research capacity to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. During 2004 - 2005 Mr. Peter Brice was the Executive Officer.

ACTIVITIES

The activities of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee during 2004/2005 have been primarily directed towards Codes of Practice relating to various animal groups. The Advisory Committee provided advice to the Minister on a number of animal welfare issues as referred to it by the Minister and investigated and reported on a number of animal welfare matters both locally and nationally. These include;

Membership of the Pet Industry Association of Australia on AWAC

In 2004, the then Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Ah Kit, received a request from the Pet Industry Association of Australia for membership on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

The Pet Industry Association of Australia is the peak national industry association representing the commercial pet industry in Australia.

The Minister referred this matter on to the Advisory Committee for consideration.

Following the Committee's recommendation, the Pet Industry Association was approved for appointment as a member organisation of the Committee in June 2004.

The Pet Industry Association nominated members Mr Scott Andresen and Ms Lyndall Squires (alternate), both being appointed to the Advisory Committee on 1 December 2004.

National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) – Position Statements on Glue Boards and Gels and Metal Toothed Rodent Traps; Puppy Export Trade; and National Guidelines on Rodeos.

In April 2005 the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry wrote to his State and Territory Government counterparts seeking support in the implementation of these position statements and guidelines. The Minister referred this matter on to the Advisory Committee for its consideration and advice. At the Advisory Committee's meeting on 10 June 2005 these issues were discussed and the Committee recommended the adoption of the Position Statements on Glue Boards and Gels and Metal Toothed Rodent Traps and the National Guidelines on Rodeos.

The Advisory Committee also considered a number of other issues during 2004/2005 relating to the welfare of animals. These include:

- The use of metal-jawed and soft-jawed traps in the Northern Territory;
- Continued discussion on the use of electronic training collars for Dogs;
- National Animal Welfare Strategy;
- The Puppy Export Trade;
- Battery Hen Farming;
- The early age de-sexing of puppies and kittens;
- Welfare of Extensively Managed Livestock during Dry Periods;
- Animal Sales at non-fixed market stalls; and
- Primary School Animal Welfare Education Program introduced in Queensland.

CODES OF PRACTICE

One of the functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee as prescribed under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* is to participate in the development of model codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice. The model codes of practice are intended as a set of guidelines for "best practice" standards for the handling, care, management and treatment of animals. The Codes of Practice adopted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* are not mandatory, although they can be used as evidence in a court hearing.

The Advisory Committee considered the following national model codes of practice during 2004/2005;

Guidelines for the Welfare of Caged Birds. – These guidelines have been prepared to provide the basis for humane care of birds held in captivity.

Code of Practice for the Humane Treatment of Captive and Wild Australian Crocodiles – The purpose of this Code is to recommend minimum standards for the humane treatment of crocodiles based on current knowledge and practice.

Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Foxes – The aim of this Code is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of foxes. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of foxes.

Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Rabbits – The purpose of this Code of practice is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of rabbits. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of rabbits.

Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Feral Pigs – The aim of this Code of Practice is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of feral pigs. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of feral pigs.

Code of Practice for the Care and Management of Cattle – The Code is intended as a set of guidelines which provides detailed minimum standards for assisting people in understanding the standard of care required to meet their obligations under the laws that operate in States and Territories.

Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos – A Code produced to ensure that all persons intending to shoot free-living kangaroos were aware of the welfare aspects pertinent to that activity.

Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Dogs – A Code to provide guidelines for the welfare of dogs, including minimum standards of accommodation, management and care.

Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Goats – This Code is intended as a guide for all people responsible for the Welfare and husbandry of Goats.

Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Domestic Poultry – This Code is intended as a guide for people responsible for the welfare and husbandry of domestic poultry appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs.

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

The AWAC endorsed a planned celebration of World Animal Day in October 2005 in conjunction with RSPCA, Darwin and Palmerston Councils to promote responsible pet ownership and provide an opportunity during school holidays for children to interact with animals and promote community awareness about animal welfare.

A Queensland Government website titled 'Help and Animal Smile', which is directed at primary school aged children, was recommended to the Northern Territory Minister for Education as reference material and for possible inclusion in an animal welfare education program.

CONCLUSION

During 2004/2005, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made a valuable contribution to animal welfare in the Northern Territory and will continue to strive towards improving animal welfare in the Northern Territory, raising community awareness and providing expert advice to the Minister on animal welfare issues.