

**ANIMAL WELFARE  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2001/2002 – 2002/2003**

# ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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John Ah Kit 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*, a combined Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2002 and 30 June 2003 as required by regulation 13 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Chairperson

November 2003

# **ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2001/2002 – 2002/2003**

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## **CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW**

Since the creation of the *Animal Welfare Act* in 2000 and the establishment of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee by the Minister for Local Government, significant outcomes are being achieved in the area of animal welfare in the Northern Territory. Among the achievements has been the adoption of relevant codes of practice, including the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition), and the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Feral Livestock Animals: Destruction, Capture, Handling and Marketing*.

During 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 the Advisory Committee provided advice to the Minister for Local Government on a number of animal welfare issues affecting the NT, such as the national campaign to prohibit the routine tail docking of dogs and the restriction of certain dog breeds. The Advisory Committee also considered the development of a number of codes of practice relating to the welfare of animals including the adoption of the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments* under the Northern Territory's *Meat Industries Act*.

In June 2002, the term of membership on the Advisory Committee expired and heralded the departure of Mr Mark Gage of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory and Mr Hugh Richardson of the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs. The Advisory Committee would like to thank both Mark and Hugh for their valuable contribution to animal welfare in the Northern Territory.

I would also like to acknowledge the many contributions by members of the Advisory Committee and express my gratitude to them for their support.

**CHARLES WEBB**

## **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 to –

- (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 eight 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 Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs);
- Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (Industry and Fisheries);
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc;
- Northern Territory University; and
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission)

Membership of the Advisory Committee as at 30 June 2003 was as follows:

### ***Professor Charles Webb (Chairperson)***

Professor Webb was re-appointed as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002. Professor Webb is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education and Research), Northern Territory University, and is the Chair of the University's Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee.

### ***Mr James McNally***

Mr McNally was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002. Mr McNally is the Chief Executive Officer of RSPCA (Darwin Branch) Inc, which represents an animal welfare organisation incorporated in the Territory. The RSPCA provides a very valuable service to the community in caring for sick, injured or stray animals.

***Dr Stephen Cutter***

Dr Cutter was appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 to represent the Australian Veterinary Association Ltd. Dr Cutter is a veterinarian and has his own practice in Palmerston. Dr Cutter replaced Mr Daniel Atkins whose appointment on 13 June 2000 expired on 12 June 2002.

***Mr Stuart Kenny***

Mr Kenny was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 27 June 2003 to represent the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc. Mr Kenny is the Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc and replaces Mr Robert Lee who was appointed on 23 July 2003 and resigned on 3 June 2003.

***Mr William Stuchbery***

Mr Stuchbery was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 June 2002. Mr Stuchbery is the Director of Local Government representing the Agency having responsibility for the administration of the Act, namely the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs. Mr Stuchbery replaced Mr Hugh Richardson, whose appointment on 13 June 2000 expired on 12 June 2002.

***Dr Kevin de Witte***

Dr de Witte was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 and represents the Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development. Dr de Witte is the Regional Veterinary Officer in Katherine and is the Northern Territory's representative on the National Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, Animal Welfare Committee.

***Mr Philip Hauser***

Mr Hauser was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 and represents the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission 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 appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002. Mrs Joyce is an Alderman with the Palmerston City Council and represents the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory. Mrs Joyce replaced Mr Mark Gage whose appointment on 2 August 2000 expired on 12 June 2002.

**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 2001/2002 are listed below.

Dr Stephen Cutter	RSPCA (NT)
Dr Matthew Boyd	Australian Veterinary Association Ltd
Mr Cecil Black	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Vacant	Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs
Dr Brian Radunz	Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development (Primary Industry and Fisheries)
Mr Stephen Peatling	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Mrs Hemali Seneviratne	Northern Territory University
Dr Simon Stirrat	Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission)

The alternate members and their representative body for the year ending 2002/2003 are listed below.

Mr Roy Kingham	RSPCA (NT) Incorporated
Dr David McClelland	Australian Veterinary Association Ltd
Mr Russell Naismith	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Mr Peter Herden	Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs

Dr Diana Pinch	Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (Primary Industry and Fisheries)
Mr John Armstrong	Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association
Mrs Hemali Seneviratne	Northern Territory University
Mr Andrew Bridges	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission)

## **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 2001/2002.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting - 8 November 2001
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting - 30 May 2002

The member’s attendance at meetings during 2001/2002 is listed in the table below.

Organisation	Name of Member	Meetings Attended
Northern Territory University	Charles Webb (Chair)	2
	Hemali Seneviratne (Alternate Member)	0
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NT) Inc.	James McNally	1
	Stephen Cutter (Alternate Member)	1
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd Northern Territory Division	Daniel Atkins	0
	Matthew Boyd (Alternate Member)	1
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Mark Gage	1
	Cecil Black (Alternate Member)	1
Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs	Hugh Richardson	2
	Vacant (Alternate Member)	0
Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development	Kevin de Witte	1
	Brian Radunz (Alternate Member)	1
Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association Inc	Robert Lee	2
	Stephen Peatling (Alternate Member)	0
Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment	Philip Hauser	2
	Simon Stirrat (Alternate Member)	0

Three Advisory Committee meetings were held in Darwin during the year ending 2002/2003

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting - 22 August 2002
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting - 13 February 2003
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting - 26 June 2003

The members' attendance at meetings during 2002/2003 is listed in the table below.

Organisation	Name of Member	Meetings Attended
Northern Territory University	Charles Webb (Chair)	3
	Hemali Seneviratne (Alternate Member)	0
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NT) Inc.	James McNally	3
	Roy Kingham (Alternate Member)	0
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd Northern Territory Division	Stephen Cutter	1
	David McClelland (Alternate Member)	1
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Judy Joyce	2
	Russell Naismith (Alternate Member)	1
Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs	William Stuchbery	2
	Peter Herden (Alternate Member)	1
Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development	Kevin de Witte	2
	Brian Radunz (Alternate Member)	0
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc	Robert Lee	1
	Val Dyer (Alternate Member)	0
Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment	Philip Hauser	2
	Andrew Bridges (Alternate Member)	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 2002 Mrs Nicole Kilgour replaced Ms Jan Collins, who was appointed in 2001 as the Executive Officer.

## ACTIVITIES

The activities of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee during 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 have been many and varied. The Advisory Committee provided advice to the Minister on a number of animal welfare legislation issues as referred to it by the Minister and investigated and reported on a number of animal welfare matters both locally and nationally.

### **National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement on the Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock**

The Advisory Committee considered the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare's (NCCAW) Draft Position Statement on the Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock – October 2001 at their meeting in November 2001. The Advisory Committee agreed to defer making any decision on the draft NCCAW Position Statement until agreement was sought with the Australian Professional Rodeo Association and the final Position Statement was endorsed by NCCAW. At the Advisory Committee's meeting in May 2002, the NCCAW Position Statement was tabled and the Advisory Committee agreed to consider recommending to the Minister that it be adopted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* at their next meeting in August 2002. At that meeting the Advisory Committee resolved to consult with industry stakeholders with respect to NCCAW's final Position Statement before recommending to the Minister its adoption under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999*. In February 2002 the Advisory Committee drafted a list of stakeholders to be consulted and in June 2003 a letter was drafted and approved by the Advisory Committee to be sent to stakeholders. The outcomes of consultations will not be available until early 2004.

### **National Coordination of a State/Territory Ban on the Routine Tail Docking of Dogs for Cosmetic Purposes**

In October 2002 the Primary Industries Ministerial Council agreed in principle to a nationally coordinated State and Territory ban on the routine tail docking of dogs for cosmetic (ie. non-therapeutic) purposes. Under the current *Animal Welfare Act 1999* the practice of tail docking of dogs is permitted provided the dog is less than five days old and the procedure is performed in hygienic conditions and in a manner that minimises suffering. The Minister referred this issue onto the Advisory Committee for consideration and advice and in February 2003 the Advisory Committee reported back to the Minister its

support for a nationally coordinated ban. In May 2003 the Government sought the views of appropriate stakeholders and in June 2003 the Government approved the adoption of a ban on tail docking of dogs for cosmetic purposes under the Act. The amendment to the Act will not be introduced until early next year and until that time the current Act applies.

### **Amendments to the Australian Rules of Racing**

In November 2002, the Minister wrote to the Advisory Committee seeking their advice following amendments to the Australian Rules of Racing by the Australian Racing Board in 2001 which banned the practice of horse firing. The practice of horse firing is undertaken primarily in the horse racing industry and involves a hot iron being placed on a horse's leg to create an inflammatory response to encourage healing of a damaged tendon or tendon sheath. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to the horse and is not an effective treatment. The Advisory Committee considered the issue and in June 2003 wrote to the Minister to recommend that he amend the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* to prohibit the practice of horse firing under section 9(1) of the Act. The amendment to the Act will not be introduced until early next year and until that time the current Act applies.

### **Electrical Stock Prod on Camels and Buffaloes**

During the year the Minister sought the advice of the Advisory Committee with respect to the use of electrical devices on camels and buffaloes under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999*. In 2002 the Minister granted an exemption to the Department of Business Industry and Resource Development under section 81 of the Act permitting the use of an electrical stock prod on camels and buffaloes under the supervision of an animal welfare officer or inspector. Following consultation with industry stakeholders, and the development of standard operating procedures for the handling of the species, DBIRD sought to formalise the use of an electrical stock prod on camels in the specific case of handling and transporting and the use of an electrical stock prod, electric stunning device, electro-ejaculator and an electro-immobiliser on buffaloes, under Schedule 1 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999 Regulations*. On 26 June 2003, the Advisory Committee agreed to write to the Minister to recommend changes to the Act to allow the use of electrical devices on camels and buffaloes. The amendment to the Act will not be introduced until the end of the year and until that time the current Act applies.

### **Remote Controlled Electronic Training Collars**

The Minister sought the advice of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee following the Federal Courts findings against the RSPCA in Victoria regarding the use of electronic dog collars. Currently the use of electronic training collars is permitted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999 Regulations*, excluding remote controlled electronic training collars. In January 2003, the Minister wrote to the Advisory Committee requesting them to consider the issue with a view to reviewing the conditions for the use of remote controlled electronic training collars under the *Regulations*. The Advisory Committee raised the issue at their meeting on 26 June 2003 and resolved to advise the Minister against changes to the Act that would allow the use of remote controlled training collars and would review the use of electronic training collars for dogs under the Act.

The Advisory Committee also considered a number of other issues during 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 relating to the welfare of animals. These include:

- Proposed cat control measures in the Northern Territory and a comparison of animal welfare legislation on cat control in other jurisdictions.
- Restriction of certain breeds of dogs in the Northern Territory;
- Sustainability and animal welfare with reference to developments in Poultry welfare;
- Australian Veterinary Association Policies – Duck Hunting, Dogs Hunting Deer, Control of Kangaroos, Control of Feral Cats, Control of Wild Rabbits, and Native and Introduced Animals Causing Damage to Agriculture and Habitat;
- Rodeos and the evidence of suffering and brutal treatment on livestock;
- RSPCA Australia Review of the humaneness of 1080 (Sodium Fluoroacetate);
- Animal cremator and pet cemeteries;
- Australian Capital Territory's Strategic Companion Animal Management Package;
- Recommendations on the welfare of domestic animals arising from a joint meeting between the Animal Welfare Centre (VIC) and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in October 2001.
- Additional responsibilities for Animal Ethic Committees.
- Australian Veterinary Association Policies – Duck Hunting
- National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement on Feral Animals.
- The use of metal-jawed and soft-jawed traps in the Northern Territory.

## 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 2001/2002 and 2002/2003.

### **Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Land Transport of Cattle (SCARM Report No. 77)**

The Advisory Committee considered the *Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Land Transport of Cattle*, which is intended as a guide for people who are involved in transporting cattle. It is aimed at encouraging considerate treatment of cattle so that transport stress and injury are minimised at all stages of the transport operation. The Advisory Committee canvassed the views of industry stakeholders before recommending to the Minister the adoption of the code in the Northern Territory. On 1 August 2001, the Minister approved the adoption of the code under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* pursuant to section 24(1).

### **Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments**

The Advisory Committee considered the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments*. The Code is intended as a standard to all people involved in the management of animals of various species at slaughtering establishments. Its aim is to encourage the efficient and considerate treatment of animals to minimise stress. In September 2001, the Advisory Committee canvassed the views of stakeholders in the slaughter industry before recommending to the Minister that the Code be ‘declared’ a code of practice under the Northern Territory’s *Meat Industries Act*.

**Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management Animal Health Committee, Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**

The *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry 4th Edition* is intended as a guide for people responsible for the welfare and husbandry of domestic poultry. It recognises that the basic requirement for the welfare of poultry is a husbandry system appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. The Advisory Committee agreed to defer consideration of the code until the new standards were available. The Advisory Committee has been awaiting publication of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition before considering the code for adoption under the Act. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will recommend to the Minister the adoption of the revised Domestic Poultry code (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) in 2004 under the Act following consultations with industry stakeholders.

**Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee's Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Feral Livestock Animals: Destruction or Capture, Handling and Marketing (SCARM Report No. 34)**

The *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Feral Livestock Animals: Destruction or Capture, Handling and Marketing* (SCARM Report No. 34) provides guidelines that promote the welfare of feral livestock animals captured for domestication, harvesting, slaughter or which are destroyed in control programs. It applies to feral pigs, donkeys, horses, goats, cattle, buffalo, camels and deer. The Minister adopted the Code under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* in December 2000. In 2001 the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment undertook a review of the above code for the Animal Welfare Committee of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resource and Management. In August 2001 the Advisory Committee wrote to stakeholders advising them of the review of the code and seeking their views.

During 2003 the Advisory Committee undertook a review of current Australian Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals that could be considered for adoption under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999*. These include:

- Animals at Saleyards
- Farmed Buffalo
- The Camel

- Cattle
- Farming of Deer
- Husbandry of Captive-Bred Emus
- The Goat
- Land Transport of Horses
- Land Transport of Pigs
- Land Transport of Poultry
- The Sheep

The Advisory Committee are also investigating the development of a code of practice for boarding kennels and dog breeders, and a code of practice for the keeping and trading of birds.

## **EDUCATION AND PROMOTION**

A Pet Expo was held in April 2002 and April 2003 at the Royal Darwin Show grounds. The Pet Expo is an annual event that is organised by various animal and bird clubs, the RSPCA and Darwin and Palmerston City Councils to promote responsible pet ownership. The Pet Expo provides an opportunity for pet owners to learn more about their pets from experts in the field and includes pet handling demonstrations, dog agility trials and dog and cat grooming.

## **CONCLUSION**

During 2001/2002 and 2002/2003, 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.