



annual report 2005/06

animal welfare advisory committee



Northern Territory Government
Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport

Animal Welfare Branch

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Mr Elliot McAdam, MLA
Minister for Local Government
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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 2006, as required by regulation 13 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Cutter
Chairperson
28 September 2006

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Chairperson's Overview

Welcome to the 6th Annual Report for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This report summarises the activities and achievements of the Advisory Committee during the 2005-2006 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 Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) and recommendations made by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW).

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 2005/2006 the Advisory Committee considered the adoption of a number of codes of practice relating to the welfare of animals including:

- Rodent Traps – National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 37 “Glue Boards and Gels and Metal-Toothed Rodent Traps”.
- Rodeo Livestock - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 39 “Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock”.
- Circus Animals National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 26.
- National Cattle Standards”. Cattle – Primary Industry Standing Committee Report No. 85 “Cattle 2nd Edition”.
- Poultry - Primary Industry Standing Committee Report No. 83 “Domestic Poultry”.

We have welcomed a number of new members to the Advisory Committee in this period and I would like to acknowledge them and thank them for their contribution to date and future involvement with the Advisory Committee:

- Mr Phil Donohoe, AWAC Member and Ms Anne Celan, AWAC Alternate member representing Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC), and
- Ms Jane Walsh representing the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).
- Dr Mauricio Perez-Perez, member and Dr Richard Morton, Alternate representing the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM).

Mr Peter Brice, Executive Officer left the Department in February 2006 and I thank him for his efforts in supporting the Advisory Committee. I welcome Ms Mary Gearin-Smith who has taken up the role of Executive Officer.

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



Dr. Stephen Cutter
Chairperson, AWAC

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 –

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

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC)

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 as detailed in the *Animal Welfare Act* 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.

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Membership

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee consists of ten 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);
- Pet Industry Association of Australia; and
- Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous communities (AMRRIC).

Membership of the Advisory Committee as at 30 June 2006:

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.

Ms Jane Walsh

Ms Walsh was appointed on 24 May 2006 to represent the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which represents an animal welfare organisation incorporated in the Territory. Ms Walsh, President, RSPCA (NT) Inc, replaces Ms Alison Boardman, former Secretary of the RSPCA (NT) Inc.

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 of 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.

Membership Continued:

Dr Mauricio Perez-Ruiz

Dr Perez-Ruiz, formally the alternate member for Dr Kevin de Witte, was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee in May 2006. He replaces Dr Kevin de Witte who retired in February 2006 and represents the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines. Dr Perez Ruiz is the Regional Veterinary Officer in Darwin and is the Northern Territory's representative on the National Consultative Council on Animal Welfare (NCCAW).

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.

Mr Philip Donohoe

Mr Donohoe represents a newly appointed organization to the committee, Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC). Mr Donohoe is the Executive Director of AMRRIC and was appointed to represent the organization in April 2006.

Following the departure of **Mr Philip Hauser** in December 2005, the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife) was not represented on the Advisory Committee for the second half the year.

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 2005/2006 are listed below.

No alternate	Australian Veterinary Association
Mr Steve Walton	RSPCA (NT) Inc.
Mr John Armstrong	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Ms Hemali Seneviratne	Charles Darwin University
Ms Amanda Shipway	Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport
Dr Richard Morton	Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines
No alternate	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Ms Lyndall Squires	Pet Industry Association of Australia
Ms Anne Celan	Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities
No alternate	Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife)

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 2005/2006.

- 1st Meeting - 17 February 2006
- 2nd Meeting - 23 June 2006

The member's attendance at meetings during 2005/2006 is listed in the table below.

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

Administrative Support

The Executive Officer, Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport provides executive support and research capacity to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. During 2005–2006, Mr. Peter Brice resigned from the position. Ms Mary Gearin-Smith was appointed Executive Officer on 9 May 2006.

Activities

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 activities of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee during 2005-2006 have been primarily directed towards Codes of Practice relating to various animal groups. 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.

Model Codes of Practice

The Advisory Committee recommended the adoption of five codes of practice during the 2005-2006 year;

1. **Rodent Traps** - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 37 “Glue Boards and Gels and Metal-Toothed Rodent Traps”. Adopted November 2005.
2. **Rodeo Livestock** - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 39 “Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock”. Adopted November 2005.
3. **Circus Animals** - National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare Position Statement No. 26 “Recommended National Circus Standards”. Adopted May 2006.
4. **Cattle** - Primary Industry Standing Committee Report No. 85 “Cattle 2nd Edition”. Adopted May 2006.
5. **Poultry** - Primary Industry Standing Committee Report No. 83 “Domestic Poultry”. Adopted May 2006.

The Advisory Committee also 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.

National Consultative Committee (NCCAW)

Review of the activities and discussions arising from the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare were presented to the Advisory Committee by the Northern Territory representative on NCCAW Dr Mauricio Perez-Ruiz.

New Members Appointed to the Committee

This year the Advisory Committee welcomed a new organization member, Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC). Their Executive Director, Mr Philip Donohoe was appointed to represent AMRRIC on the Advisory Committee.

The RSPCA is now represented by, Ms Jane Walsh, President, RSPCA (NT) Inc.

Dr Maurizio Perez- Ruiz, Senior Veterinary Officer, moves up from alternate member for the Department of Primary Industries and Mines and appointed alternate is now Dr Richard Morton, Regional Veterinary Officer.

Australian Animal Welfare Strategy

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) will guide the development of new, nationally consistent policies and will enhance existing animal welfare arrangements in all Australian states and territories. The Strategy covers the humane treatment of all animals in Australia including:

- livestock/production animals
- animals used for work, sport, recreation or display
- companion animals
- animals in the wild
- aquatic animals, and
- animals used in research and for teaching purposes.

The Strategy was developed over five years by the Australian Government with assistance from the [National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare \(NCCAW\)](#), in consultation with state and territory governments, animal industry organisations, animal welfare groups and the general public.

The goals, objectives and activities outlined in the Strategy are based on science, national and international benchmarks, and social and economic considerations. The Strategy is for the entire Australian community including animal owners, the veterinary profession, livestock producers, processors, transporters, animal welfare bodies,

researchers, consumers and government agencies. To view the Strategy visit: www.affa.gov.au/content/.

Topics of Interest - AWAC

Individuals, interest groups, and other departments have presented the Advisory Committee with topics of interest and for discussion. These have been responded to accordantly. They have also provided the members with valuable information and enrichment of the debate on animal welfare issue.

These topics included:

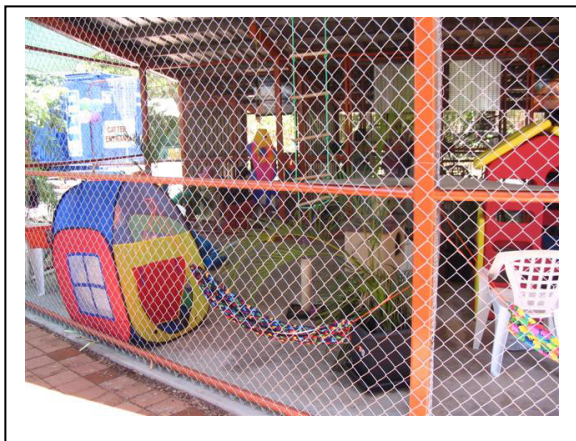
- Battery Hens
- Dangerous dogs
- The restraining of pet birds
- The use of soft toothed leg hold traps
- Animal welfare education in schools
- The welfare of livestock during dry periods
- Pig farming
- Legislation in other states regarding the use of animals for scientific research
- The best practice for the destruction of cane toads
- Live animal exports
- The sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores.

Presentations

AWAC members made presentations to the Advisory Committee.

The presentations provided a valuable insight into the training of stock inspectors on matters of animal welfare investigations and the care and treatment of animals in the livestock industry.

Education and Promotion



World Animal Day, October 4

World Animal Day is celebrated across the world on October 4 the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi the Patron Saint of Animals. The Advisory Committee supported the coordinated a celebration of World Animal Day on 4 October 2005 in conjunction with RSPCA, The NT Police, Darwin and Palmerston Councils, and other

animal stakeholders 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. The RSPCA celebrated the opening of the new cattery pictured above.

Puppy Love, A Youth Week Initiative

The Advisory Committee supported the RSPCA during National Youth Week by participating in the Puppy Love program. The event was held over 2 days, 5-6 April 2006. Each day a class of year 8 students from Kormilda College was presented with five interactive units on pet care and responsible pet ownership. The Advisory Committee participated both days with a unit focusing on animal welfare offences under the *Animal Welfare Act*. There was lots of interest and participation from the students.

Million Paws Walk, Darwin

The Million Paws Walk is a national fundraising event. The RSPCA Darwin fund raising event was held on Sunday, 21 April 2006 on the Esplanade in Darwin. The Animal Welfare Branch provided administrative and marketing support and assistance in the lead up the event and on the day. Approximately 400 dogs (and their owners) participated in this highly successful event which was the most popular Million Paws Walk held in Darwin to date.

Conclusion

During 2005-2006, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made a valuable contribution to animal welfare in the Northern Territory. The Advisory Committee will continue to strive towards improving animal welfare, raising community awareness and providing expert advice to the Minister and the community on animal welfare issues.