



Northern  
Territory  
Government

# ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2008/2009

**Animal Welfare Advisory Committee**

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The Hon Robert Knight MLA  
Minister for Local Government  
Parliament House  
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Minister

As required by Regulation 13 of the *Animal Welfare Act* and on behalf of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, I have pleasure in presenting to you the annual report for the year ended 30 June 2009.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Cutter  
Chairperson

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Chairperson’s Introduction                         | 4  |
| Legislative Charter                                | 5  |
| Animal Welfare Advisory Committee                  | 5  |
| Functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee | 5  |
| Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Members          | 6  |
| Membership as at 30 June 2009                      | 6  |
| Alternate Members                                  | 8  |
| Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Meetings         | 9  |
| Members Attendance 2008-2009                       | 9  |
| Administrative Support                             | 10 |
| Activities Overview                                | 10 |
| Codes of Practice                                  | 11 |
| The Animal Welfare Branch                          | 13 |
| The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy             | 15 |
| Promotion, Education and Awareness                 | 15 |
| Conclusion   | 20 |

## CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 9th annual report for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (the Committee). This report summarises the activities, achievements and challenges of the Committee during the 2008-2009 reporting year.

I would like to thank the Committee's members for their continued commitment and support without which the activities and achievements summarised in this report would not be possible. So it is with thanks to all of the members, the organisations they represent, and the secretariat that I present the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Annual Report.

Dr Stephen Cutter  
Chairperson, Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

## LEGISLATIVE CHARTER

The Bill for the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* (the Act) 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

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

## 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 MEMBERS

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.

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 –

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA NT Inc);
- Australian Veterinary Association Ltd;
- Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;
- Department of Local Government and Housing (agency having the responsibility for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act*);
- Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources;
- Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association Inc;
- Charles Darwin University;
- Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (Parks and Wildlife Commission);
- Pet Industry Association of Australia; and
- Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC).

## MEMBERSHIP AS AT 30 JUNE 2009

[Dr Stephen Cutter](#) – Chairperson;

Dr Cutter has tirelessly served the Committee as Chairperson since 2004. He is a practicing Veterinarian who also operates a wildlife care and rescue service, as well as a shelter for lost animals. Dr Cutter’s extensive knowledge and experience in the care of animals has been invaluable to the Committee. In the past he has represented the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the

Australian Veterinarian Association (AVA) and Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC).

[Ms Gillian Priddy](#) – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA Darwin);

Ms Priddy is Shelter Manager of the RSPCA Darwin and has been representing the organisation on the Committee since February 2009.

[Dr Lara Bettink](#) - Australian Veterinary Association Ltd;

Dr Bettink is a practicing veterinarian in Darwin and was appointed to the Committee in November 2007.

[Ms Melanie van Haaren](#) - Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;

Ms van Haaren is an alderman on the Alice Springs Town Council and was appointed to the Committee in November 2007.

[Ms Meryl Gowing](#) - Department of Local Government and Housing

Ms Gowing is a newly appointed member to the Committee and is the Director of the Animal Welfare branch which has responsibility for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act*. Ms Gowing was appointed in June 2008.

[Ms Susanne Fitzpatrick](#) - Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines;

Ms Fitzpatrick is a newly appointed member to the Committee and is the Senior Veterinary Officer for the department. Ms Fitzpatrick was appointed in March 2009.

[Mr Luke Bowen](#) - Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc;

Mr Bowen is a newly appointed member to the Committee and is the Executive Director of the NT Cattlemen's Association. Mr Bowen was appointed in November 2008.

[Professor Bob Wasson](#) - Charles Darwin University;

Professor Wasson is the Vice Chancellor for Research at Charles Darwin University and has served on the Committee since December 2004.

**Ms Robyn Delaney** - Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (Parks and Wildlife Commission);

Ms Delaney is a newly appointed member to the Committee and is a Scientist with the Biodiversity Conservation Division of the Department. Ms Delaney was appointed in November 2008.

**Mr Scott Andresen** - Pet Industry Association of Australia;

In addition to representing the pet industry on the Committee, Mr Andresen owns and operates a pet shop in Alice Springs. Mr Andresen has been serving on the Committee since December 2004.

**Ms Julia Hardaker** - Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC);

Ms Hardaker is the Executive Officer of AMRRIC and has been serving on the Committee since April 2008.

#### ALTERNATE MEMBERS

| Organisation  | Name of Alternate Member |
|---|--------------------------|
| Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)    | Dr Kerry-Ann O'Grady     |
| Australian Veterinary Association of the Northern Territory (AVA) | No Alternate             |
| Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)    | No Alternate             |
| Department of Local Government Housing and Sport (DLGHS)          | Ms Shaan Myall           |
| Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM)     | Dr Richard Morton        |
| Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc (NTCA)             | Mr Anthony Searle        |
| Charles Darwin University (CDU)                                   | Ms Fiona Steele          |

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Department of Natural Resources,<br>Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS) | Mr Brett Easton |
| Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA)                                 | Ms Rhonda Wise  |
| Animal Management in Rural and Remote<br>Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)     | Dr Sam Phelan   |

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## ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Regulation 11 of the *Animal Welfare Act* requires at least two meeting of the Committee each year. However, the Committee has agreed to hold more meetings if necessary. Meetings for the reporting period were held in Darwin:

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| 21st Meeting | 21 August 2008   |
| 22nd Meeting | 20 November 2008 |
| 23rd Meeting | 19 February 2009 |

## MEMBER'S ATTENDANCE 2008-2009

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| Organisation   | Name of Member        | Meetings<br>Attended |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Chairperson  | Stephen Cutter        | 2                    |
| Royal Society for the Prevention of<br>Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)    | Gillian Priddy        | 1                    |
| Australian Veterinary Association of<br>the Northern Territory (AVA) | Lara Bettink          | 2                    |
| Local Government Association of the<br>Northern Territory (LGANT)    | Melanie van Haaren    | 0                    |
| Department of Local Government<br>and Housing (DLGH)                 | Meryl Gowing          | 2                    |
|  | Shaan Myall           | 0                    |
| Department of Primary Industries,<br>Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM)     | Mauricio Perez – Ruiz | 1                    |
|  | Susanne Fitzpatrick   | 1                    |

|   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc (NTCA)                     | Luke Bowen     | 1 |
|   | Anthony Searle | 1 |
| Charles Darwin University (CDU)   | Bob Wasson     | 2 |
|   | Fiona Steele   | 0 |
| Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS) | Robyn Delaney  | 3 |
|   | Brett Easton   | 0 |
| Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA)                              | Scott Andresen | 3 |
| Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)     | Julia Hardaker | 2 |

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## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The Department of Local Government and Housing provides executive, administrative and financial support as well as research capacity to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. The Education and Engagement team assists the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee in educating the community about animal welfare issues.

## ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

The activities of the Committee for the year have been varied. As well as fulfilling its primary functions; individuals, interest groups, various stakeholders and government departments have presented the Committee with topics of interest and areas of concern for discussion. These have been responded to accordingly.

The Committee continues its involvement in animal welfare issues at the national level. Members are actively involved in the implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) and keep the Committee abreast of developments taking

place outside the Northern Territory. Some of the animal welfare topics discussed this year include:

- Dogs used for pig hunting
- Draft Standards and Guidelines for the Exhibition of Animals
- Animal Welfare and Animal Control in new Shires
- Code of Practice - Humane shooting for kangaroos and wallabies
- Code of Practice - Humane treatment of wild and captive crocodiles
- Code of Practice – Care and use of animals for scientific purposes
- Model Code of Practice for the Care of Pigs
- National Land Transport Standards
- Feral camels in Central Australia
- Use of twisted horse bits
- Review of the Northern Territory *Animal Welfare Act*; and
- Mulesing

## CODES OF PRACTICE

A primary function of the Committee is to participate in the development of Codes of Practice for the care and welfare of animals.

During the reporting year the Committee adopted three new Codes of Practice;

- Primary Industries Standing Committee Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs – Third Edition – PISC Report 92;
- National code of practice for the humane shooting of kangaroos and wallabies for commercial purposes; and
- National code of practice of the humane shooting of kangaroos and wallabies for non-commercial purposes.

Codes of Practice are not enforceable and do not carry penalties for non compliance. They set minimum best practice for the care of animals. A Code of Practice may however be used as supporting evidence in a court hearing.

Codes of Practice which have been adopted since the enactment of the Animal Welfare act are as follows:

| Date   | Code of Practice  | Gazette         |
|--|---|-----------------|
| 15 December 2000   | National Health and Research Council's Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animal for Scientific Purposes 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition 1997                                  | S63<br>22/12/00 |
| 18 December 2000   | Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee Model code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Feral Livestock Animals – Destruction or Capture, Handling and Marketing | S63<br>22/12/00 |
| 12 July 2005   | National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) Position Statement No. 37 – Glue Boards and Gels and Metal Toothed Traps  | G45<br>09/11/05 |
| 12 July 2005<br><br>Repealed and replaced with revised code May 2007 (see below) | National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) Position Statement No. 39 – Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock   | G45<br>09/11/05 |
| 10 April 2006  | Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Cattle (2 <sup>nd</sup> addition) (PSIC Report – No. 85)  | G18<br>03/05/06 |
| 10 April 2006  | Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry (4 <sup>th</sup> Edition) (SCRAM Report – No.83)   | G18<br>03/05/06 |
| 10 April 2006  | National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) Position Statement N. 26 – Recommended National Circus Standards  | G18<br>03/05/06 |
| May 2007   | National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) Position Statement No. 39 – Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock   | G23<br>06/06/07 |
| 12 May 2008  | Northern Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Guidelines for the Care and Welfare of Caged Birds   | G21<br>28/05/08 |

|               |   |                 |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| 12 May 2008   | Northern Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Guidelines for the Care and Welfare of Animals in Retail Pet Shops         | G23<br>11/06/08 |
| 8 July 2008   | Primary Industries Standing Committee Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs – Third Edition – PISC Report 92 | G33<br>20/08/08 |
| 24 April 2009 | National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for non-commercial purposes                        | G18<br>06/05/09 |
| 24 April 2009 | National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for non-commercial purposes                        | G18<br>05/05/09 |

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## THE ANIMAL WELFARE BRANCH

In addition to providing administrative support to the Committee, the Department of Local Government and Housing is responsible for the Animal Welfare Branch (the branch). This team is the lead agency for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act*.

### Function of the Animal Welfare Branch:

**Enforcement** – Enforcement plays a major role in the administration of the provisions of the *Animal Welfare Act*. The branch is responsible for receiving, recording and investigating animal welfare reports. The branch received and investigated 409 reports of animal neglect or cruelty for the reporting year.

**Inspectorate** – The Animal Welfare Authority appoints all Animal Welfare Inspectors/Officers (except Police Officers). There are appointed Inspectors/Officers in various departments and branches of the Northern Territory Government, such as the Parks and Wildlife Commission; in some local Councils, such as the Katherine Town Council; and outside agencies, such as the RSPCA. Additionally, all Police Officers are Animals Welfare Inspectors as they carry the same powers under the *Animal Welfare Act*. The branch is responsible for the co-ordination of the efforts of

these Inspectors/Officers. Also, because the inspectorate is spread across a wide range of authorities, it is able to draw upon a wide range of skills and expertise. The branch brings these agencies together for the common goal of the improved welfare of all animals.

**Prosecutions** – The prosecution of offenders is an inevitable part of the enforcement process. The branch continues to develop good investigation procedures with the aim of successful prosecution of serious offenders. The branch also conducts joint investigations and prosecutions with other departments and outside agencies.

**Licences for research and teaching** – The Animal Welfare Branch reviews, considers and approves applications for licenses to use premises for teaching or research involving animals. As a result of the licences issued in the Northern Territory, the branch is also responsible for the collecting and recording statistical data of animal use from each licence holders. The data is collated and reported to the national body responsible for animal welfare, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

**Community awareness** – The branch provides advice and support for community based activities and events to raise awareness of animal welfare in the Northern Territory. This year the branch participated in the following animal welfare initiatives:

- Animal Awareness Week
- World Animal Day;
- a display at the pet expo;
- a display at PAWS open day;
- a display at Pet Barn open day; and
- support of the Millions Paws Walk.

**Leadership** - The branch is the lead agency for animal welfare related matters providing advice and support to the Minister, other departments, outside agencies, and interstate bodies. The branch is also responsible for the implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) in the Northern Territory. The branch is the first point of contact with the public regarding all animal issues. Consequently the

handles a multitude of phone enquires, requests for information and responses to media reports, while keeping the Minister informed on contemporary welfare issues.

**Inter-departmental and outside agency co-operation** - Co-operation with other departments is essential to the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act*. The intention of the Act is to protect animals across a broad range of species. Successful investigation of offences relies on the specialised advice provided by other departments such as the Primary Industries for their expertise in livestock animals; Fisheries for their expertise in aquatic animals; and Wildlife for their knowledge of native species. The Committee recognises that success would not be possible without the knowledge, experience, advice and support from other departments.

### AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY (AAWS)

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is an Australian Government initiative which is intended to provide a comprehensive, integrated and planned approach to animal welfare. It is aimed at the entire Australian community and encompasses all animals in Australia.

The strategy provides for the development of future animal welfare policies, based on a national consultative approach and a firm commitment to high standards of animal welfare.

The Committee has taken an active role in this national consultative process. The focus of the past year has been the continuing development of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Transport of Livestock. This is the first of the national standards and is now in the final stages of completion.

### PROMOTION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

One of the key objectives of the *Animal Welfare Act* is to promote community awareness about the welfare of animals. The branch provides advice and support for community based activities and events and takes every opportunity to raise awareness of animal welfare in the community. Reviews of this year's initiatives are:

### Animal Awareness Week 2009

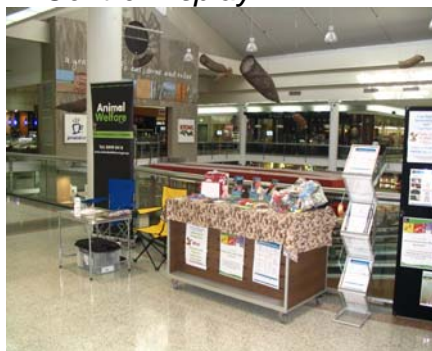
The branch's inaugural Animal Awareness Week was conducted from 22-28 June 2009 with the theme 'protecting and caring for our animals'. A program of events and activities was held throughout Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs. A colouring-in competition and Pamper Your Pet competition ran throughout the week and stakeholders conducted activities and events which were open to the public. Some of the events conducted included:

- Shopping centre displays with reptile demonstrations;
- RSPCA open days in Alice Springs and Darwin;
- Library and community talks;
- Keeping reptiles as pets demonstrations; and
- Animal Welfare Inspector/Officer Training Day.

*Palmerston Shopping Centre Display*



*Casuarina Shopping Centre Display*



*Parliament House Library Talk*



*Venomous Pit Snake Demonstration*



The week was hosted by the Animal Welfare Branch and stakeholders were responsible for their own events. Animal Awareness Week was marketed to the community through the following:

- 5 press advertisements promoting a key message each day;
- Press ad features including the Calendar of Events;
- 5 speakers on Mix FM radio promoting a key message each day;
- Banner displays throughout the week;
- A mail out to approximately 265 schools throughout the Northern Territory; including the Calendar of Events, colouring-in competition and poster;
- Key businesses were visited and provided with the Calendar of Events and poster; and
- A range of lead up activities including displays.

**Animal Welfare Inspector/Officer Training Day** - The Animal Welfare Branch conducted a full training day for all appointed Animal Welfare Inspectors/Officers. The branch held the training day to ensure that all Inspectors/Officers were aware of their responsibilities under the *Animal Welfare Act*. The event was very well received with 26 Inspectors/Officers and guest speakers from Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs attending the session. The attendees were required to complete an online tutorial based on their knowledge of the *Animal Welfare Act* before attending the training. The feedback from the training day was very positive and it was noted that a similar training day should be organised for next year.

**Colouring-in Competition** - A colouring-in competition was conducted to support Animal Awareness Week. The aim of the competition was to build a positive profile of animal welfare amongst young Territorians so that the animal welfare message is instilled at an early age. The competition required young people to add two or more animals that they need to care for, calling on the entrants' creativity. 384 entries were received from participants throughout the Northern Territory, with a considerable number received from remote Indigenous communities.

The winner was Martika Smiler from Pigeon Hole Primary School with this entry.



**Pamper Your Pet Competition** - A Pamper your Pet competition was conducted online, with the prize being a pet pampering pack valued at \$150. Entrants were required to explain in 50 words or less why they thought their pet was so important to them and attach a photo of their pampered pet. The branch received a total of 34 entries. The winner was Annie Gardner and her dog Clancy.

### *Clancy*



*Clancy is my only family, he is my 'welcome home' at the end of the day, my walking buddy, TV and take away sharer, holiday companion, confidant, 'shoulder to cry on', absolute best mate! Clancy makes my life complete. - Annie Warner*

**Summary** – Overall, the Animal Welfare branch's first Animal Awareness Week was a huge success. Stakeholder participation was high and attendance at events was good. A full report of the week has been produced outlining recommendations for the future.

### World Animal Day 2008

World Animal Day 2008 was held at Robbie Robbins Reserve on Saturday 4 October. Activities included a pet parade, horse drawn cart, dog wash and face painting and were well received by those that participated. Stakeholder participation was positive with a program of events scheduled throughout the day. Feedback from the day indicated that more promotion is required to increase attendance.



### Million Paws Walk 2009

On 17 May 2009 the Animal Welfare Branch presented a show of support for this popular RSPCA fund raising event with an animal welfare display. The event provided the branch with an opportunity to raise the profile of the Animal Welfare Inspectors and the work they do in the community. The fact sheets were available and the tattoos were popular with the kids.



### Pet Expo 2009

This year the branch participated in the Northern Territory Pet Expo on Sunday 9 April 2009 held in Darwin. The display focused on the cruelty and neglect of animals and featured some disturbing photos of animal cruelty cases. The photos generated a great deal of comment and Animal Welfare Inspectors were on hand to answer questions. On the lighter side, the branch also conducted a Pamper Your Pet Competition. Winner Alex Stewart of Kormilda College visited the Animal Welfare

branch stall at the expo and completed an entry form detailing how she pampers her pet. Alex wrote that her dog Limo goes to the beach every Sunday where he has a bath and on his birthday he gets a chum cake to share with his friends. Alex won herself a pamper pet pack with lots of goodies for her dog Limo.

*Alex with her prize*



### Fact sheets

A series of informative facts sheets have been developed to raise awareness and provide useful information regarding the welfare of animals. The sheets answer some frequently asked questions relating to the care of pets and address owner responsibilities under the *Animal Welfare Act*. The collection includes the following titles:

- Food, Water and Shelter
- Planning for Holidays
- Horses and Natural Disasters
- Pet Emergency Plan
- Mange
- Ticks
- Worms
- Veterinarians in the Northern Territory

### CONCLUSION

During 2008-2009, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made a valuable contribution to animal welfare in the Northern Territory. The Committee will continue to strive towards improving animal welfare, raising community awareness and providing expert advice to the Minister on animal welfare issues.