



Northern
Territory
Government

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Annual Report

2007/ 2008

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
Ground Floor, RCG House
83-85 Smith Street, Darwin
Postal address GPO Box 4621
Darwin NT 0801
Tel 1300 720 386
Fax 08 8999 8520

Mr 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 2008.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Cutter
Chairperson

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Chairperson's Introduction

Welcome to the 8th annual report for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (the Committee). This report summarises the activities, achievements and challenges of the Committee during the 2007-2008 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 executive officer 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, Housing and Sport (Agency having the responsibility for the administration of the Animal Welfare Act ;
- Department of Primary Industry, 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 As At 30 June 2008

Dr Stephen Cutter – Chairperson;

Dr Cutter has tirelessly served the Committee as Chairperson since 2004. He is a practicing Veterinarian. He also operates a wildlife care and rescue service, and a shelter for lost animals. His 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). But this year he has decided to serve on the Committee as an independent member.

Ms Jane Walsh – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA NT Inc);

Ms Walsh is the President of the RSPCA NT Inc and has been representing the organisation on the Committee since May 2006.

Dr Lara Bettink - Australian Veterinary Association Ltd;

Dr Bettink is a new member to the Committee, appointed in November 2007. She is a practicing veterinarian in Darwin.

Ms Melanie van Haaren - Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;

Ms van Haaren is a new member to the Committee, appointed in November 2007. She is an alderman on the Alice Springs Town Council.

Mr Graham Franklin - Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport;

Mr Franklin is the former Director of the Animal Welfare Branch which is the agency having the responsibility for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act*. He has served actively on the Committee since his appointment in March 2005. Mr Franklin has left the Department and consequently, the Committee in May this year. The Committee thanks Mr Franklin for his contribution to animal welfare during his 3 year term.

Dr Mauricio Perez-Ruiz - Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines;

Dr Perez-Ruiz is the Senior Veterinary Officer for the Department in the Biosecurity & Product Integrity. He has served on the Committee since December 2004.

Mr Stuart Kenny - Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc;

Mr Kenny is the Executive Director of the NTCA and was appointed to the Committee in December 2004.

Professor Bob Wasson - Charles Darwin University;

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

Mr Tony Bowland - Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Parks and Wildlife Commission);

Mr Bowland is the Wildlife Manager and Principal Scientist of Biodiversity and Conservation Division of NRETA. He was appointed to the Committee in July 2006.

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. He has been serving on the Committee since December 2004.

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

Ms Hardaker has recently taken up the position of Executive Officer of AMRRIC. She is our newest member, appointed to the Committee in April 2008.

Alternate Members

Organisation Name	Name of Alternate Member
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)	No Alternate
Australian Veterinary Association of the Northern Territory (AVA)	Dr Jamin Fairbrother
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)	No Alternate
Department of Local Government Housing and Sport (DLGHS)	Ms Deborah Josling
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, Environment and the Arts (NRETA)	Ms Robyn Delaney
Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA)	Ms Rhonda Wise
Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)	Dr Sam Phelan

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Meetings

Regulation 11 of the Animal Welfare Act requires at least two meeting of the Committee each year. The Committee moved to have a third meeting this year. Meetings for the reporting period were held in Darwin:

18th Meeting	20 September 2007
19th Meeting	24 January 2008
20th Meeting	22 May 2008

Member's Attendance 2007-2008

Organisation	Name of Member	Meetings Attended
Chairperson	Stephen Cutter	3
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)	Jane Walsh	1
Australian Veterinary Association of the Northern Territory (AVA)	Lara Bettink	2
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)	Melanie van Haaren	1
Department of Local Government Housing and Sport (DLGHS)	Graham Franklin	2
	Deborah Josling	2
Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM)	Mauricio Perez-Ruiz	3
	Stuart Kenny	0
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc (NTCA)	Anthony Searle	1
	Bob Wasson	0
	Fiona Steele	1
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	Tony Bowland	1
	Robyn Delaney	2
Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA)	Scott Andresen	3
	Julia Hardaker	1
Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA)		
Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)		

Administrative Support

The Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport provide executive, administrative and financial support as well as research capacity to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Ms Mary Gearin-Smith is the Executive Officer.

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 on a 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
- Public awareness brochures
- Care of animals in natural disasters
- Labelling of animal derived food products
- Victorian Model Code of Practice for Horses
- Model Code of Practice for the Care of Pigs
- National Land Transport Standards
- Feral camels in Central Australia
- Cattle prod ban in South Australia
- Review of the Northern Territory Animal Welfare Act
- Mulesing
- Model for the ranking of humaneness

Codes of Practice

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

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

- The Northern Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Guidelines for the Care and Welfare of Caged Birds. This code of practice was developed to set the standard for the care of pet birds and to be used as a guide for people who keep birds as pets.
- The Northern Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Guidelines for the Care and Welfare of Animals in Retail Pet Shops. This code of practice was developed to set the standard for the care of animals in pet shops and to be used as a guide for proprietors of retail pet shop establishments.

Codes of Practice are not enforceable and do not carry penalties for non compliance. They set a best standard 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 set out in the following table.

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 6th Edition 1997	S63 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 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 09/11/05
12 July 2005	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 09/11/05
10 April 2006	Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Cattle (2nd addition) (PSIC Report – No. 85)	G18 03/05/06
10 April 2006	Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry (4th Edition) (SCRAM Report – No.83)	G18 03/05/06
10 April 2006	National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW) Position Statement N. 26 – Recommended National Circus Standards	G18 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 06/06/07
12 May 2008	Northern Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Guidelines for the Care and Welfare of Caged Birds	G21 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 11/06/08

The Animal Welfare Branch

In addition to providing administrative support to the Committee, the Department of Local Government Housing and Sport is responsible for the Animal Welfare Branch (The Branch). This Division 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 375 reports of animal neglect or cruelty for the reporting year.

Inspectorate – The Animal Welfare Authority appoints all Animal Welfare Inspectors (except Police Officers). There are appointed Inspectors in various Departments or 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. Also, because the inspectorate is spread across a wide range of authorities, it is able to draw upon a wide range of skill and expertises. 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 such as the RSPCA.

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:

- the Youth Week creative arts competition;
- the development and distribution of animal welfare and pet care fact sheets;
- a display at the pet expo; 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 Branch 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 in the continuing development of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Transport of Livestock. This is to be the first of the national standards which is now in its 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:

Youth Week 2008

In 2008 the Animal Welfare Branch again was involved in National Youth Week. The Branch ran a Creative Arts Competition for young people aged 12-25 years asking them to address the following statement: "What are the benefits of a society that actively promotes the care and protection of animals?"

Over 40 entries from throughout the Territory were received showcasing the creative and artistic talents of our youth. Moreover, it was encouraging to see so many young people thinking about the care and protection of animals.

The Visual Category was won by Matthew Phillips of Alice Springs. Matthew received a portable DVD Player and a day of volunteering at the RSPCA.

The Written Category was won by Bess Collins of Sanderson. Bess was awarded with a portable DVD Player by Minister Bonson at the Northern Territory Library.

Entries were displayed at the Northern Territory Library throughout National Youth Week.



Pet Expo 2008

This year the Branch participated in the Northern Territory Pet Expo 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, there was a Pamper Your Pet Competition with the winner receiving a Pet Pamper Pack.



Fact sheets

A series of informative facts sheets have been developed to raise awareness and provide useful information. 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

Million Paws Walk 2008

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. Our newly developed fact sheets were available and our tattoos were popular with the kids.



Conclusion

During 2007-2008, 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