



SECRETARY'S ANIMAL CARE & ETHICS COMMITTEE

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The following Grievance Procedures have been drawn up to follow the requirements and recommendations of the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes and the Animal Research Act.

Procedures have been developed to handle the following:

- a) complaints from independent people who are not associated with research.
- b) complaints by staff of businesses whose research is supervised by the Secretary's ACEC or accredited research establishments to which the Secretary's ACEC is appointed.
- c) disputes between investigators and the ACEC.
- d) serious disagreements between members of the ACEC.
- e) disagreements between the ACEC and management of Animal Research Establishments.

Types a) and b) to be referred to Secretary's ACEC for investigation. Investigation may take the form of: interviews of the complainant, the subject of the complaint, witnesses; unannounced inspection of the facility or animals in question; seeking expert advice on technical matters from outside the institution.

A report is made to the Secretary with recommendations for any action considered appropriate. This may include cancellation or suspension of the Animal Research Authority, formal reprimand or dismissal. The complainant will be advised in general terms of the outcome. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times to protect the complainant.

It is essential that employees may raise concerns without jeopardising employment, entitlements or general working conditions.

Any outsider with a grievance may report it to a member of the ACEC who is obliged to raise the matter with the ACEC as soon as possible to allow the complaint to be resolved quickly.

Types c), d) and e) may need referral to a higher authority than the ACEC - guidance on policy matters may be sought from the Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP). In cases where investigators wish to lodge an appeal, it is to be lodged direct with the Secretary, Department Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services.

The Secretary may investigate procedural matters, may request the ACEC to re-examine the matter or refer new information to the ACEC for consideration, but may not overrule a decision of the ACEC made on the basis of correct procedure in compliance with the legislation.

Where necessary, the Secretary may request the ACEC to seek further technical advice or may appoint an independent mediator to assist resolution of such matters.

All complaints are to be treated confidentially.