The NSW Department of Primary Industries, an Accredited Research Establishment under the NSW Animal Research Act 1985, operates four AECs:

- The NSW Fisheries AEC
- Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) AEC
- Orange AEC
- NSW Forests AEC (also used by the NSW Forests Corporation)

AECs are responsible for ensuring that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Animal Research Act 1985 and the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes - 8th Edition (the Code).

AECs are responsible to the Director-General through the Deputy Director-General, Agriculture NSW and the Director, Science/Chief Scientist. Accordingly, the AECs have the Director-General’s approval to act in accordance with these Terms of Reference, the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW), Animal Care and Protection Act 1986 (Qld), Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic) and the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes - 8th Edition.

AECs consider applications for animal research authorities (ARAs) from staff of NSW DPI and any other accredited research establishment with which a current Memorandum of Understanding exists.

**Responsibilities**

NSW DPI AECs must:

i) review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code (Clause 2.3.2 [i]).

ii) review applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities, including procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line, and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code (Clause 2.3.2 [ii]).

iii) conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code (Clause 2.3.2 [iii]).

iv) monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities (Clause 2.3.2 [iv]).

v) take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events (Clause 2.3.2 [v]).

vi) take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance (Clause 2.3.2 [vi]).

vii) approve guidelines for the care and use of animals (Clause 2.3.2 [vii]).

viii) provide advice and recommendations to NSW DPI (Clause 2.3.2 [viii]).

ix) report on its operations by providing an annual report to the Director Science, (Chief Scientist, NSW DPI) (Clause 2.3.2 [ix]).

x) maintain a record of all correspondence including new applications, renewal applications, final reports and minutes of meetings.
Membership

The Director Science, (Chief Scientist, NSW DPI) will appoint eight or more persons to each AEC, with at least two in each of the following categories to ensure a quorum:

Category A  A person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the institution’s activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge.

Category B  A suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the institution and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience. If the business of the AEC relates to the use of animals for teaching only, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed.

Category C  A person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution, and who is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, the person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and endorsement by, such an organisation.

Category D  A person not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their undergraduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

The Director Science, (Chief Scientist, NSW DPI) may appoint a person or persons in the category “Other”. Such persons will normally be management staff within the Department (Clause 2.2.6).

- Each person nominated in any category must receive approval from the Animal Research Review Panel before appointment.
- Procedures must include the declaration of interests by prospective members and the management of conflicts of interest in making appointments.
- Before appointment, all members of the AEC must acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the terms of reference of the AEC and any other requirements (eg for confidentiality) required by NSW DPI (see Clauses 2.1.2 [iv] and 2.2.22).
- NSW DPI will ensure that AEC members undergo appropriate induction, and have access to appropriate education programs and resources.
- Terms of appointment are normally for four years after which time positions in categories A, C and D will be advertised. Incumbents may be reappointed. See Clause 2.2.18 (iv).

These Terms of Reference will be made publically available on DPI websites and such other places as the Department may decide.

SCOTT HANSEN
DIRECTOR GENERAL

4 NSW Department of Primary Industries, October 2015