



## WILDLIFE ETHICS COMMITTEE

# Complaints, grievances and non-compliance

## 1. Procedures for handling concerns and grievances

- 1.1. Notwithstanding the following grievance procedures adopted by the Wildlife Ethics Committee (the Committee), any member who suspects, that there has been a breach of legislation may exercise their right to report this directly to the appropriate state or territory authority.
- 1.2. Committee operations or rulings
  - 1.2.1. Grievances concerning members conduct, operations or decisions of the Committee should be discussed, in confidence, with the Executive Officer or the Chair.
  - 1.2.2. If the matter alleges professional misconduct the Chair or Deputy Chair will decide whether the matter is best referred back to the Committee or referred to the Chief Executive (CE) of the organisation by whom the researcher is employed.
  - 1.2.3. If any matter is referred to the CE, the Committee must be informed that this course of action has been initiated.
  - 1.2.4. An applicant may appeal any decision of the Committee may be appealed to the Minister responsible for administering the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (the Act) *in accordance with Section 26 of the Act*.
  - 1.2.5. Any ruling of the Minister responsible for administering the Act may be appealed to the Supreme Court, in accordance with Section 27 of the Act.
- 1.3. Care and use of animals
  - 1.3.1. Such concerns may be reported to the Committee Executive Officer.
  - 1.3.2. All complaints and concerns must be treated confidentially and sympathetically.
  - 1.3.3. The Chair must determine if:
    - 1.3.3.1. The complaint or concern is properly and fairly made
    - 1.3.3.2. The complaint or concern is valid.
  - 1.3.4. If the complaint or concern is found to be valid, the Chair may institute one or all of the following:

- 1.3.4.1. Consultation with the member, student, researcher or staff member who is the subject of the complaint or concern. This may be a private meeting involving the Chair, Executive Officer or a person nominated by the Chair, or it may be attendance at a meeting of the full Committee.
    - 1.3.4.2. Suspension of all further work on the project under review
    - 1.3.4.3. Suspension of all projects pertaining to the student or researcher under review
    - 1.3.4.4. Initiation of an unexpected adverse event investigation
    - 1.3.4.5. Solicitation of a veterinary opinion, treatment or euthanasia of the animal/animals in question
    - 1.3.4.6. Communication with other relevant animal ethics committees
    - 1.3.4.7. Report of the incident to the Institution, if the incident is deemed to be a matter of significant non-compliance.
  - 1.3.5. Written records must be kept of all deliberations, discussions and actions undertaken.
  - 1.3.6. The complaint or concern and any action arising from it must be reported to the Committee at the next full meeting.
- 1.4. External review
  - 1.4.1. An appeals process relating to the process for the quadrennial external review will be instituted by the CE, in consultation with the Chair of the Review Panel, the Chair of the Committee and the Manager of the DEW Animal Welfare Unit, when agreeing the terms of the external review.
- 1.5. Non-compliance
  - 1.5.1. Any event deemed to be a matter of non-compliance with the Code must be reported to the Executive Officer who shall bring the matter to the attention of the Chair.
  - 1.5.2. The Chair will investigate all allegations of non-compliance, consulting as indicated with the DEW Animal Welfare Unit, researchers or other members of the Committee.
  - 1.5.3. The Chair will then determine whether or not a non-compliance has occurred, and whether or not it is an administrative matter or impacts on animal welfare, and what subsequent actions or consequences are required.
  - 1.5.4. If the non-compliance has a significant impact on animal welfare, or is a repeated offence, the Chair must report the matter to the CE and to any other licensee impacted by either the non-compliance or the actions to be taken in response to it.
  - 1.5.5. If a matter of non-compliance also involves a breach of state legislation, the Chair must ensure that the relevant regulatory authority is informed.
  - 1.5.6. The Chair will report back to the Committee about any non-compliance investigations, findings and actions.
- 1.6. Disputes between the Committee and DEW
  - 1.6.1. Any dispute between the Committee and DEW must be reported by the Chair to the CE.

1.6.2. If the Chair and the CE are unable to resolve the dispute internally, external mediation will be organised by the CE.