

Australian Capital Territory

Animal Welfare (Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes) Code of Practice 2014 (No 1)

Disallowable Instrument DI2014—195

made under the

Animal Welfare Act 1992, Section 22 – (Approved code of practice)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 22 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* provides that the Minister may approve a code of practice relating to animal welfare.

This instrument approves the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013* (‘the Code’) as an approved Code of Practice under the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

The Code is prepared by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in consultation with key stakeholders. The Code was issued by the NHMRC on 26 June 2013 and has also been endorsed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia.

The Code was first produced by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 1969 with revisions undertaken in 1979, 1983, 1985, 1990, 1997, 2004 and 2013. Revisions take into account changing community views and scientific developments.

Purpose of the Code

The purpose of the Code is to promote the ethical, humane and responsible care and use of animals used for scientific purposes. The ethical framework and governing principles set out in the Code provide guidance for investigators, teachers, institutions, animal ethics committees and all people involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

An obligation to respect animals underpins the Code. This obligation brings with it a responsibility to ensure that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes is ethically acceptable, balancing whether the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved is justified by the potential benefits to humans, animals or the environment.

The use of animals for scientific purposes must have scientific or educational merit; must aim to benefit humans, animals or the environment; and must be conducted with integrity. When animals are used, the number of animals involved must be minimised, the wellbeing of the animals must be supported, and harm, including pain and distress, in those animals must be avoided or minimised.

Scope of the Code

The Code encompasses all aspects of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes where the aim is to acquire, develop or demonstrate knowledge or techniques in any area of science—for example, medicine, biology, agriculture, veterinary and other animal sciences, industry and teaching. It includes their use in research, teaching associated with an educational outcome in science, field trials, product testing, diagnosis, the production of biological products and environmental studies.

The Code applies throughout the animal's involvement in activities and projects, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing, husbandry, the use of the animal in a project, and the provisions for the animal at the completion of their use.

The Code applies to the care and use of all live non-human vertebrates and cephalopods.

All those involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes must be aware of the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation.

Structure of the Code

The sections of the 8th Edition of the Scientific Code are detailed below:

Section 1 – Governing principles

Section 1 describes the governing principles and ethical framework to guide decisions and actions of all those involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, including Animal Ethics Committees (AECs), which are institutions that use animals for scientific purposes. The application of these governing principles is further developed in subsequent sections of the Code.

Section 2 - Responsibilities

Section 2 describes the responsibilities of institutions, AECs investigators and animal carers. It also outlines responsibilities in situations involving more than one institution and/or AEC, and application to an AEC.

Section 3 – Animal wellbeing

Section 3 outlines the principles for supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes in terms of the animal's lifetime experience.

Section 4 – The care and use of animals for the achievement of educational outcomes in science

Section 4 covers the care and use of animals in teaching activities, where the 'scientific purpose' is to impart or demonstrate knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science.

Section 5 – Complaints and non-compliance

Section 5 describes responsibilities for addressing complaints and non-compliance related to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Section 6 – Independent external review of the operation of institutions

Section 6 describes responsibilities related to the independent external review of the operation of institutions.