The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) has been developed to provide the national and international communities with an appreciation of animal welfare arrangements in Australia and to outline directions for future improvements in the welfare of animals. It was jointly developed by national, state and territory governments, industry and the community. The production of the AAWS was coordinated by Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health in the Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry on behalf of the Primary Industries Standing Committee.


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Revised edition, 2008
ISBN 0 9757221 5 8

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Design: Design ONE
Print: New Millennium Print

Printed with vegetable based inks on stock which comprises 80% recycled fibre from post-consumer waste and 20% TCF pulp.
Introduction

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy has been developed to provide the national and international communities with an appreciation of animal welfare arrangements in Australia and to outline future directions for improvements in animal welfare.

The Strategy builds upon historic and existing animal welfare arrangements in Australia. It recognises the strong connections between animal welfare and animal health and production.

Six sectoral groups have been established to take forward priority tasks for companion animals, livestock and production animals, animals in the wild, aquatic animals, animals in research and training and animals used in sport, recreation, work and display.

Three expert groups were established to deal with cross sectoral issues, these being education and training, communications and information and coordination of animal welfare research.

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) was endorsed by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council in May 2004.

In the period between 2004 and 2008, significant tasks have been undertaken and achievements gained. Some of these achievements are:

- The formation of the AAWS Advisory Committee to oversee the shape and direction of the Strategy. This Committee works closely with the staff of the Animal Welfare Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

- The establishment of working groups for each of the animal sectors. These groups are responsible for implementation of the AAWS through the development and progression of robust and inclusive action plans for their sector.

- A National Implementation Plan (NIP) in consultation with key stakeholders and incorporates the sector specific plans to deliver the specific objectives under the Strategy. It provides a basis for strategy coordination and reporting.
Animals have intrinsic value
Stocktakes, including extensive research have been undertaken to determine the current situation in each of the sectors.

Stakeholders have identified the need for a national consistency in animal welfare arrangements. In response, DAFF has funded a review of current legislative implementation and regulatory arrangements in jurisdictions. This process has identified differences in operational and regulatory approaches. Recommendations for each state or territory (jurisdiction) to implement the agreed consistency will be considered in late 2008.

A Standards Reference Group has met several times and is nearing agreement to a Land Transport Standards and Regulatory Impact Statement.

The AAWS Advisory Committee established Research and Development (R&D) and Education and Training (E&T) Expert Groups to advise on these important areas in which all sectoral working groups have a common interest.

The E&T group has commissioned a review of animal welfare related education and training curricula with the aim of ensuring consistency, balanced and science-based content.

The R&D Group is considering the existing animal welfare R&D framework and capacity and will advise the Advisory Committee on how to best provide for delivery of these outcomes through the AAWS in a way that is harmonious within existing R&D frameworks.

The R&D Advisory Group considered a variety of options for delivering strategic animal welfare R&D under the AAWS. The central recommendation of its report is the establishment of an Animal Research Centre.

The cross sectoral Communications Strategy provides a framework that can be adapted and used by all stakeholders to promote key animal welfare messages. A number of elements of the Communications Strategy, including a dedicated web site and information materials, are underway.
AAWS has had and will continue to have a strong representation at international and national conferences, including the International Animal Welfare Conference, the International Poultry Congress, the Australasian Aquaculture Conference and the Australian Veterinary Association Conference.
1. Vision

The Strategy’s vision is that:

**The welfare of all animals in Australia is promoted and protected by the development and adoption of sound animal welfare standards and practices.**

2. Purpose

The Strategy provides direction for the development of future animal welfare policies, based on a national consultative approach and a firm commitment to high standards of animal welfare. It will facilitate the establishment of priorities that are consistent with agreed strategic goals and the revision of, and agreement on, acceptable standards. The Strategy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of key community, industry and government organisations.

3. Scope of the Strategy

The Strategy covers the care, uses and direct and indirect impacts of human activity on all sentient species of animals in Australia (see Figure 1). This includes animals used in research and teaching, animals used for the production of food and fibre and other products, companion and guide animals, animals used for recreation, entertainment and display, native and introduced wildlife and feral animals. The Strategy builds on the current animal welfare framework in Australia (See Attachment 1).

It also covers the welfare of animals transported to and from Australia according to the standards and guidelines of international organisations and bodies such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (Office International des Épizooties – OIE) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

It embraces a broad vision for the humane treatment of all sentient animals and provides a framework for sustainable improvements in animal welfare outcomes, based on scientific evidence and social, economic and ethical considerations. It reflects the high regard Australians place on the value, care and the well-being of animals. (See Attachment 1, p 26.)

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1 A sentient animal is one that has the capacity to have feelings and to experience suffering and pleasure. Sentience implies a level of conscious awareness.
The Strategy is aimed at the entire Australian community and all uses of animals.
The Strategy has direct relevance for the entire Australian community including, persons in charge of an animal, animal users, the veterinary profession, livestock producers, processors and transporters, animal welfare bodies, researchers and teachers, governing bodies of sport and recreation organisations, educational facilities, consumers, government agencies and harvesters.

The Strategy was developed with wide community consultation. Where specific action plans need to be established under the Strategy, key actions and responsibilities of stakeholders are being developed and agreed through consultation.

Figure 1. Australian Animal Welfare Strategy – building on strong foundations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the existing framework</th>
<th>Animals covered by the strategy:</th>
<th>Roles &amp; responsibilities addressed by the strategy:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Animals used for work, sport, recreation, or on display</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation/regulation</td>
<td>Animals in the wild</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-regulation/QA</td>
<td>Companion animals</td>
<td>Technical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National codes</td>
<td>Livestock/Production animals</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting/benchmarking</td>
<td>Aquatic animals</td>
<td>Jurisdictional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/training</td>
<td>Animals in research and teaching</td>
<td>Co-ordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community expectations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Driving Factors
Values • Science • Ethics • Culture • Education/Awareness Economics • Innovation • International developments

Cohesive national strategy
4. Goals

The Goals of the Strategy are to achieve:

1. A national approach and commitment to ensure high standards of animal welfare based on current approaches;

2. Sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on national and international benchmarks, scientific evaluation and research, taking into account changes in whole of community standards; and

3. Effective communication, education and training across all Australian community sectors to promote an improved understanding of animal welfare.
5. Objectives and Activities

The following objectives and activities have been developed for each goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1: Achieve a national approach and commitment to ensure high standards of animal welfare based on current approaches.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives:</strong> To ensure that administrative, legislative and planning mechanisms underly and support effective management of animal welfare in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Establish a shared understanding of respective roles and responsibilities across all relevant Australian, state, territory and local government agencies and non-government organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Facilitate the maintenance of effective animal welfare units in each jurisdiction, recognising inter-agency interests, to assist and coordinate the delivery of animal welfare advice, policy development and support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Facilitate the timely development, revision and implementation of codes of practice, standards and guidelines and legislation for the welfare of animals where scientific, social and industry developments justify changes being made to existing practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives:</strong> To facilitate improved consistency of legislation across states and territories for improved and sustainable animal welfare outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Promote the adoption of a harmonised approach to the development and application of clear, contemporary, adequate and consistent animal welfare legislation and codes of practice across all state, territory and local government jurisdictions, for appropriate and agreed outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Strategy is aimed at promoting an improved understanding of animal welfare
Objectives: To involve all stakeholders in ownership of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

Activities:
- Encourage the use of effective consultative and communication mechanisms to engage all animal use industries, including the livestock industries, the aquaculture and fishing industries, companion animal carers and the companion animal industry, recreational animal industries, the veterinary profession, researchers, community groups, animal welfare organisations, governments and the community in developing animal welfare policies, standards and education.

Objectives: To produce a concise outline of current processes as a basis for sustainable improvement.

Activities:
- Undertake a review of the existing animal welfare infrastructure, policies and programs in place in Australia.

Objectives: To ensure effective and timely implementation and monitoring of the Strategy.

Activities:
- Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) will assume lead responsibility for the monitoring, review and reporting on progress under the Strategy and will coordinate the development of an AAWS Implementation Plan in consultation with key stakeholders. This Plan will:
  - Incorporate specific action plans and nominated lead agencies;
  - Identify any additional resources and funding required to deliver the Plan; and
  - Provide a basis for national coordination of the Strategy and reporting on implementation progress.
- Maintain a nationally representative committee of key stakeholders on NCCAW to advise the Australian Government on developments under the Strategy to be authorised by Primary Industries Ministerial Council.
GOAL 2: Achieve sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on national and international benchmarks, scientific evaluation and research, taking into account changes in whole of community standards.

Objectives: To strengthen the current framework as a basis for enhancing the delivery of acceptable animal welfare outcomes.

Activities:
- Facilitate the development, collection and collation of national statistics on animal welfare standards as a basis to benchmark Australia's animal welfare outcomes.
- Promote acceptable animal welfare practices in the care and management of Australia’s wildlife.
- Promote the development and use of humane and effective methods to control pest animals in Australia.
- Expand Australia’s efforts to inform international bodies of our current standards for animal welfare through the development of readily available explanatory material outlining the animal welfare arrangements and achievements, in Australia.
- To contribute to the benchmarking of international animal welfare outcomes by assisting in the development of international standards through the World Organisation for Animal Health (Office International des Épizooties – OIE).

Objectives: To ensure formal processes for community involvement in the development and implementation of welfare standards.

Activities:
- Seek effective input from AWACs\(^2\), AECs\(^3\) and government bodies (including NHMRC\(^4\), CSIRO\(^5\)) with community inputs and other stakeholders across the spectrum of use of animals in Australia.

\(^2\) Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (in each state and territory)
\(^3\) Animal Ethics Committee
\(^4\) National Health and Medical Research Council
\(^5\) Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
**Objectives:** To maintain and improve the scientific basis for animal welfare standards.

**Activities:**
- Identify possible research and development needs and to encourage greater investment in research areas by industry and government through existing funding mechanisms.
- Explore options for funding and establish national animal welfare research priorities.

**Objectives:** To ensure that new knowledge gained through research on animal welfare is broadly communicated and adopted into national animal welfare standards.

**Activities:**
- Establish a process whereby welfare research is continually monitored and, where applicable, sustainable standards can be updated.

**GOAL 3:** Achieve effective communication, education and training across the whole community to promote an improved understanding of animal welfare.

**Animal handling skills and understanding**

**Objectives:** To enhance the attitudes, skills and knowledge of animal carers and handlers and all other people whose actions have a potential effect/impact on animals such as wildlife or introduced animals by developing, where appropriate, national training competencies and standards.

**Activities:**
- Promote consultation and the dissemination of information on animal care and encourage the adoption of best practice standards in all situations where there is potential for human to animal interaction.
- Promote and facilitate the inclusion of animal welfare studies in the curricula of educational institutions.
The Strategy promotes sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on national and international benchmarks.
- Develop and promote national competency based training\(^6\) and other educational programs for the improvement of skills of people using animals where existing training programs are shown to be deficient.

- Where necessary, develop, promote and deliver appropriate education and training as part of quality assurance programs for animal care, production, use and management that satisfy relevant Australian standards.

### Community awareness

**Objectives:** To promote ownership and responsibility by the whole of the Australian community of the benefits of the Strategy.

**Activities:**

- Publicise the existence and content of existing animal welfare legislation, model codes of practice, position statements, standards and guidelines utilising appropriate media.

- Create national internet sources for national, state/territory and local animal welfare information and establish a process of national consultation with the general community on nationally important welfare issues.

### International

**Objectives:** To improve the availability of information on Australia's standards of animal welfare performance internationally.

**Activities:**

- Inform international bodies of Australia’s policies and standards for animal welfare through the development of readily available explanatory material outlining existing animal welfare arrangements.

**Objectives:** To monitor developments in animal welfare in other countries.

**Activities:**

- Disseminate relevant information to appropriate organisations throughout Australia.

\(^6\) Nationally accredited training is endorsed by the National Quality Council, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
6. Benefits

The benefits of the Strategy are:

- Achievement of optimum, sustainable welfare outcomes for animals;
- Development of a clear and consistent national direction on animal welfare;
- Focus and guidance for future resource decisions to protect and promote sustainable animal welfare;
- Readily identifiable and clearly defined national standards;
- Demonstration and promotion of Australia’s standards and performance against domestic and international benchmarks;
- Improved identification of research priorities for Australia, also taking account of international developments; and

7. Defining Australia’s approach to animal welfare

All animals have intrinsic value. The Australian approach to animal welfare requires that animals under human care or influence are healthy, properly fed and comfortable and that efforts are made to improve their well-being and living conditions. In addition, there is a responsibility to ensure that animals which require veterinary treatment receive it and that if animals are to be destroyed, it is done humanely.

This responsibility towards animals does not necessarily extend to intervention in the management of individual wild animals and their populations, in which animals suffer or die as part of natural processes.

Australia’s approach to animal welfare, through adoption of the Strategy, is to ensure that due consideration is accorded to a multitude of factors (including science, practicability, culture, economics, ethics, societal values of the whole community, education and awareness, innovation and international developments). These considerations are relevant to the establishment and promotion of sound animal welfare standards.
An Australian Parliamentary Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare established in 1983 was the first forum to recognise the complexity surrounding animal welfare issues. It provided a meeting place for all points of view and allowed for structured debate and the emergence of relevant and identifiable ideas.

The following comprehensive dialogues and debates culminated in the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and associated National Plan which continues to operate in the open, consultative and consensual nature expected by Australia’s democratic and pluralist society.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

All people who have animals in their care have a responsibility to ensure that they have adequate knowledge, training and skills to apply in the protection of the welfare of animals. These people have an enduring obligation to seek expert assistance where necessary to ensure the welfare of animals.

Individuals and groups of people with specific responsibilities include:

- Individual animal owners and users
- Animal industry groups
- Community and specialist animal welfare groups
- Local, state and Commonwealth governments.

**Individual animal owners and animal users have a responsibility to:**

- Fulfil a duty of care for animals in their charge and have responsibility as members of the community for the welfare of animals.

- This duty of care includes:
  - Understand, support, promote and apply animal welfare best practice contained in relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and quality assurance programs; and
  - Ensure that their animals do not impact adversely on other animals.
The Strategy recognises the intimate connection that exists between animal welfare and animal health and production.
Animal Industry groups have a responsibility to:

- Represent their interests and responsibilities on animal welfare issues in appropriate and relevant forums in an appropriate way.
- Provide their members with factual information on animal care and welfare and encourage the adoption of best practice, national codes and standards.
- Participate in the development of codes, policies and programs, aimed at maintaining sustainable animal welfare outcomes in Australia.
- Sponsor or undertake research or information gathering to advance knowledge of animal welfare, and application of that knowledge.

Community animal welfare groups have a responsibility to:

- Raise awareness of animal welfare issues and promote responsibility towards the welfare of animals.
- Represent their interests and responsibilities on animal welfare issues in relevant forums in an appropriate way.
- Provide their members and the community with factual information on animal care and welfare and encourage the adoption of best practice.
- Participate in the development of codes, policies and programs, aimed at maintaining high standards of sustainable animal welfare in Australia.
- Sponsor information gathering to advance knowledge of animal welfare, and application of that knowledge.
- Deliver the enforcement of animal welfare legislation through inspectors authorised by governments.
Governments' responsibility:

Australia has three tiers of government each of which may have animal welfare responsibilities, although these vary between jurisdictions. If the Strategy is to be successful, there must be effective reporting and coordinating mechanisms between the different tiers of government.

Under the Federal Constitution, States and Territories have the primary jurisdiction for animal welfare within Australia. That is to:

- Prepare and enforce animal welfare legislation.
- Provide suitable institutional and legislative frameworks as well as appropriate policies and programs and to promote and make these readily accessible to the public.

The Australian Government has specific powers in relation to external trade and treaties that encompasses some animal welfare issues. That is:

- Represent Australia’s position on animal welfare.
- Provide legislation with regard to the import and export of animals and animal products and promote these to the public.
- Coordinate the development of animal welfare strategies, across local, regional, state and national levels where these developments are justified.
- Ensure appropriate coordination and communication between different jurisdictions.
State/Territory and Australian Governments have a responsibility to:

- Work toward consistency of approach in State and Territory legislation;

- Identify, encourage and resource appropriate scientific research activities to provide scientific understanding of animal welfare issues that will underpin developments in implementation of improved and sustainable animal welfare;

- Enforce agreed animal welfare standards and encourage best husbandry practices;

- Contribute to the development of animal welfare strategies across local, regional, state and national levels;

- Facilitate consultation with all stakeholders on animal welfare issues and the ongoing development and revision of acceptable animal welfare outcomes through legislation, codes of practice, standards and quality assurance programs based on sound scientific evidence; and

- Develop and enhance a nationally coordinated approach to emergency animal welfare planning, preparedness and response.

Local governments have responsibility for some areas of domestic and unwanted animal control and public health that has a significant impact on animal welfare. This includes the provision of feedback to state/territory governments in order to change legislation and for the promotion and maintenance of responsible animal ownership.
The Strategy aims to develop effective communication, education and training in animal welfare across the whole community.
9. Progression and Strategy’s Implementation

This Strategy sets broad national goals on animal welfare and provides a framework for sustainable, scientifically based and acceptable animal welfare outcomes. This process is undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders.

The National Implementation Plan incorporates specific action plans as required with nominated lead agencies. It also identifies any additional resources and funding required to implement the Strategy. It provides a basis for national co-ordination of the Strategy with the associated reporting on progress of the implementation process.

Under the Strategy, the Primary Industries Ministerial Council assumes responsibility to monitor, review and report implementation progress. The National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare, the nationally representative committee of key stakeholders, will continue to advise the Australian Government on developments under the Strategy.

Australia has a strong existing framework to establish and enforce acceptable animal welfare outcomes and has contemporary and comprehensive animal welfare legislation and enforcement at national, state, territory and local levels. National codes of practice and audited industry quality assurance programs are also in place and provide a sound basis for the humane and responsible use and treatment of animals. The Strategy aims to promote and refine the framework used to protect the welfare of animals.

Figure 2 outlines the various elements present in the Australian community that combine to achieve a framework to deliver sustainable standards in animal welfare.

Figure 2. Australia's current animal welfare framework
10.1 Legislation

Under current constitutional arrangements, legislative responsibility for animal welfare within Australia rests primarily with state and territory governments. All States and Territories within the Commonwealth of Australia have contemporary and comprehensive animal welfare legislation. Local governments have legislation relating to the management of companion animals. The Australian (Federal) Government has responsibility for trade and international agreements.

Australian Government legislation covers the welfare of animals involved in the live animal export trade and animals processed at export registered slaughter establishments. It also has overall responsibility for the welfare of kangaroos killed for commercial purposes (State Management Plans are approved by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts), for the conduct of introduced animal management under the DEH National Threat Abatement Plans and for animal welfare aspects of wild animal management and animal research on Australian Government lands.

Another role of the Australian Government will be to have input to the international negotiations on animal welfare and the development of international standards. It also negotiates treaties (e.g. the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora - CITES) and ensures compliance with those treaties it signs.

Protection of Australia’s environment is important for all Australians and for the welfare of our unique and diverse native wildlife.

10.2 Codes of Practice

National standards and model codes of practice for animal welfare in the livestock industries have been developed over the past 25 years through government bodies in consultation with industry groups and animal welfare organisations.
The Strategy sets broad national goals on animal welfare and provides a framework for sustainable, scientifically based and acceptable animal welfare outcomes.
National Model Codes of Practice provide minimum standards and specify the duty of care to be given to animals. They are adopted throughout Australia, either directly by reference in legislation or indirectly in the development of State and Territory codes to meet specific regional needs. The Codes are used as a resource for the education of animal carers and the development of training and awareness programs.

They also provide a basis for animal welfare standards within audited industry quality assurance programs and can be used in legal proceedings. Additionally, there are more locally-based codes relevant to companion animals, animal management and animal control.

There are periodic reviews of standards to include advances in animal welfare science, changing community expectations and evolving industry practices and to consider the implications for Australia of overseas developments. There are continuing efforts to promote awareness of the Codes and to determine ways to ensure adoption of these minimum standards.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) and its members have developed some benchmarks for animal welfare within the framework of performance standards for the Australian animal health system.

The use of animals in research and teaching is determined by the Australian Code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (Scientific Code), which describes ethical guidelines and establishes institutional Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) to make the necessary ethical evaluations. The resulting process seeks to protect the welfare of animals and, at the same time, allow their continued use in biomedical, veterinary, agricultural and environmental research so that people and animals can benefit from advances in human and animal health and better management of the environment.

Research or teaching projects using animals are performed only when the value of the envisaged outcomes outweigh the possible effects on the welfare of the animal. AECs apply the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (3Rs), to minimise the number of animals used, diminish impacts on animals and to achieve an acceptable balance.
The Scientific Code has been developed through a consultative process involving government, welfare groups, researchers and teachers. The Code is referred to in state and territory legislation. As a consequence, the use of animals in research and teaching must comply with the ethical requirements of the Code and the legal requirements set out in statute law.

10.3 Reporting Performance and Benchmarking

Australia recognises the essential role of science in animal welfare, to provide evidence and concepts that support value based decisions, as a foundation for animal welfare standards and innovation and as a bridge to ‘best-practice’ animal husbandry. Performance standards for livestock animal welfare have already been established as a core component of the national animal health system in line with approaches in some other countries. Results of an examination by the Australian Government, state and territory governments and twelve livestock industries of the level of compliance against these measures will lead to the establishment of agreed national benchmarks. The development of an enhanced national reporting system will be an important action arising from the implementation of the Strategy.

10.4 Auditable Industry Quality Assurance programs & self-regulation

While legislation is essential, Australia encourages the development of quality assurance programs in the animal industries as an additional means to deliver acceptable animal welfare outcomes. Such industry self-regulation is an important and complementary development to the existing regulatory framework. The Strategy encompasses local animal welfare strategies developed by individual animal industries in Australia working collaboratively with state and local government jurisdictions, and with local animal welfare organisations to develop appropriate animal welfare strategies on a regional basis. This is important in Australia where climatic conditions and farming industries vary widely between tropical and temperate areas that are separated by very great distances.
10.5 Education and training

Australia has a competency-based training and assessment system that delivers training courses under the National Training Quality Council, of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training. National standards are set for training and education qualifications at all levels of the community – primary and secondary school, industry, technical and university education systems. These national standards are applied in courses that educate and train persons who are to use, manage or treat animals. As further welfare standards are developed or revised, this system can be used to competently deliver appropriate training.

Australia promotes the training and accreditation of stock handlers and animal carers. The livestock industries have developed a range of courses and workshops to increase the skills of people working with the various species. These courses are provided through on-farm learning, seminars and workshops and through Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges. The community sector receives companion animal education through the provision of educational services by some government agencies and non-government educational institutions and organisations and a range of distributed educational material. Primary and secondary education sectors have the capacity to provide information on the use of animals in Australia and humane animal welfare practices.

10.6 Research and development

Research and development in Australia is currently carried out through a range of programs and institutions, with funding derived from both public and private sectors. There are established national coordination and funding arrangements in certain sectors such as the livestock production sector. Livestock industries contribute funds through statutory levies and receive matching ‘dollar for dollar’ funding from the Australian Government when spent on approved research and development projects. Industry research and development corporations manage the process of selection, funding and management of eligible research projects in line with agreed annual operational plans to deliver industry objectives and priorities.
The Strategy promotes a national consultative approach and a firm commitment to high standards of animal welfare.
Animal welfare research, complementing that undertaken overseas but aimed at specific issues within Australia, is carried out within this framework. In addition, Australia is well-placed to access research and development outcomes from overseas animal welfare studies carried out in a wide range of countries. However, many of these studies are inappropriate to Australian conditions and specific research projects are therefore undertaken in this country.

10.7 International responsibilities and activities

Australia is a major producer and exporter of animal products and live animals. The Strategy highlights the need for domestic and international benchmarking of animal welfare outcomes as currently being discussed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Australia has been actively engaged in the establishment of national benchmarks for animal welfare and will continue to promote these Australian standards in relevant international forums and organisations. Australia conforms with all international conventions on endangered species, including the CITES requirements covering trade. Australia has also been working with other international bodies such as the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) on issues such as the development of a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare.

The OIE is currently developing scientifically based animal welfare standards in line with the OIE Guiding Principles as outlined below:

- There is a critical relationship between animal health and animal welfare;
- The internationally recognised ‘five freedoms’ (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in animal welfare;
- The internationally recognised ‘three Rs’ (reduction in numbers of animals, refinement of experimental methods and replacement of animals with non-animal techniques) provide valuable guidance for the use of animals in science;
The scientific assessment of animal welfare involves diverse elements which need to be considered together, and that selecting and weighing these elements often involves value-based assumptions which should be made as explicit as possible;

The use of animals in agriculture and science, and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people;

The use of animals carries with it a duty to ensure the welfare of such animals to the greatest extent practicable;

Improvements in farm animal welfare can often improve productivity and hence lead to economic benefits; and

Equivalent outcomes (performance criteria), rather than identical systems (design criteria), be the basis for comparison of animal welfare standards and guidelines.

Australia will take these into account in developing its vision, international policies and input to relevant international goals for animal welfare.

10.8 Community Consultation

Ongoing and broad consultation is a major element of the AAWS. Consultation is focussed on, and involves government, animal users, the veterinary profession, animal welfare groups, and the community in general, is ongoing. There is review and continuing development of industry animal welfare Codes of Practice. Other processes include the conduct of Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) at research and teaching institutions, state and territory and Australian Government Animal Welfare Advisory Committees (AWACs) and a national structure of ministerial committees for coordination of policy development and implementation that considers animal welfare policy development issues.