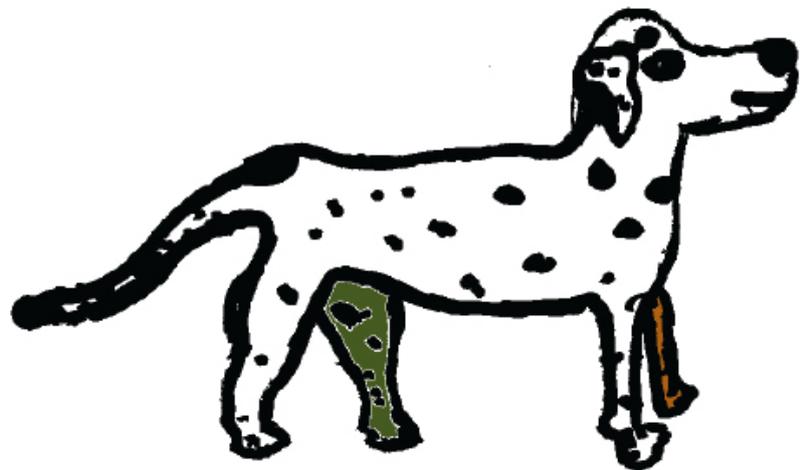


AUSTRALIAN
ANIMAL
WELFARE
STRATEGY



Stage 1 of developing
a framework for animal
welfare education
in Australia
2009

Scarlet Consulting Australasia
CM Communications



AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY

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The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is a national partnership between governments, industries and the community to improve animal welfare for all Australian animals. For more information visit www.daff.gov.au/aaws.

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Drawings by primary students from Canberra Grammar School.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stage 1 of 'Developing a Framework for Animal Welfare Education in Australia' involved collecting data from teachers active in classroom teaching regarding their perspectives on:

- the place for animal welfare education within the school curriculum, and
- the resources needed and the level of support required.

The AAWS E&T Working Group, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), engaged consultants Mal Brown and Carolyn Munckton to run a series of focus groups with primary school teachers in Victoria, NSW and South Australia. In total 43 people were engaged with this project including:

- face-to-face focus groups with 35 primary teachers
- interviews and discussions with eight other people including teachers, external education program providers and curriculum development specialists.

DAFF has indicated that the next stage in developing a framework for animal welfare education in Australia will be to conduct an online quantitative survey with teachers. The findings and opportunities identified from this Stage 1 report should be considered in conjunction with the results from this quantitative survey. It is planned that the findings and opportunities from Stage 1 will inform the development of the survey.

The consultants found that although there are a number of hurdles involved with improving animal welfare education and training in primary schools across Australia, when discussed in depth, there is considerable interest in the issue from teachers.

Discussions and focus groups revealed that teachers have considerable flexibility within the curriculum to incorporate topics that are either student-initiated, adapted to what's happening locally or in the news, or are initiatives from their own area of interest. This potentially allows for the incorporation of animal welfare education provided the teachers are given access to appropriate resources.

However, there is currently limited scope for professional development for 'topic areas' such as animal welfare. Teachers undertake a maximum of about 4-5 days of professional development per year and it mostly focuses on learning strategies and running and managing a classroom. Teachers indicated that there is very limited participation in professional development about subject content. They mostly participate in professional development focused on pedagogy - how students' best learn.

The majority of teacher participants favoured the development of a short 'general' unit of work on animal welfare (either a 2-3 week unit or a 4-6 week unit of work). This would need to include a teacher's guide showing clearly where it would fit with their state curriculum for teachers to incorporate it into their classroom work. The teachers also indicated that the concept of the Five Freedoms and the six AAWS sectors would provide an appropriate framework for such a unit of work.

It is important to note that a national curriculum framework is under development. This will potentially bring the curriculum taught in states and territories into line and provides an important opportunity for the AAWS.

The three main opportunities for the AAWS identified in this project are:

- The AAWS E&T Working Group liaise with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority which is developing the National Curriculum Framework to explore how animal welfare could be included.
- The AAWS E&T Working Group contact the Australian Academy of Science to discuss the development of a unit of work on animal welfare for incorporation into 'Primary Connections'.

- The AAWS E&T Working Group considers the development of a short primary curriculum unit on animal welfare that includes a poster series based around the Five Freedoms and the six AAWS sectors.

Key findings and additional opportunities are explained in more detail in the next five pages.

KEY FINDINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Curriculum frameworks and jurisdictions

Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia have different curriculum frameworks – as do the other Australian states and territories. This means that developing curriculum resources, and increasing the likelihood that teachers will use them, currently requires matching the resources to nine different curricula.

However, a national curriculum framework is under development. This will potentially bring the curriculum taught in states and territories into line and provides an important opportunity for the AAWS.

On 28 May 2009 the new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) became operational. Its charter is to develop a world-class kindergarten to year 12 curriculum; a national assessment program that measures students' progress; and a national data collection and reporting program. The Federal Minister for Education announced the composition of the new ACARA Board on 3 June 2009. The Authority will be led by a 13 member Board of Directors made up of experts nominated by each of the Australian and State and Territory Governments as well as the Catholic and Independent school sectors.¹

Opportunity: That the AAWS E&T Working Group write to the new ACARA Board Chair, Professor Barry McGaw, informing the Board of the AAWS 'animal welfare in the curriculum' initiative and seeking support for the inclusion of animal welfare in the national curriculum.

2. Primary Connections

'Primary Connections' is a partnership between the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). 'Primary Connections' promotes linking the teaching of science with that of literacy to enrich the learning experience for students. The initiative also aims to enhance primary school teachers' confidence and competence for teaching science.

By the end of 2008 the initiative had published a suite of 19 curriculum units spanning all years of primary school, trained 400 Professional Learning Facilitators across the country, undertaken ongoing research and evaluation, and developed an Indigenous perspective.

The national professional development program is an opportunity for the AAWS. For example, South Australia is about to embark on a major roll-out across the state. All South Australian teachers will have access to 'Primary Connections' over the next 2-3 years. In South Australia there are 7,500 primary teachers and so far 1,500 have done Primary Connections professional development.²

The units most relevant to Animal Welfare would be: Life and Living – Early Stage 1 Staying Alive and Stage 1 Schoolyard Safari.

If designing an Animal Welfare unit, there is a unit planner on the website.

Opportunity: That the AAWS E&T Working Group write to Shelly Peers, Managing Director of Australian Academy of Science (or Acting MD, Robyn Bull) to explore opportunities for a unit of animal welfare to be developed as part of the 'Primary

¹ www.acara.edu.au

² Jan Brooks, Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia, pers comm., June 2009

Connections' initiative and rolled out with the current plan for teacher professional development nationally.

3. Teachers and flexibility with the curriculum

Most teachers indicated that they have considerable flexibility within the curriculum to incorporate topics that are either student-initiated, adapted to what's happening locally or in the news, or are initiatives from their own area of interest. This potentially allows for the incorporation of animal welfare education provided the teachers are given access to both appropriate resources and professional development (PD).

However, teachers indicated that there is currently limited scope for professional development for 'topic areas' such as animal welfare. Teachers undertake a maximum of about 4-5 days of professional development per year and it mostly focuses on learning strategies and running and managing a classroom. Teachers indicated that there is very limited participation in professional development about subject content. They mostly participate in PD on pedagogy (how students' best learn).

4. Animal welfare in the curriculum

The majority of teachers who participated in the focus groups favoured the development of a short 'general' unit of work on animal welfare (either a 2-3 week unit or a 4-6 week unit of work). This would currently need to include a teacher's guide showing clearly where it would fit with their state curriculum, for it to be of interest to them. The teachers also indicated that the concept of the Five Freedoms and the six AAWS sectors would provide an appropriate framework for such a unit of work. (One Grade 4 teacher spends a term on the topic of food and where it comes from. The students go on an annual excursion to a local farm. The teacher indicated that a 4-6 week general animal welfare unit would ideally complement this topic).

It is not clear from the focus groups where animal welfare might best fit in the primary school curriculum. Whilst some teachers indicated a preference for a discrete unit of work that could be slotted into a particular, relevant topic taught in their classroom (e.g. where does food come from), other teachers requested some general resource materials (principles) that could be incorporated across a range of existing topics and learning outcomes. One teacher said "Animal welfare to me as an issue is a bit like bullying. I don't teach bullying week two of term one. It is an issue that I would integrate throughout the whole year."

The Victorian Responsible Pet Ownership Program (RPOP) provides a good example of how to develop 'age-specific' resource materials that focus less on content and more on pedagogy. In the early primary years, messages are reinforced through song and rhyme (e.g. staying safe around dogs). Whereas in the later primary years there is a greater focus on enquiry (e.g. How do our laws deal with the issue of unwanted pets?)

Many rural teachers stated, "city kids and country kids are different". One teacher indicated that the local (rural) demographic had a good understanding of the concept of paddock to plate. This is not necessarily so in cities. Therefore different strategies may be needed for rural/regional students and metropolitan students.

Opportunity: That the AAWS E&T Working Group facilitates the development of a primary curriculum unit on animal welfare that includes a poster series based around the Five Freedoms and the six AAWS sectors.

5. Teachers' views of educational resources and programs

In larger schools, the school librarian is a valuable resource for the AAWS program. Primary school teachers regularly use 'library kits or topic boxes' put together by the school librarian. One opportunity exists to provide the librarian with a teacher's guide and a range of existing external resources, rather than create new AAWS resource materials.

Some librarians indicated that they set up and maintain live animal displays that are very popular with students. Responsible students are rostered to care for the animals. The librarians we spoke with indicated that there is an additional opportunity to invite guest specialists to 'lunchtime library sessions' who can communicate information about animal welfare.

Participating teachers were critical of lists of web-based resources that are not kept up-to-date. They found it frustrating to direct students to a particular URL only to find that it no longer existed (or when they went to websites that they had researched in previous years and prepared lessons around). The teachers said they do not have the time to check all URLs prior to directing students. If AAWS was to develop an on-line directory of appropriate animal welfare related websites, it must be kept up-to-date or teachers will lose interest.

External education providers are useful for teachers and generally well used and accepted, particularly where there is no cost involved. However, teachers indicated that it was often an expensive option for a school, and not good practice, to rely on external providers. It is far better to equip the teachers to cover the topic in balanced way.

The participating teachers were generally unaware of the AAWS and/or specific animal welfare resource materials. Programs such as RPOP and SPOT are known, but not by all teachers.

6. How important is animal welfare as an issue among many issues?

At the beginning of focus groups, teachers were asked to rank 11 issues/topics in terms of their importance in classroom teaching. The overall result of the TOP ISSUES ranking exercise is outlined in Table 1. The full results are presented in Appendix 3 and have been broken down into three age-related groupings (Teachers of Prep to Year 2, Years 3-4 and Years 5-6) and a fourth grouping of specialist teachers (e.g. special education, librarians).

Table 1: Overall results for primary teacher’s ratings of a range of issues and how important they are in their classroom. (n=30*)

Use a scale 1-5 where:

1 = extremely unimportant

5 = extremely important

Ranking	Issue	Mean
1	Bullying	4.82
2	Road Safety	4.33
3	Drought/water conservation	4.28
4	Recycling	4.13
5	Water safety	4.20
6	Climate Change	3.63
7	Obesity	3.63
8	Drugs	3.60
9	Bike Safety	3.43
10	Animal Welfare	3.27
11	Dog bite prevention	2.87

*Not all teachers completed the worksheet to rate a range of issues and their importance in the classroom. For example, some teachers had bus supervision immediately after school and joined the focus group after it had started.

At one school, and after the consultants had made a presentation about animal welfare (based around the Five Freedoms and the six AAWS sectors), one teacher said, “Could I have my sheet back, I would like to rate animal welfare higher than I did.”

7. Teachers and the use of animals in schools

Animals in the classroom provide hands-on opportunities for learning about animal welfare and the exercise becomes immediate and accessible. Many teachers raised as an issue the amount of paperwork involved in complying with state legislation regarding the use of animals in research and teaching and adherence with the Code of Practice. It was particularly valuable to have Geoff Dandie, Executive Officer of ANZCCART, attend and explain the process to the participants in the South Australian focus groups.

In South Australia, many primary schools that don't have animals on site full-time borrow animals from the Nature Education Centre (NEC) in Adelaide – a centre established by science teachers who wanted schools to have access to animals for studying science. Schools become members of the NEC for a small fee and can borrow a variety of animals. The borrowing period is usually 2-4 weeks and they can borrow as many times during the year as they wish - depending on the availability of the animal/s they are interested in. All animals are returned to the NEC during school holidays so there is no requirement for schools to care for animals during when no teaching occurs.

The Animal Ethics Committee, Department of Education and Children’s Services, South Australia approves the Nature Education Centre. Schools need to apply for approval from the AEC to borrow animals from the NEC. Forms are available for download from the NEC website. According to the Animal Ethics Committee’s Executive Officer, last year 140 SA primary schools had membership with the NEC. However, currently there are only 45 approvals for SA primary schools to borrow from the NEC. NEC has an agreement with the AEC that it will not loan any animals to schools unless they have AEC approval. The EO suggests that the paperwork involved with the new 2009 approval process may have impacted on the borrowing of animals from the NEC.

Geoff Dandie said that he found the sessions provided a clearer picture of how ANZCCART might set up proposed professional development sessions for teachers. In

addition, Geoff informed the consultants that ANZCCART has been working on a project aimed at senior secondary students. The particular unit of work looks at the debate surrounding the scientific use of animals and tries to put forward both the arguments for and against as well as the importance of having a balanced debate and diametrically opposed positions. Geoff has started looking at the idea of poster-style material for primary classes, but this is in the early stage of development.

8. Relevance of the Code

After one of the South Australian focus groups some teachers again raised the issue regarding the "sudden need to work within the Code". Geoff Dandie said that this is far from sudden, but there certainly has been a period of awakening in parallel with, or as a result of, the process of triennial reviews of AEC operation which came in with the current (7th Edition) Code.

With the exception of NSW and possibly Queensland, where the system may still be imperfect but certainly appears to be far more functional (and this probably reflects the level of government funding and infrastructure available in those areas), Geoff suspects South Australia is probably a pretty close to "average" case study.

According to Geoff there is an urgent need to implement an education/information program from Ministers right down to teachers. Ministerial staff need to understand that one AEC that only meets four times a year cannot properly service every classroom with animals in it, in every public school in the State. The same goes for the independent and Catholic schools' AEC.

The education program then needs to work through AEC members, school principals and contact persons, and then teachers. At the same time, trainee teachers need to be fully educated about the AEC system and processes in terms of their responsibilities, the protection it offers them, and, most importantly, using the Code as a resource.

As a part of the revision of the Code of Practice - moving towards the 8th Edition (which has recently started), Geoff suggests that we need to accept that the current code has been written with Research Institutions and Tertiary teaching in mind, but thrust onto pre-tertiary education as well by legislation in every State and Territory. We need to seriously think about reworking Section 6 with primary and secondary schools in mind as well.

INTRODUCTION

The AAWS Education & Training (E&T) Working Group is developing a Framework for Animal Welfare Education in Australia. Stage 1 of this project sought to gather information from primary school teachers to gain an appreciation of current levels of animal welfare education and the limitations or difficulties in introducing animal welfare education into classrooms.

The AAWS E&T Working Group, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) engaged consultants Mal Brown and Carolyn Munckton to run a series of focus groups with primary school teachers in Victoria, NSW and South Australia. This follows on from two projects undertaken by the consultants for the E&T Working Group – a comprehensive stocktake of Australian education and training in animal welfare (2007) and an international benchmarking report (2008).

Specifically this 2009 new project focussed on:

- collecting data from teachers active in classroom teaching regarding their perspectives on
 - the place for animal welfare education within the school curriculum, and
 - the resources needed and the level of support required.

Although the consultants had some difficulty in setting up focus groups in NSW, by early July they had successfully run five focus groups with 35 primary teachers in three states – Victoria, NSW and South Australia. This included teachers from public schools and independent schools and also a church school that has set up its curriculum in line with the International Baccalaureate. The consultants also interviewed a number of educational experts and observed two sessions of the Victorian Responsible Pet Ownership.

This report summarises the key findings from the focus groups and key points from discussions with a range of educational experts – principals, educational program developers, state curriculum policy officers, people involved with animal ethics committee and animal used in research and teaching.

This report has outlined a number of opportunities for the AAWS based on the key findings. The AAWS E&T Working Group has indicated that Stage 2 of developing the Framework is to undertake quantitative surveying of teachers in order to gather more information that will inform and guide this framework. The key findings in this report should be considered in conjunction with any results and findings from the quantitative survey.

METHODOLOGY

The consultants interviewed a total of 43 people for this project. This included face-to-face focus groups with 35 primary teachers in three states – Victoria, NSW and South Australia, as well as interviews and discussions with eight other people including teachers, external education program providers and curriculum development specialists.

Victoria

1. A group of primary school teachers in rural Victoria – Girton College Junior School (an independent school), Bendigo, 25 May 2009.
2. A group of primary school teachers in rural Victoria – Maryborough Education Centre, 1 June 2009.
3. Visits to schools and kindergartens and discussions with teachers and presenters that participate in the Responsible Pet Ownership Program. These visits were primarily to observe the education program in action.
 - Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School, 26 May 2009
 - Kangaroo Flat Pre-school, 26 May 2009.
4. Interview with the principal of a small rural public school that currently participates in the Responsible Pet Ownership Program.
5. Discussions with coordinators of the Victorian Responsible Pet Ownership Program.

NSW

6. A group of primary school teachers in rural NSW – Jindera Public School and Burrumbuttock Public School, 8 July 2009.
7. Discussions with RSPCA NSW Education Officer.

South Australia

8. A group of primary school teachers from a metropolitan Adelaide school that is working towards International Baccalaureate (IB) accreditation in August 2009 – St John's Lutheran Junior School, 9 June 2009.
9. A mixed group of primary school teachers from metropolitan Adelaide – St Peter's College Junior School (an independent school) and North Adelaide Primary School, 10 June 2009.
10. Interview with Jan Brooks, Policy and Program Officer, Science, Curriculum Services, Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia. Jan is a member of the National Curriculum Advisory Group.
11. Interview with Anna Ucinck, Executive Officer, Animal Ethics Committee, Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia.

The consultants also approached the NSW SPOT program about organising a focus group with primary teachers who have been involved with SPOT (Safe Pets Out There). It was not possible to get this group up and running. As an alternative, the consultants approached RSPCA NSW, but although they were supportive and willing to help it wasn't possible to organise a focus group before the end of second term.

Conducting the focus groups

The consultants developed questions for each focus group that concentrated on two main discussion areas:

- general questions about the curriculum and teaching resources
- specific questions about the teaching of animal welfare (in each particular state).

As an introduction to each focus group, and in order to gain some idea of how important teachers view animal welfare as a topic in the primary level classroom, the participating

teachers were asked to view a list of 11 topics and to rank them in terms of their importance (1-5 scale ranking). The results of this exercise are shown in Table 1.

Mal Brown facilitated the discussion in the focus groups. After exploring general issues around the curriculum and teaching resources he made a short introductory presentation about animal welfare and the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). He introduced teachers to the Five Freedoms and outlined the six AAWS sectors using photos and anecdotes that captured the attention of the participants. He also briefly explained the two AAWS projects in which the consultants had been involved and introduced samples of the range of resource materials that are available on websites.

The consultants then explored with participants the issue of animal welfare in the curriculum. All comments were recorded and key issues are presented in this report.

Project documentation

Project Overview

To explain the project and to seek schools' involvement with focus groups the consultants developed a 2-page introduction and overview of the project. The E&T Working Group Chair and the DAFF Project Manager endorsed the document before distribution (see Appendix 1).

Focus Group Outline & Questions

The consultants prepared an outline of the how the focus groups would be structured and conducted including a list of questions to be explored. This was provided to the DAFF Animal Welfare Unit and the Acting Chair of the E&T Working Group for input. The full set of questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Ranking of Top Priority Topics

In order to gain some idea of how important teachers view animal welfare as a topic in the primary level classroom, a list of 11 topics was developed and teachers were asked to rank them in terms of their importance (1-5 scale ranking). See Appendix 3.

SUMMARY OF ANSWERS TO FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Below is a summary of the key points and teachers' quotes arising from the focus group discussions.

Q.1 The state curriculum currently determines what you teach. How much flexibility do you have to include any topic that will allow your students to meet the standards by which achievement and progress is measured for any domain or key learning area?

- Generally, teachers thought there was good flexibility. (NSW, SA, Vic).
- The principal of one school thought curriculum was pretty tight. (NSW)
- Teachers said they have to be flexible to allow lots of perspectives to be incorporated – classroom work depends a lot on particular students/groups. Topics are largely student-driven. (NSW, SA, Vic)
- NSW curriculum is certainly very prescriptive regarding outcomes. However, teachers can choose content to achieve these outcomes.
- One independent school works from the state curriculum framework, but writes the curriculum detail specifically for the school. (SA)
- Students in independent schools are involved in a broad range of extra-curricula activities (SA).
- “We pick the topics, and could easily match up anything to the curriculum.” (Vic)
- “It comes down to our skills/experience, personal interest, or perhaps from the students.” (Vic)
- “Some themes allow a lot of flexibility/ability to choose topics.” (Vic)
- “If trying to add a different theme you would need to be aware of other year level themes.” (Vic)
- “Curriculum and themes have been set for up to 10 years. A review might re-focus aspects of a theme.” (Vic)

Q.2 From where do you source new information/resources/teaching strategies to assist you in your classroom teaching?

- The Internet received a large number of mentions (NSW, Vic, SA)
- Newspapers (NSW)
- Freebies (commercial products) (NSW)
- Library kits (NSW, Vic, SA)
- “NSW teachers are selective in what they choose to use.”
- “Teachers work closely with the librarian, who does theming and overall displays in library.” (SA)
- “Anywhere we can!” (SA)
- “Draw on local, external resources and experts (e.g. from museum experts, goat farmer).” (SA)
- “From each other.” (Vic)
- “We do not source new information from teacher professional development.” (Vic)
- Parents and guest speakers. (Vic)
- “Time is a constraint when preparing, so we need to use the internet at home.” (Vic)
- “More and more teachers are using the internet and interactive whiteboards.” (Vic)

Q.3 What criteria do you apply when choosing content to meet the curriculum?

- “It must engage the students. It is good if a topic and resources can be used on a group basis and not, just by individuals, i.e. so that kids can operate independently without too much teacher direction.” (NSW)
- “Resources need to have tasks and not just worksheets. Needs to be activity-based and hands-on.” (NSW)
- “Unfortunately websites often change constantly. What could be good is an online resource with lists of informative websites about animal welfare, but it needs to be regularly updated to reflect changes in websites.” (NSW)
- “In a small school, we need to be careful about not repeating themes/topics.” (NSW)
- “Strategies for learning and/or content.” (Vic)
- “We no longer necessarily give every child the same topic, e.g. Australia – one gets the flag, another gets coins etc. We separate children into groups where necessary.” (Vic)
- “Does it fit with VELLS?” (Vic)
- “There is a Planner for each Department. We try to avoid repeating topics year after year.” (Vic)

Q.4 Which of the following would have the greatest influence on whether you incorporated a new topic into your classroom teaching:

Peer recommendation

- “Not much.” (NSW, SA, Vic)
- “Yes. Independent Schools Group.” (SA)

Professional development (PD) training about the topic

- “Some, but mainly learning strategies.” (NSW)
- “No time for science PD. No such PD identified.” (SA)
- “Professional development is more about teaching/learning strategies, not about content.” (Vic)
- “PD must be affordable – could do it with other schools.” (Vic)

Access to pre-packaged curriculum resources (purchased by your school)

- “Yes, generally good when used.” (NSW)

Pre-packaged ‘approved’ education programs delivered by external providers

- “Sometimes, e.g. sex education, local vets, dental nurse, SPOT (Burrumbuttock), police, AusKick and other sports, zoo education. With external providers there is a cost issue. Also, need to be careful about their interpretation of the topic and the NSW curriculum.”
- “Usually bring in 2-3 external people per term. Sometimes follow-up lessons.” (NSW)
- “Yes. Nature Education Centre, Norwood.” (SA)

A wide range of internet resources on the topic

- Yes. (NSW, SA, Vic)

Q.5 What process would you go through to introduce a new topic into your classroom?

- “Look at what you’ve got to teach.” (NSW)
- “Look in-house for resources that you might use. If not available, then look elsewhere.” (NSW)
- “When introducing a new topic there is some flexibility, but it is quite difficult. Introducing a concept is easier.” (NSW)
- “If possible it is good to ‘kill two birds with one stone’ – e.g. bike safety and literacy.” (NSW)
- “Would discuss with co-worker first. Then go to Head of Year level. Then go to Head of Curriculum P-6.” (Vic)
- “Would need to ensure it works in with the VELs. It is probably not too hard to introduce a new topic. Wouldn’t need to change reporting if there was a new topic.” (Vic)
- “To bring a new topic into the classroom I would want all aspects:
 - PD (has to be good delivery)
 - Good resources
 - Able to be integrated” (Vic)
- “Already trying to fit too much into a term/year. However, we would hold a team meeting to discuss the topic and then submit a proposal to the curriculum coordinator. There is no guarantee that such an approach would be successful. The unit of work would have to meet VELs. Maybe we could put a new slant on existing topics.” (Vic)

Q.6 In which Key Learning Area would you include the study of animal welfare?

- NSW teachers thought it would be possible to incorporate animal welfare into literacy/English and maybe science – Note there is a new science curriculum currently being developed in NSW.
- Teachers supported an animal welfare unit that lasted 2-3 weeks at most. (NSW)
- “Need a good resource that can be used by many teachers in a way that they want.” (NSW)
- “Possibly part of a health syllabus – e.g. avoid hydatids!” (NSW)
- “City and country kids are different. Need different strategies and resources. The rural school demographic has an understanding of ‘paddock to plate’.” (NSW)
- “Animal welfare would be incidental. I would deal with it when it comes, like bullying. A spontaneous thing, e.g. pets in the news.” (Vic)
- “To have a class pet would need approval.” (Vic)
- “All VELs are tight. Over a two-year rotation we cover one topic every term.” (Vic)

Q.7 Do you teach about animal welfare in the classroom?

- There is very little animal welfare taught by the teachers we interviewed.
- “Not really – most kids have a pet or animals. Pet care part of “care of living things.” (NSW)
- “I consider dog bite prevention as a parental responsibility.” (NSW)
- “Sometimes, if we have an animal in the classroom.” (NSW)
- “Have previously used an RSPCA resource.” (NSW)
- “The children’s interests drive the topics used at junior/early learning level.” (NSW, SA, Vic).
- “Topics are sometimes the teachers’ interests.” (NSW, SA, Vic).
- “We used to have a lot of animals in the classroom/school, but now it is quite difficult to do all the paperwork and get approvals.” (SA)
- “Only incidentally – e.g. Pet Parade.” (SA, Vic)
- “Yes, in protective behaviour/responsibilities.” (SA)

- “Currently in prep there is a term on farm animals and a farm visit. It has a production focus but could include animal welfare more.” (Vic)
- “I could include animal welfare in the Year 2 topic Australian animals (habitat, species).” (Vic)
- “In the Relationships topics, we could include a human/animal topic.” (Vic).
- “Currently, once a week, two dogs come into classroom. They have been coming in since they were six weeks old.” (Vic)

Q.8 If you do teach about animal welfare what topics do you cover? What resources do you use?

- “How do we care for animals? What are the right procedures?” (NSW)
- “Jindera plans to have a chook yard and then animal welfare will come up and be discussed when it’s relevant.” (NSW)

Q.9 If you don’t, why not?

- “Current curriculum is too full.” (NSW)
- “It doesn’t come as a discussion topic from children or teachers.” (NSW)
- “Animal handling is difficult to connect with learning outcomes.” (SA)

Q.10 Do you participate in ‘pre-packaged animal welfare programs’ delivered by other government agencies or animal welfare organisations (e.g. RPOP, SPOT, PetPEP, RSPCA schools education program, Animal Club etc)?

- “Have had SPOT program to the school. Also had local vet clinic to school with dogs.” (NSW)
- “Local Government Ranger comes once a year to many small NSW schools.”
- “Have previously used PetPEP, but not a lot now.” (SA)
- “Packaged education programs are not prevalent.” (Vic)
- “Don’t generally have others come into the school to deliver programs.” (Vic)

Q.11 Are you aware of these programs?

- “Somewhat.” (NSW, SA)
- Teachers from the public school in Victoria were aware of RPOP. Teachers from the independent school in Victoria were not aware of RPOP.
- RPOP reaches 80% of schools in Victoria over a two-year cycle. (source: RPOP)
- 65-70% of Victorian schools doing RPOP also use the curriculum kit (source: RPOP)
- RPOP participating schools are 50% public and 50% catholic and independent schools (Vic) (source: RPOP)

Q.12 Are you aware of other schools/teachers who participate in animal welfare programs or who teach the topic?

- “No.” (NSW)
- “Some local kindergartens have had RPOP.” (Vic)
- “The special development school uses Righteous Pups.” (Vic)

Q.13 Are you aware of any animal welfare teaching resources?

- “No.” (NSW, Vic)
- “Mobile Zoo.” (SA)
- “Nature Education Centre.” (SA)

Q.14 If you do not teach about animal welfare what would you need before you might consider the topic for your classroom?

- “Need to evaluate the available resources to decide whether I would use them or not.” (NSW)
- “It would be fantastic to have an AW package – connected to use of animals.” (SA)
- “Produce a booklet (not online only) of resources on animals and AW for the library.” (SA)
- “A simple poster on the Five Freedoms would be good. This would provide a great opportunity for teachers to take it in many directions. Lots of scope.” (SA)
- “A poster kit - one poster on the Five Freedoms and additional posters on each freedom.” (SA)
- “Need resources for teachers to use to back up a school visit from an expert. Simple kit. Practical, useful. Teachers need to be able to integrate it in a way that suits them.” (SA)
- “Maybe a Talking Book – topics: fishing, pets.” (SA)
- “The six AAWS sectors provide a good starting point for discussion topics.” (SA)
- “One central website with useful links.” (SA)
- “Would need to integrate animal welfare into an existing topic.” (Vic)
- “If good resources existed then it would be easier to integrate.” (Vic)
- “Could easily fit into existing curriculum.” (Vic)
- “A visit to the zoo could incorporate animal welfare.” (Vic)
- “Could link it into the School’s Values. School values are reviewed regularly.” (Vic)
- “It would certainly help if any resources were well mapped out by Year Level & VELS – like RPOP materials.” (Vic)
- “To introduce a whole, new full-term topic would be an awful lot of work.” (Vic)
- “The learning/reinforcement strategies in RPOP seem to be good.” (Vic)
- “If you can relate it back to VELS then it is valid.” (Vic)

Q.15 If you currently do not teach about animal welfare, and you were to take up the topic what curriculum issue might it complement or perhaps even replace?

- “NSW Curriculum is too crowded; not much room for additional. Don’t want an additional unit.”
- “Animal welfare unit would have to be connected to curriculum outcomes.” (NSW)
- “Identify how animal welfare could be incorporated into existing curriculum.” (NSW)
- “Principal suggested talking to the Curriculum Directorate.” (NSW)
- “Perhaps in ‘Environment’ – a unit done over a term.” (SA)
- “Need to build in a literacy component.” (SA)
- “Perhaps in Rights & Responsibility there’s an opportunity for inclusion.” (SA)
- “It might be possible to do a 3-4 week unit on animal welfare. But it would be hard for it to be an additional topic on top of all others. It just wouldn’t get taken up.” (SA)
- “Connecting environmental issues with animal welfare might be good. Best chance of getting animal welfare on curriculum.” (SA)
- “If teachers are interested, then they will include it in their classroom.” (SA)
- “Pets – are part of the local, community-based environment, whereas Orangutans are a global topic.” (SA)
- “Need to assume no prior knowledge about animal welfare.” (SA)
- “Teachers expressed mixed reactions about using cartoons in artwork vs real animals – may depend on year level.” (SA)
- “There is a need for animal welfare education. If promoted at the young it would be of benefit to everyone. However, something would have to drop off in order to include animal welfare. Particularly to do it well, animal welfare would need a whole terms (9-10 weeks).” (Vic)
- “I would like to have animals at the school/in the classroom, but it is difficult because our school re-development isn’t complete yet. It would be really good to have animals for the difficult/physical kids.” (Vic)

Summaries of interviews with educational experts

1. Interview with the Principal of a small rural public school that currently participates in the Responsible Pet Ownership Program (RPOP).

The key findings from this interview included:

- Students complete work in both the lead-up to and following the RPOP visit. Literacy is a focal learning activity associated with the RPOP visit.
- To introduce a new topic into the curriculum the teacher would put a proposal to the School Council, including the rationale and content to be included.
- The teacher sees the need for balanced debate about animal welfare but says it would be difficult to get more animal welfare into the curriculum at this time.
- 'Outside experts' are considered invaluable in the education process when introducing a new topic.
- The teacher is not aware of any animal welfare resource materials.
- The teacher is not aware of any other schools that teach animal welfare in a more comprehensive manner.

2. Interview with Rob Morrice, Program Coordinator, Responsible Pet Education/ We are Family Programs, Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

The key findings from this interview included:

- RPOP is an established program that has been running in Victoria since 2000.
- The Program has been both evaluated and refined over the years.
- The Program has engaged curriculum development specialists to help develop the teacher and student resource materials.
- The Program has been developed to be age-specific.
- The Program places an emphasis on effective learning strategies (dance, rhyme, song etc for younger students) to reinforce messages, rather than an emphasis on content.
- At the senior primary level, the Program's content is primarily maths based.
- The Program reaches 80% of Victorian schools over a two-year cycle.
- 80% of teachers who participate in the Program use the teacher resource kit.
- Commented that learning and teaching strategies need to fit with the Learning & Teaching Guidelines.
- Teachers may recognise that animal welfare is an important and valid topic, but just not sure where to fit it in.
- Because the new National Curriculum Framework is statement based and not so prescriptive then there may be more flexibility.
- The Program is continuously reviewed and updated – an animal welfare program cannot just be developed and not reviewed.
- RPOP has one overarching message that ultimately supports its uptake with schools and that is "personal safety – avoid dog bites". An animal welfare program would need one key message too.

3. Interview with Jan Brooks, Dept of Education and Community Services, SA

The South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework describes the curriculum Key Ideas and Outcomes all learners can expect their education to be built on. (http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/index_fsrc.asp?t=Home)

The Learning Areas describe the span of development, knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with learning from Birth to Year 12. They are interwoven with the Essential Learnings, Equity Cross-curriculum Perspectives and Enterprise and

Vocational Education. From Reception to Year 12 they are organised around 8 nationally agreed bodies of knowledge.

(http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/index_fsrc.asp?t=LA)

The SACSA Framework is one of the older curriculum frameworks in Australia and was developed in 1999/2000 and first introduced in 2001. It is due to be reviewed, but no review will be done until the National Curriculum has been determined. It was looked at in 2007 to make sure it aligned (as required by the Commonwealth) with the National Standards of Learning. The 2007 study found that it matched pretty closely.

The National Standards of Learning will inform the new National Curriculum Framework.

Schools and teachers that have been following SACSA will find that the shift to the new National Curriculum won't be too difficult.

Jan introduced the consultants to 'Primary Connections' and suggested that any proposed animal welfare education (via Science) could be aligned with this initiative. 'Primary Connections' links science with literacy and is an "innovative approach to teaching and learning which aims to enhance primary school teachers' confidence and competence for teaching science". It has been trialled and evaluated.

'Primary Connections' is a partnership between the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). It promotes linking the teaching of science with that of literacy to enrich the learning experience for students.

The 'Primary Connections' project supports teachers and schools with:

- An integrated teaching and learning approach
- Professional learning workshops
- Curriculum units supported with online resources
- An ongoing research programme
- Incorporating Indigenous perspectives

'Primary Connections' supports teachers to improve students' scientific literacy, as well as their learning outcomes in both science and literacy. Linking science with literacy enriches the learning experience for students.

It includes a professional learning program that gives teachers the tools to understand the 'Primary Connections' programme, its philosophy and goals. Through interactive workshops participants develop their pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers also explore how to effectively use, adapt and extend curriculum units to suit their needs, or write their own units using a unit planner.

A set of curriculum units model how to implement the teaching and learning approach in the classroom. They are practical resource books with an easy-to-use layout, and a science background CD. They have a working scientific focus and topics are chosen after consulting all state and territory documents, as well as the Statement of Learning for Science. The full suite of units spans all years of primary school.

The 'Primary Connections' has a 5Es teaching and learning model which is based on the theory that students learn best when they are allowed to work out explanations for themselves over time through a variety of learning experiences structured by the teacher. Students use their prior knowledge to make sense of these experiences and then make connections between new information and their prior knowledge.

To help students make the connections between what they already know and new information, each 'Primary Connections' unit uses five phases:

1. Engage
2. Explore
3. Explain
4. Elaborate
5. Evaluate

A national professional development program currently has 400 facilitators Australia-wide. SA is about to embark on a major roll-out in the state. All SA teachers will have access to 'Primary Connections' over the next 2-3 years. In SA there are 7,500 primary teachers and so far 1,500 have done Primary Connections PD.

The 'Primary Connections' units are:

Stage	Earth and Beyond	Energy and Change	Life and Living	Natural and Processed Materials
Early Stage 1	Weather in my world (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	On the move (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Staying alive (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	What's it made of? (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)
1		Sounds sensational (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Schoolyard safari (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Spot the difference
	Water works (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Push-pull (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)		
2	Spinning in space (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Light fantastic **	Plants in action (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	
		Smooth moves (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)		Material world (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)
3	Earthquake explorers (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	It's electrifying Marvellous micro-organisms (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	Package it better (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)	
				Change detectives (Incorporating Indigenous perspectives)

The units most relevant to Animal Welfare would be: Life and Living – Early Stage 1 Staying Alive and Stage 1 Schoolyard Safari.

If designing an Animal Welfare unit, there is a unit planner on the website.

The Australian Academy of Science is developing 'Science by Doing'. Currently in pilot stage with eight subjects so far.

SA to renew the focus on the fundamentals of schooling

The South Australian Government has recently announced a \$108 million scheme that by 2012 will require Year 1 to 7 teachers to devote a minimum of five hours each week to literacy and numeracy. Year 1 to 3 students must receive 90 minutes of science tuition a week, which will increase to two hours in Years 4 to 7.

In a media release, the Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said the move recognised the need to foster interest in maths and science at a younger age and lift student results. "We've wanted teachers to have control of their curriculum but, because we've had such significant flexibility, subjects such as science and maths have been squeezed out," she said.

The SA State Government will provide \$47m and the Australian Government \$61m. There will be:

- an immediate one-off grant for every primary school to support maths and science programs at a cost of \$7.8m.
- professional development in science and maths for every Year 1 to 7 teacher between 2010 and 2012.

4. Visits to schools & kindergartens that participate in the Responsible Pet Ownership Program. These visits were primarily to observe the education program in action.

Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School, 26 May 2009

Observation of three sessions: Prep-Year 2, Year 3 & 4 and Year 5 & 6.

The consultants have requested a follow-up focus group, but this hasn't been organised as yet as teachers are currently preparing school reports.

Kangaroo Flat Pre-school, 26 May 2009

Observation of two sessions: Pre-school aged children and a session for parents.

The key message arising from observing this session was that teachers complement the RPOP visit with a range of story books ('readers') that children can borrow. Again this is an opportunity for AAWS to engage with a literacy expert who may help to recommend suitable texts that could facilitate discussion about animal welfare issues (see Attachment 1 as an example).

APPENDIX 1 – PROJECT OVERVIEW

Developing a Framework for Animal Welfare Education in Australian Schools – seeking input from teachers

‘The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.’ This quote from the great humanist Mahatma Gandhi underpins the goal of this project - to improve education about animal welfare in Australian schools.

This project is an initiative of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), which provides the national and international communities with an appreciation of animal welfare arrangements in Australia and outlines directions for future improvements in the welfare of animals. Developed jointly by national, state and territory governments, industry and the community, the implementation of the AAWS is coordinated by the Federal Department of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry.

Whilst Australia has made modest progress in improving the welfare of its animals there has been minimal progress on the issue in schools. Schools have largely restricted their coverage of the issue to participating in responsible pet ownership programs or dealing with an Animal Ethics Committee regarding a scientific licence for the use of animals in teaching. Yet animal welfare provides a far richer curriculum topic for study than is generally recognised. Broadly speaking, and despite the best efforts of some individuals, the development and uptake of animal welfare education in Australian schools remains a missed opportunity for our nation.

Animals play an important role in Australian daily life due to:

- an increasing recognition in the community that animals have an intrinsic value
- the important role of animals as a source of food, fibre and other products
- the important role of animals in Australia’s history and development as a nation
- Australia’s diverse and unique native animals, many of which figure prominently in indigenous culture
- The ongoing tourism importance of Australia’s diverse and unique native animals
- the strong cultural and sporting significance of animals, including the use of animals as a subject across the arts and as icons for our sporting teams
- the ongoing economic importance of the animal industries to Australia
- the dependence of many Australians on animals for companionship.

According to the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)³, the benefits of animal welfare education in schools include:

- linking animal welfare with social justice, citizenship and environmental issues
- recognising the interdependence of all living things
- contributing to the development of a responsibility for the natural world and for the animals which share it
- helping to develop children’s attitudes and critical thinking skills in order to become more compassionate and respectful
- empowering children to make decisions and take action as responsible world citizens, helping the planet, animals and people in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

There is also a connection between children demonstrating cruel behaviour towards animals as a potential indicator of dysfunctional family relationships and of future aggressive and anti-social behaviour.

³ Carlos Chacón, WSPA Education Manager, www.caribbeananimalwelfare.org/images/Education_WSPA_CAWC08.pdf

A unique program operating in schools in Israel has found that animal welfare education leads to a host of other benefits including sensitivity to the needs of others, personal responsibility and prevention of violence⁴.

Animal welfare education at the primary school level is important in achieving the goal of advancing improved animal welfare outcomes. Young children, particularly up to the age of 7 years, are recognised for being receptive to forming positive attitudes to animal welfare that they will carry through to adulthood.

This project seeks to gather information from primary school teachers about when and how they incorporate animal welfare into classroom teaching and if they currently don't, to ascertain why not so that strategies can be developed for improving education about animal welfare.

The Federal Department of Agricultural Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) wants to gain an appreciation of the limitations or difficulties in introducing animal welfare education into classrooms and to hear from primary school teachers their thoughts about how animal welfare could be incorporated into curriculum and classroom activities.

DAFF has engaged consultants Mal Brown and Carolyn Munckton to run a series of focus groups with primary school teachers in Victoria, NSW and South Australia. Focus groups will run for approximately 60-90 minutes and involve 8-12 participants. During the focus groups, participating teachers will also be asked to comment on a range of currently available animal welfare education resources.

No preparatory work is required to attend the focus groups. The consultants just want to hear from teachers and facilitate discussion amongst participants about animal welfare education.

The information gathered from the focus groups will remain confidential and the anonymous findings will be circulated only to the DAFF steering group responsible for this project. Participants' answers will not be attributed to individuals in the final report.

Focus group information will be used to develop an online survey to be sent to primary teachers Australia-wide in order to gain a broader picture of animal welfare education in schools in 2009.

On behalf of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and the Department of Agricultural Fisheries and Forestry, the consultants look forward to working with and hearing from primary teachers so that we can improve the welfare of animals in Australia.

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⁴ www.sviva.gov.il/bin/en.jsp?enPage=e_BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Object&enDispWho=Articals^I3588&enZone=ani_ed

APPENDIX 2 – Focus group QUESTIONS

General questions about the curriculum and teaching resources

- 1) The state curriculum currently determines what you teach. How much flexibility do you have to include any topic that will allow your students to meet the standards by which achievement and progress is measured for any domain or key learning area?
- 2) From where do you source new information/resources/teaching strategies to assist you in your classroom teaching?
- 3) What criteria do you apply when choosing content to meet the curriculum?
- 4) Which of the following would have the greatest influence on whether you incorporated a new topic into your classroom teaching:
 - Peer recommendation
 - Professional development training about the topic
 - Access to pre-packaged curriculum resources (purchased by your school)
 - Pre-packaged 'approved' education programs delivered by external providers
 - A wide range of internet resources on the topic
- 5) What process would you go through to introduce a new topic into your classroom?
- 6) In which VELS domain(s) or Key Learning Area would you include the study of animal welfare?

Specific questions about the teaching of animal welfare in Victoria

- 7) Do you teach about animal welfare in the classroom?
- 8) If you do teach about animal welfare what topics do you cover? What resources do you use?
- 9) If you don't, why not?
- 10) Do you participate in a 'pre-packaged animal welfare program' delivered by other government agencies or animal welfare organisations (e.g. Responsible Pet Ownership Program, SPOT, PetPEP, RSPCA schools education program, Animal Club etc)?
- 11) Are you aware of these programs?
- 12) Are you aware of other schools/teachers who participate in animal welfare programs or who teach the topic?
- 13) Are you aware of any animal welfare teaching resources?
- 14) If you do not teach about animal welfare what would you need before you might consider the topic for your classroom?
- 15) If you currently do not teach about animal welfare, and you were to take up the topic what curriculum issue might it complement or perhaps even replace?

APPENDIX 3 - Top Issues for Teachers in the Classroom

Using a scale 1-5 where:

1 = extremely unimportant

5 = extremely important

Teacher (n=30)	Issue										
	Road Safety	Obesity	Climate Change	Bullying	Dog Bite Prevention	Drugs	Bike Safety	Animal Welfare	Drought/ Water Conservation	Recycling	Water Safety
Prep - Year 2											
NSW 1	5	4	5	5	3	3	4	4	5	5	4
SA 1	5	4	5	5	5	5	N/a	5	5	5	5
SA 2	5	3	3	4	3	3	5	3	4	4	5
Vic 1	5	1	2	5	4	4	1	3	5	4	5
Vic 2	5	4	3	4.5	3	3	3	4	4.5	5	5
Vic 3	4	2	2	5	1	2	3	4	5	5	5
Vic 4	4	3	2	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
Vic 5	5	4	4	5	3	1	5	3	5	4	5
Vic 6	5	2	2	5	2	2	3	2	5	4	5
Vic 7	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3
Vic 8	5	3	3	5	5	3	5	4	4	4	5
Years 3 - 4											
NSW 2	5	4	3	5	2	2	2	3	4	4	4
NSW 3	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	5
SA 3	3	4	5	5	1	3	1	2	5	5	4
SA 4	4	2	3	5	1	4	2	3	2	4	3
Vic 9	5	4	5	5	3	5	3	3	4	4	5
Vic 10	4	4	5	5	4	3	3	3	5	5	4
Vic 11	5	5	1	5	4	4	5	3	4	2	4
Vic 12	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4
Years 5 - 6											
NSW 4	3	4	3	5	3	4	4	3	3	3	3
NSW 5	5	5	3	5	2	5	5	3	4	3	4
Vic 13	3	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	5	4	2
Vic 14	4	3	4	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Vic 15	2	4	5	5	1	1	1	2	4	4	2
Vic 16	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	4	4
Vic 17	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
Special Education and Specialist teachers											
NSW 6	4	4	4	5	1	5	4	3	4	4	4
SA 5	4	4	5	5	3	4	4	2	5	5	5
SA 6	4	3	5	5	1	5	3	3	2	4	4
Vic 18	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5
Mean value	4.33	3.63	3.63	4.82	2.87	3.60	3.43	3.27	4.28	4.13	4.20