

NAEAC

The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee



The Waran Report

July 2024

Kia ora koutou

I can't believe it's July already – and the days are getting longer! NAEAC has been busy with planning our webinar series for AEC members and we are looking forward to engaging with a good number of you online for three separate talks followed by, I hope, some lively discussion. The talks will also be made available as recordings on the NAEAC website after the series has finished.

We are also looking forward to lots of submissions for the John Schofield 3Rs award, jointly administered by NAEAC and ANZCCART NZ, which opened on 1 July. Recognising and rewarding new developments that replace, reduce or refine our use of animals in RTT is a key objective for NAEAC and we hope that AEC members will encourage their colleagues to apply. We know there are some great examples of innovation in the 3Rs space since this has been highlighted in the 2022 New Zealand Animal Use Statistics, where organisations have provided valuable additional information regarding the progress they have observed in implementing the 3Rs.

We are now gearing up to review Codes of Ethical Conduct that have been submitted to MPI, which is an important part of NAEAC's work programme in the second half of each year, as well as the ongoing review of the Good Practice Guide to provide up to date information to help researchers and AEC members with their work.

I look forward to meeting those of you who plan to attend the ANZCCART conference in Christchurch in September, where I am humbled to have been asked to give the Cam Reid Oration.

Keep well.

Ngā mihi,
Nat Waran



Accredited Reviewer Updates

Accredited reviewers play a critical role in assessing code holder compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the organisation's code of ethical conduct. **For more information regarding accredited reviewers please visit the [MPI website](#) or contact MPI animal.welfare@mpi.govt.nz.**

Concluded appointments

Dr Wendy Cook's appointment as an Accredited Reviewer has ended as of 15 May 2024. We thank her for her service.

In memory: Dr Mark Vallarta

NAEAC would like to acknowledge the recent news of the passing of Dr Mark Vallarta. Mark was appointed as an independent Accredited Reviewer in 2020 and resigned from the role in February 2024.

Mark worked at the University of Otago as an Animal Practices and Compliance Officer in the Animal Welfare Office. He had numerous qualifications to support this role, including veterinary medicine and laboratory animal medicine. He was also the Lower Island representative for the Australian and New Zealand Laboratory Animal Association (ANZLAA) and held numerous professional affiliations throughout the industry.

His background and qualifications meant Mark was no doubt a true asset to the University of Otago and wider industry, with his role seeing him contribute significantly to the RTT space by developing, monitoring, auditing, and reviewing animal-related practices at the University and leading the establishment of codes of practice, policies, and SOPs regarding animal welfare and ethics. Those who worked with Mark also note his many valuable contributions to the Openness Working Group.

Mark's commitment to the values of ethical animal use were clearly seen in his work, and his passing will be a notable loss to the RTT community.

NAEAC thanks Mark for his service as an Accredited Reviewer and acknowledges the important role that he played in the regulatory framework that protects the welfare of animals used in RTT in New Zealand.

NAEAC Regional Site Visits 2024

Once a year, NAEAC visits code holders and their AECs in a regional location. This is undertaken as a part of NAEAC's commitment to supporting AECs, as well as increasing understanding regarding animal use in RTT within New Zealand. The visit is not an auditing exercise, and neither the facilities nor the code holder or AEC are under review during the visit. Rather, these visits aim to:

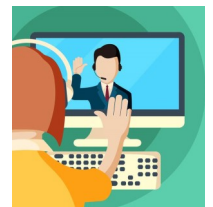
- familiarise NAEAC members with RTT work being carried out;
- allow NAEAC members to understand the challenges and experiences of AEC members;
- provide an opportunity to discuss various aspects of welfare, research, or teaching strategy;
- educate code holders and AEC members about the role of NAEAC within the RTT system; and
- provide code holders and AEC members a forum for asking any questions they may have of NAEAC.

This year, NAEAC visited a number of AECs and facilities in Ōtautahi Christchurch. NAEAC were very interested in the discussions that took place regarding the use of animals for teaching purposes, and impressed by the diversity of research that was presented and how it aligned with the 3Rs principles.

If you have any questions regarding NAEAC site visits, get in touch via naeac@mpi.govt.nz.

NAEAC AEC Webinar Series 2024

As part of NAEAC's commitment to supporting AECs in New Zealand, NAEAC hosts a biennial AEC workshop in alternate years between AEC Chairs meetings. These workshops provide a forum for AEC members to interact with NAEAC and other members and to engage on topical issues, generate information exchange, and stimulate discussion. This year, NAEAC is trialling a new format and, rather than hosting a one-off workshop, will host a series of mini-webinars. The details are still being finalised and will be communicated via email to all stakeholders – so keep an eye out!



For further information, feel free to reach out to NAEAC at naeac@mpi.govt.nz.



NAEAC / ANZCCART NZ Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield 3Rs Award

**Applications for the 2024 cycle of
the NAEAC & ANZCCART NZ 3Rs
award opened 1 July 2024.**

The principles of replacement, reduction and refinement (or the “3Rs”) are a cornerstone of ethical use of animals in research, testing and teaching (RTT).

The Aotearoa New Zealand John Schofield 3Rs Award celebrates achievement in the development and/or implementation of the 3Rs.

The biennial award is jointly offered by NAEAC and the New Zealand board of the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART (NZ)).

The award will be made to an individual, group, or organisation working in New Zealand that shows great commitment to developing or implementing one or more of the 3Rs principles. Applications are not limited to animal-based research. Applications relating to areas such as law, policy and administration, or conceptual work that advances the 3Rs are also welcome.

Further information, the award Terms of Reference and application form can be found on the [NAEAC](#) and [ANZCCART](#) websites, or requested via email from naeac@mpi.govt.nz or anzccart@royalsociety.org.nz.

Animal Ethics Committees & Non-Compliance Reporting

Section 83 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) states that no person may carry out any project that involves the use of animals for research, testing or teaching unless it has first been approved by an animal ethics committee (AEC) and is carried out in accordance with any conditions imposed by the AEC. The functions and powers of an AEC, as set out in section 99 of the Act, include the consideration and determination of applications for the approval of projects, the power to set, vary and revoke conditions of approval, and to monitor compliance with the condition of project approvals. The AEC also has the power to monitor animal management practices and facilities to ensure compliance with the terms of the code of ethical conduct.

This means that when an AEC approves an application for RTT work involving animals it is doing this on the basis that the work will be carried out as described in the application along with any conditions that the AEC may have imposed. If the applicant then decides to change any aspect of the work, for example the number or type of manipulations, the number of animals, the key personnel involved or the facility where the work will take place, an amendment to the application must be submitted to the AEC and approved prior to the change taking place. When the applicant, or anyone else involved in the work, makes changes without AEC approval then a non-compliance may have occurred.

NAEAC recommends that each AEC has a process for the reporting and management of non-compliances. A busy AEC may consider developing a specific form for this purpose that can be completed online and is linked to the original application. An AEC with a smaller workload may be happy to manage non-compliances as correspondence. It is important that adequate records are kept and that these can be easily retrieved and reviewed.

Ongoing non-compliances relating to an application or to an applicant are a cause for concern and may warrant more detailed investigation. It is recommended that the severity of a non-compliance is considered as multiple minor non-compliances may add up to a major or critical non-compliance over time.

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Animal Ethics Committees & Non-Compliance Reporting (continued)

A non-compliance may result in a direct impact on the welfare of the animals involved, but not necessarily so. In either case the first consideration for the AEC is to ascertain if there are any animal welfare concerns. Further investigation should then follow which may result in an amendment to the application, reviewing and updating procedures, training or retraining staff, suspension of work or elevation of the matter within the organisation for management consideration.

Suggested grading for non-compliances:

Critical: *Severe deviation, omission or failure from a specification or standard with a direct and adverse effect on meeting requirements.*

Major: *Significant deviation from a specification or standard where maintenance of requirements is inhibited without constituting an overall failure.*

Minor: *A deviation which is not likely to materially reduce the ability to meet acceptable requirements.*

Any questions on the above general advice can be forwarded to naeac@mpi.govt.nz.

As part of NAEAC's commitment to supporting animal ethics committees in New Zealand, NAEAC publishes regular newsletters that contain updates on the committee's work programme as well as general advice on topical issues.

The information available through this newsletter is intended to provide general information to animal ethics committees and all reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the quality and accuracy of the information available. The contents of the newsletters should not be construed as legal advice and any guidance included is not intended to take the place of, or to represent, the written law of New Zealand or other official guidelines or requirements.

Considerations of Mātauranga Māori in RTT

The Mātauranga Māori Sub-committee (SC) of NAEAC discussed in some depth how the Codes of Conduct (CEC) could meet Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations by the Crown. As an agent of the Crown, NAEAC considered how presentations and discussion documents upheld the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The chair of the Mātauranga Māori SC Associate, Professor Dianne Wepa, with her fellow committee members, Nat Waran, Rachel Heeney, and Jacquie Harper agreed to update NAEAC's approach to inform code holders. It was agreed that the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi had become outdated and the Articles are more relevant in modern day Aotearoa New Zealand.

Kaitiakitanga is now promoted to provide the overarching framework for ethical decision making within CECs and by incorporating kaitiakitanga, the SC aims to promote ethical and responsible practices in animal research, while honouring and respecting Māori values and perspectives. Kaitiakitanga means guardianship or stewardship which is a concept deeply rooted in Māori culture. It encompasses the responsibility and duty of care for the natural environment, including animals.

The following guideline will be included in the NAEAC Good Practice Guide, in the next annual revision:

Beyond the functions outline in the Act, NAEAC is committed to upholding the principle of kaitiakitanga under Article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, where Māori are guaranteed protection of their treasured possessions. Kaitiakitanga considers stewardship as relevant to the use of animals in RTT and provides general obligations and considerations to all working in RTT in Aotearoa New Zealand.

*Associate Professor Dianne Wepa
NAEAC Member*

2022 New Zealand Animal Use Statistics

The 2022 New Zealand Animal Use Statistics report has been published on the [MPI website](#).

In this report, additional information related to the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) was presented in a newly expanded section.

This data was provided to MPI on an optional basis. Anyone who intends to use animals in RTT must carefully consider where they can **replace** animals with alternatives, **reduce** the number of animals or **refine** the techniques they use.

Of the organisations that provided animal use statistics (143 total), a number of them also provided information regarding replacement (30), reduction (44) and/or refinement (43) at their organisation. Responses to questions about the 3 Rs were reviewed and common themes were identified (e.g., *in vitro* techniques were used by several organisations to replace some of their animal use). The data was organised according to these themes to provide a high-level indication of the type of replacement/reduction/refinement techniques while protecting the anonymity of the organisations that provided this information.

Additionally, one case study for each of the 3Rs was identified and content for the report was developed alongside the organisation that submitted it.

Following the success of the optional 3Rs data collection in 2022, MPI repeated this process in 2023 and plans to include optional 3Rs questions when animal use statistics are collected in the future. This ongoing initiative aims to elevate the profile of 3Rs work throughout New Zealand by increasing awareness and transparency.

If you have any questions regarding animal use statistics or the 3Rs please contact animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz.



Want to know more?

Check out the NAEAC website to learn more about the work of the committee and how you can get involved: www.naeac.org.nz.

Want to attend a general meeting?

NAEAC holds four general meetings each year. Upcoming meetings are:

- 8th August
- 25th November

For details about meeting attendance as a public observer, contact NAEAC at naeac@mpi.govt.nz.

Need to get in touch?

Send us an email:

naeac@mpi.govt.nz