

National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Annual Report

1 January to 31 December 2023

National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
C/- Ministry for Primary Industries
P O Box 2526
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

May 2024

Chair's Comment

Tēnā koutou katoa

At the start of 2023 NAWAC reviewed our work programme and instituted a new approach: a plan with a two-year horizon, updated annually. The work is structured using the three pillars of our strategic framework. Pillar I is NAWAC's critical and most visible work on Codes of Welfare. To support greater transparency, the programme describes the current state and intended progress for each Code of Welfare review in accordance with 13 steps, which are noted in an appendix of the work programme and are also referred to in this annual report. We expect this will assist all stakeholders in understanding our process and intended progress, supporting your planning for engagement in these reviews. Those 13 steps are described in full in the first of our guidelines¹ reviewed during 2023 under Pillar II, providing information on the intended outcome, who is responsible and involved, the process, and the deliverables at each step. Since consultation and consideration of regulations are integral within the process of reviewing Codes of Welfare, our second² and third³ guidelines in the reviewed set describe our approach for these aspects. The review of guidelines demonstrates NAWAC's commitment to good regulatory practices, and there is a specific articulation of 10 associated principles appended in Guideline 1.

The NAWAC work programme annexes a table of metadata for Codes of Welfare providing the date of the current versions, when they were last amended (which normally reflects the dating of current versions), and when they were last substantively reviewed. Since the 2015 amendment to the Animal Welfare Act 1999, NAWAC is no longer bound by a statutory obligation to review Codes of Welfare every 10 years – an obligation that was becoming increasingly difficult to achieve, and which despite best intentions was eventually deemed to work against animal-centric and strategic prioritisation. It may surprise some to see that the last time a Code of Welfare was issued following a substantive review was September 2018. I'm not going to repeat all the reasons explaining that situation: there are many. It is however reasonable to ask, "Did the 2015 amendment result in the pressure going off this critical area of NAWAC mandate?". I would like to assure all stakeholders that the answer is a resounding "No". However, the introduction of regulations for care and conduct towards animals in 2016 did add complexity to Codes of Welfare review processes and workload to the regulatory system.

We can only maintain a pace within our review programme that our own commitment to quality analysis and meaningful engagement, and that our MPI secretariat, regulatory partners, and stakeholders, can sustain. This must always consider other priorities including unforeseen events such as the weather-related emergencies that demanded focus in early and

¹ NAWAC Guideline 1: Guidance for the development, review, and content of Codes of Welfare

² NAWAC Guideline 2: Consultation

³ NAWAC Guideline 3: Recommending regulations for the care and conduct towards animals

mid-2023. During 2023 NAWAC made significant progress on strategically prioritised, and in one case judicially directed, reviews of Codes of Welfare for the livestock sectors. We have also benefited from the initial review and drafting work completed by SPCA on companion animal Codes of Welfare, by agreement between NAWAC, MPI and SPCA. In 2023 we brought some reviews to important milestones, but we recognise this places significant burden on stakeholders engaging in review processes, for our regulatory partners in the process of achieving Ministerial decisions to issue reviewed Codes of Welfare, and of course for all parties to prepare for implementation.

NAWAC's function is to advise the Minister, not only on Codes of Welfare, but on any matter affecting the welfare of animals in New Zealand. With the change of government following elections in late 2023, NAWAC serves its fourth Minister in as many years, and we look forward to working with Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare) Hon Andrew Hoggard and supporting him with evidence-based independent advice.

Regarding membership, I acknowledge the important contribution to NAWAC from Dr Grant McCullough who completed a three-year term in late 2023, and welcome Ms Carolyn Eyre as a newly appointed member. Carolyn brings both farming and governance experience to NAWAC, from her Waikato beef dry stock farm and as Deputy Mayor on the Waikato District Council.

In closing, I thank all NAWAC's members for their work during the year. On behalf of NAWAC, I also thank the MPI Animal Welfare team for the excellent technical and administrative secretariat service; our partners in the New Zealand animal welfare regulatory system MPI Policy, MPI Compliance, MPI Verification Services, the SPCA, the Veterinary Council of New Zealand, and the Racing Integrity Board; the organisations representing persons in charge of animals, as well as the farmers, farm workers, animal owners, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals with duty-of-care responsibilities; and the stakeholder organisations representing animal welfare advocacy groups. I trust you will find the information in this NAWAC annual report for 2023 informative and relevant in support of our collective responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy.

Ka nui tēnā mō tēnei wā,

Nga mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Stone', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Stone
Chairperson

Membership

Members	Date of Appointment	Expiry of Appointment
Dr Matthew Stone (Chair) BVSc, MVS (Epidemiology), MInstD	04.11.22	03.11.25
Dr Arnja R Dale (NAWAC-Appointed Deputy Chair for 2023) BSc, GDipNFPL, GDipHE, MSc, MSc (Hons), PhD	14.03.19	31.10.24
Ms Ruth H Palmer MA (Hons), MPP (Distinction)	01.11.18	31.10.24
Dr Grant R McCullough BVSc	01.11.20	31.10.23 ¹
Professor Craig Johnson BVSc, PhD, DSc, DVA, DipECVA, RCVS Registered Specialist, Professor of Veterinary Neurophysiology	18.03.20	31.10.25
Mr Peter W Mason BComm	18.03.20	31.10.25
Mrs Sandra B Faulkner BComm	17.03.20	31.10.25
Professor Natalie Waran BSc (Hons), PhD, NAEAC Chair	01.11.21	31.10.24
Dr Mhairi Sutherland MSc, PhD	01.11.21	31.10.24
Ms Tracy Brown BAgSci (Hons)	21.12.22	31.10.25
Ms Carolyn Eyre BA, Dip Grad (Psychology), GradD (Dispute Resolution)	21.08.23	31.10.26

¹ Grant McCullough did not seek re-appointment after serving one term on NAWAC and will continue to serve on an as-needed basis until a replacement appointment is made in early 2024.

Fees

Government policy requires disclosure of board member fees paid to members of statutory boards and committees. The daily board member fee paid to committee members during 2023 was \$400 for members and \$550 for the chairperson.

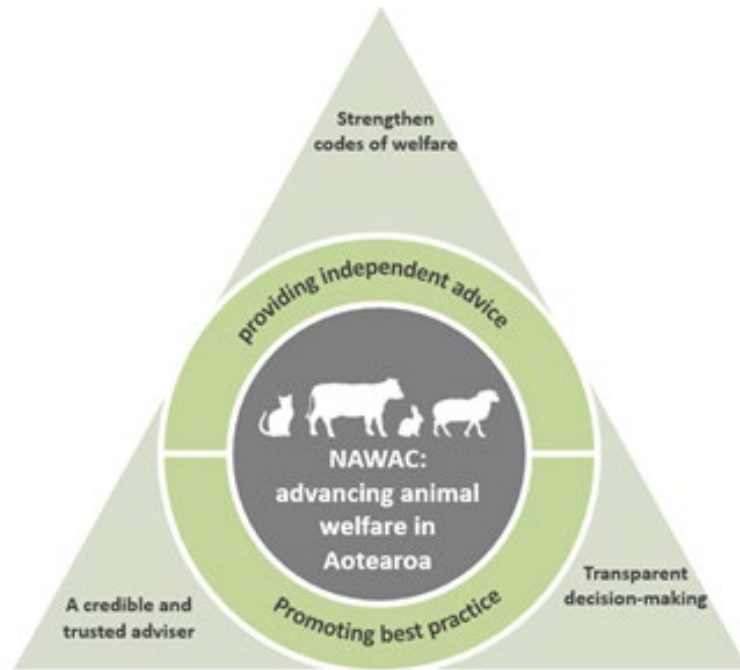
Members are paid the daily rate for attending both general and subcommittee meetings, with an allowance for preparation time. Members are also reimbursed for travelling expenses. In addition, the chairperson and, on occasion, other members may be paid additional fees for representing the committee at other organisation's meetings or for carrying out significant extra work on the committee's behalf.

Total gross fees paid	\$94,839.00
Total reimbursed travelling expenses	\$3,985.29
Total for 2023	\$98,824.29

Member	Gross fees paid in 2023
Matthew Stone	\$25,439.00
Arnja Dale ¹	-
Ruth Palmer	\$9,400.00
Peter Mason	\$24,600.00
Craig Johnson	\$9,200.00
Sandra Faulkner	\$3,800.00
Grant McCullough	\$3,000.00
Natalie Waran	\$800.00
Mhairi Sutherland	\$5,400.00
Carolyn Eyre	\$1,000.00
Tracy Brown	\$12,200.00
Total	\$94,839.00

¹ Arnja Dales travelling expenses and fees for work completed in 2023 were paid in early 2024 and will thus be reported in the 2024 Annual Report.

NAWAC Strategic Plan



NAWAC STRATEGY 2021-2024

NAWAC advances animal welfare in Aotearoa by providing independent advice to Ministers and promoting best practice in animal welfare

Strengthening Codes

NAWAC provides independent advice to strengthen codes of welfare

Our advice promotes positive welfare and is based on evidence and good practice

The Codes of Welfare work programme is regularly reviewed and priorities agreed

Advice is provided on emergent and cross-cutting issues that may impact across the Codes

Credible and trusted adviser

NAWAC enhances its reputation as a credible and trusted adviser

Ministers are provided with an independent view of animal welfare concerns and priorities

We engage in constructive dialogue with our Minister

We communicate effectively with our stakeholders and other interested parties

Stakeholders are encouraged to recognise that animals are sentient

Transparent

NAWAC is open about how decisions are made and takes an inclusive approach to the development of welfare standards

We engage appropriately with relevant stakeholders and interested parties across the work programme

An independent publically accessible NAWAC website is implemented and maintained

NAWAC committee meetings are inclusive and open to the public as appropriate

Purpose

In 3 years time

What we will do

Principles

Decision-making

Informed
Independent
Collective responsibility

Conduct of hui

Inclusive
Prepared
Focused
Respectful
Efficient and effective
Free and frank

Meeting summaries

NAWAC holds general meetings quarterly, and other meetings (e.g., subcommittee meetings, joint NAWAC/NAEAC meetings, strategic meetings) as necessary.

Note: The February 2023 general meeting was cancelled due to cyclone Gabrielle.

29th March - other meeting:

As the February meeting was cancelled, the committee met via Videoconferencing in March to discuss key issues in the draft pig and dairy Codes of Welfare.

2nd & 3rd May - general meeting:

The key agenda item on the agenda was the discussion and approval of the Code of Welfare for pigs and associated report prior to being recommended for issue to Minister Whaitiri. Updates on other Codes under review were also provided.

Thursday 3 May was a half-day session focussing on the Committee's work programme for 2023-2024, which was reforecast as a result of the impacts of cyclone Gabrielle. This was followed by a presentation and discussion around the development of animal welfare regulations.

1st August - general meeting:

The key items on the agenda included reviewing the draft 2022 Annual Report, updates on the priority code reviews underway, and discussing the draft updated cat Code of Welfare submitted to NAWAC for consideration by the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in July. The committee also discussed its progress with the 2023 work programme.

7th November - general meeting:

The key agenda item on the agenda was the discussion of the Code of Welfare for dairy cattle and associated report.

Other items included approving the first tranche of updated NAWAC Guidelines, hearing updates on key issues related to the Deer Code of Welfare review and discussing the draft updated dog Code of Welfare submitted to NAWAC for consideration by the SPCA in October 2023.

Work plan

The NAWAC work programme for 2023-2024 was reviewed and approved by NAWAC at its May 2023 general meeting, with the intention to be reviewed annually. The work programme provides a comprehensive view aligned with the three pillars of the NAWAC strategic plan, while recognising an operating environment which requires a degree of flexibility and regular prioritisation, including resourcing constraints, unexpected events, and new requests.

A summary of NAWAC's work in 2023 under each pillar is as follows.

Pillar I: Strengthening Codes Programme:

Pillar I of the NAWAC work programme includes priorities arising from Government direction, Ministerial direction, from external drafting, or based on NAWAC's guideline to review Codes every 10 years. The schedule for future Code reviews for those currently on hold will be determined as the work outlined below is completed.

The following steps are used to summarise the development process of Codes of Welfare described in the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and NAWAC Guidelines.

1. Planning and prioritisation
2. Scoping and analysis
3. Initial drafting
4. Targeted stakeholder engagement
5. Finalise consultation drafts
6. Request Minister approval to consult
7. Public consultation
8. Review submissions
9. Undertake further targeted consultation [Optional]
10. Undertake further public consultation [Optional]
11. Economic analysis [Optional]
12. Finalise recommended drafts
13. Recommend to the Minister

Code	Status at December 2023	Next Steps
Pigs	Recommended to the Minister of Agriculture in May 2023	Waiting for Ministerial decision.
Dairy	Step 12 – Finalise recommended drafts	Step 13 – Recommend to the Minister

Code	Status at December 2023	Next Steps
Sheep and Beef	Step 3 – Initial Drafting in progress Step 4 - Targeted stakeholder engagement	Step 5 - Finalise Consultation Drafts
Deer	Step 12 – Finalise recommended drafts	Step 13 – Recommend to the Minister
Rodeo	Step 4 – Targeted stakeholder engagement Step 5 – Finalise Consultation Drafts	Step 6 – Request Minister approval to consult
Rabbits	Step 3 – Initial Drafting	Step 4 – Targeted stakeholder engagement ¹ Paused April 2024 at Minister’s direction
Poultry	On hold	Step 1 - Planning and prioritisation
Fin-Fish Aquaculture	On hold	
Companion Cats	A draft updated Code was submitted to NAWAC for consideration by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in July and was subsequently accepted into NAWAC’s work programme.	Step 1 - Planning and prioritisation Paused April 2024 at Minister’s direction
Dogs	A draft updated Code was submitted to NAWAC for consideration by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in October and was subsequently accepted into NAWAC’s work programme.	Step 1 - Planning and prioritisation Paused April 2024 at Minister’s direction

¹ Targeted stakeholder engagement was conducted by the SPCA prior to the draft rabbit Code being submitted to NAWAC for consideration. NAWAC will work to identify if any further targeted stakeholder engagement is required prior to finalising a draft Code for public consultation.

Other Projects:

Project	Key focus for 2023	Status at December 2023	Next Step
Greyhound Racing	Priority arising from Ministerial direction: receive the Racing Integrity Board report; scope and plan the response in conjunction with MPI and stakeholders.	The subcommittee reviewed the Racing Industry Board report in 2023 and sent advice to the Minister on 27 th July, which was also uploaded to the NAWAC website.	Continue to attend the Greyhound New Zealand Animal Health and Welfare Committee meetings as an observer.
Wildlife	Guidelines relating to pest control activities prioritised as a result of the Predator Free 2050 Strategy, including reviewing the trap testing guidelines and humane best practice guidelines for pest control.	Updated trap-testing guidelines were approved by NAWAC at the November 2023 general meeting and will be uploaded to the NAWAC Website and shared with external stakeholders in 2024.	Development of a humane best practice guideline for pest control.

Pillar II: Credible and Trusted Adviser

- Advice was developed and sent to the Minister regarding the greyhound racing industry in July (available on the NAWAC Website [here](#)).
- NAWAC Chairperson Dr Matthew Stone was invited to give an oral submission on the Pigs Code of Welfare at the Primary Production Committee's Briefing on the pork industry, 17th August.
- The review and development of three new NAWAC guidelines was completed by the NAWAC Business Subcommittee. These were approved by NAWAC at its November meeting.
 1. Guideline 1: Guidance for the development, review, and content of Codes of Welfare
 2. Consultation
 3. Recommending regulations for the care and conduct towards animals.
- The next two guidelines updated by the Business Subcommittee will be presented to NAWAC for approval at the first general meeting in 2024.
 4. Activities using animals for Exhibition, Entertainment, and Encounter (the 3Es)
 5. The role of science in setting animal welfare standards

A draft NAWAC opinion paper on animal welfare issues relating to emerging Agritech was drafted and reviewed by NAWAC, with further development planned for 2024. This opinion paper will be presented to the Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare, Skills).

Pillar III: Transparent Decision-Making

- Development of www.nawac.org.nz as a communication tool was continued.
- Agendas, minutes, and other advice continued to be proactively published on the NAWAC website.
- Numerous requests from industry stakeholders were received for public attendance to NAWAC meetings.
- NAWAC liaised with various stakeholders, including:
 - Farm to Processor Animal Welfare Forum meetings
 - Animal production and care industry groups
 - Animal Advocacy Groups
 - Undertaking public engagement on Codes of Welfare, NAWAC's other activities, and on the wider role of NAWAC in the Animal Welfare system.
- The 2022 NAWAC Annual Report was approved and sent to the Minister in September.

Subcommittee reports

NAWAC's operational work programme is achieved via the work of subcommittees. Committee members are expected to serve on subcommittees, with the number determined based on interest, expertise, and workload based on the additional time commitment. A summary of each subcommittees work and achievements in 2023 is as follows.

Pigs Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Craig Johnson

The Pigs subcommittee finalised the review of the Pigs Code of Welfare following instruction by the Minister to develop new standards after the High Court, in 2020, ruled that the code standards relating to farrowing crates and mating stalls were unlawful and invalid. Following public consultation in 2022, a revised draft Code was shared with targeted stakeholders through a series of online meetings in late 2022 and early 2023. The Code was further revised following feedback from those meetings and sent for external peer review before being finalised and presented to NAWAC for approval in May 2023. The code was recommended to the Minister for issue the same month.

Sheep and Beef Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Sandra Faulkner

Following the events of cyclone Gabrielle, work on the Sheep and Beef Code recommenced in mid-2023, allowing the subcommittee to assess progress made so far on the Code review. The subcommittee dedicated significant time this year to ensuring that the Code aligns with other pastoral Codes where appropriate. A meeting was held with industry stakeholders in September 2023 to discuss key areas of the Code. The subcommittee is working through the feedback received.

Work will continue through 2024 with a view to finalising a draft Code for public consultation.

Deer Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Mhairi Sutherland

In January 2023 the subcommittee completed review of all the submissions received from the public consultation. Additional targeted post-consultation engagement with some stakeholders was undertaken to gain a better understanding of some submissions. Due to the impact of cyclone Gabrielle on secretariat resources and some subcommittee members, the review of the Code was placed on hold in February. In June, the subcommittee became active again. There was further engagement with some stakeholders to better inform the subcommittee's understanding of some areas of the code, including provision of oxytocin at milking for milking hinds, weaning age, and pre-transport requirements for deer. External peer review was completed in October.

The subcommittee will consider feedback received from MPI's review processes in early 2024.

Dairy Cattle Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Matthew Stone

The Dairy Cattle subcommittee led targeted consultation meetings with industry and advocacy groups in December 2022 and January 2023, and continued to consult experts, receiving advice,

and exercising collective professional judgement in the final stages of the review process. NAWAC was kept informed of progress at each of the general meetings during the year. The subcommittee met for the best part of the year on a regular fortnightly basis up until the November meeting when the process was mostly concluded. The Review of Submissions was considered and approved at a final meeting of the subcommittee in December. The package of recommended documents constituting the review of the Dairy Cattle Code of Welfare has been submitted to NAWAC, and following their approval will be forwarded to the Associate Minister of Primary Industries (Animal Welfare) by NAWAC's Secretariat, with MPI's accompanying advice.

Rodeo Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Peter Mason

The Rodeo subcommittee began the year with a visit to Gore where it met with the New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association Animal Welfare Committee and several Board members prior to observing the Matura Rodeo, including its operation behind the scenes. This visit was immediately followed by the arrival of cyclone Gabrielle, which resulted in the review being suspended for several months due to the impact of cyclone Gabrielle on secretariat resources and some subcommittee members. The committee recommenced later in the year and continued assessing stakeholder feedback on the pre-consultation draft Code circulated at the end of 2022, with a view to finalising a draft Code for public consultation in 2024.

Companion Animal Codes Review Subcommittee (formerly the Rabbit Code Review Subcommittee)

Chair: Arnja Dale

In August 2021, NAWAC received a draft Code of welfare for rabbits which had been developed by RNZSPCA in conjunction with other organisations with an interest in rabbits. Due to secretariat resourcing constraints, a Rabbits Subcommittee without secretariat support was formed and worked on this over 2021 and 2022, including targeted consultation. Secretariat support was assigned in 2023 and the subcommittee resumed development of the draft Code with the aim of public consultation in 2024.

NAWAC also agreed to rename the subcommittee to the 'Companion Animal Subcommittee' to accommodate for future work on the companion animal Codes of Welfare.

Greyhounds Subcommittee

Chair: Peter Mason

The Greyhound subcommittee maintained a watching brief over the greyhound industry during the year through having observer status on the Greyhound Racing New Zealand Animal Health and Welfare Committee, and review of the Racing Integrity Board (RIB) quarterly reports on the industry. NAWAC provided advice on the greyhound racing review work programme to the Associate Minister of Agriculture in July after the RIB reports dated 12 December 2022 and 16 March 2023 were publicly released by the Minister for Racing.

The year ended with the committee awaiting the government decision on the future of greyhound racing in New Zealand. Whether or not that decision is to stage a phase out of the industry or to

allow it to continue but with additional checks and balances in place is still pending. The committee will continue to maintain a close watch on activity during 2024.

Wildlife Subcommittee

Chair: Arnja Dale

A key achievement this year has been completing the update of Guideline 09 regarding the welfare performance of traps, which will be published in early 2024. This guideline has been renamed "*Assessing the welfare performance of restraining and kill traps*". The updated guideline aims to promote the standardisation of the testing of traps for welfare performance and encourage development of new and existing traps. In doing so it is hoped that the effectiveness of kill traps and the welfare of animals caught in restraining traps will be improved through the minimisation of suffering and the reduction of injuries. Additional information has been included relating to traps with a pre-kill containment period and gives guidance to personnel conducting trap testing.

The subcommittee is currently developing Good Practice Guidelines for Humane Pest control, covering use of traps, hunting and vertebrate toxic agents.

Business Subcommittee

Chair: Ruth Palmer

The main focus for the Business subcommittee in 2023 was to review and re-develop the NAWAC Guidelines. This review was included in NAWAC's Workplan, under Pillar II: Credible and Trusted Adviser, of NAWAC's strategic plan. The prioritisation of guidelines for review was based on age of the guidelines, relevancy, and urgency, with the first five guidelines to be prioritised directly relating to NAWAC's core role of developing and reviewing Codes of Welfare, including (N.B. the following guidelines are named in accordance with their prior titles, which will no longer exist upon completion of the review):

1. Guideline 1: Approach to consideration of draft Codes of Welfare.
2. Guideline 2: Dealing with practices that might be inconsistent with the spirit of the Animal Welfare Act.
3. Guideline 4: Process for the development of Codes of Welfare.
4. Guideline 6: Wider issues relevant to setting minimum standards.
5. Guideline 10: Phasing out one animal management system in favour of another

Three new Guidelines were developed and approved by NAWAC to replace those above at its general meeting on 7 November 2023:

1. Guideline 1: Guidance for the development, review, and content of Codes of Welfare
2. Guideline 2: Consultation
3. Guideline 3: Recommending regulations for the care and conduct towards animals

The review of remaining NAWAC Guidelines will continue in 2024.