



ANIMAL WELFARE

National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Annual Report 1 January to 31 December 2021

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

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September 2022

NAWAC

National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Chair's comment

Each year, two committee members retire and two new appointees are welcomed. At the end of 2021 we farewelled Grant Shackell and Dr Karin Shütz, both of whom devoted many hours to support animal welfare improvements during their respective six-year terms. Karin contributed to the work of the Good Life subcommittee, and code reviews for dairy cattle and pigs. As Chair of NAEAC, Grant enabled the collaboration between our committees, as well as making a significant contribution to NAWAC. His interests included animals in encounter, entertainment and exhibition and he contributed to the work of the 3Es subcommittee, as well as the code review for pigs. I thank them both for their service.



And in November we welcomed our two new appointees, Dr Mhairi Sutherland and Prof Natalie Waran. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge of animal welfare science to our further committee discussions. Natalie is also the new Chair of NAEAC.

NAWAC's work continued steadily, facilitated by reduced pandemic restrictions that enabled travel and face-to-face meetings during Q1-Q3. Our pandemic-derived skills for video-conferencing were well used for subcommittee work, and the Q4 meeting of NAWAC was also held by video-conference. Despite this good fortune, some components of the 2021 workplan were not completed – in particular the poultry and fin-fish welfare codes. Reasons for this included changed priorities, pandemic restrictions and secretariat resourcing, and the workload capacity of committee members, given many have full-time responsibilities to their employers.

The Ministerial request late in 2020 for urgent advice on pig farrowing and mating systems committed much of the committee's resources in Q1 and Q2. The consequence was that further work on poultry was delayed, as was the wildlife subcommittee's guidelines development work. Pandemic restrictions in Q3 and Q4 further postponed poultry work, and further information-gathering and site visits necessary in developing a code of welfare for finfish aquaculture.

NAWAC spent half a day in February reviewing and developing our Strategic Plan. This is presented later in Figure 1. Further thinking is required to develop key performance indicators for committee delivery but these must be realistic of committee members' ability to contribute. While setting clear targets is a useful management tool when endeavouring to drive work at a rapid pace, paddling the waka too fast may not be sustainable in the long run.

The draft dairy code of welfare proposed for public consultation was brought through its final stages of committee agreement at the November meeting, with its associated evaluation report to be completed early in 2022. Discussion of the sheep and beef code progressed within the working group in the latter part of the year, and plans were put in place to commence a review of the deer code, also early in 2022. These codes share many common threads including provision of shade and shelter, and animal management systems. There is efficiency in expediting their reviews together, particularly when considering those elements that may be recommended for regulation, such as increased use of pain relief during management procedures.

The 3Es subcommittee finalised and published the NAWAC Guideline 15: Approach to understanding why society engages with activities that use animals for exhibition entertainment and encounter (the 3Es). It also provided advice on greyhound welfare for the Minister of Racing's review of that industry. Progress with welfare improvements at rodeos continued to be monitored through NAWAC's observer status with

the Rodeo Animal Welfare Committee of the NZ Rodeo Cowboys Assn, and regular advice provided to the Minister and published on our website.

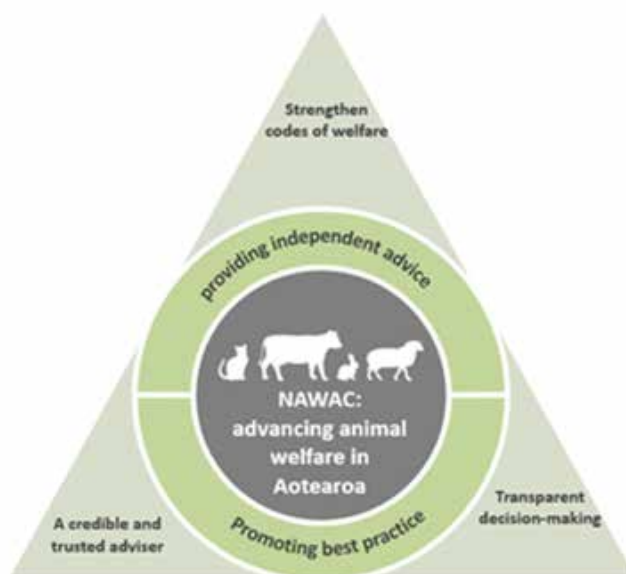
A review of the Rodeo Code of Welfare was initiated in 2021, with a dedicated review subcommittee established. In mid-2021, NZALA and SAFE requested a judicial review of that code, and High Court proceedings were initiated. NAWAC endeavoured to get an adjournment to allow it to complete its review, but this was denied. Nevertheless, NAWAC determined that the subcommittee should continue to complete the pre-consultation work and develop a draft for public consultation.

In mid-2021 NAWAC received a request from Minister O'Connor that development of a code of welfare for bees be considered. At that time NAWAC had provided guidance for the apiarist industry to promote a voluntary code in the industry. The implications of establishing a code of welfare for bees under the Animal Welfare Act will be further considered by NAWAC and NAEAC.

Thank you to the hard-working people of the MPI Secretariat that have provided NAWAC with the most awesome support during 2021. They are too many to name, but I want to give particular thanks to Kate Littin for her ongoing efforts to provide NAWAC with the resources it needs, if it is to carry out its work. Thank you also, to the Committee members themselves for their dedication, and for the many hours of personal time given to this work, to promote welfare improvement for the animals of Aotearoa.

Dr Gwyneth Verkerk
Chair

Figure 1: 2021 version of the NAWAC Strategic Plan



NAWAC STRATEGY 2021-2024		
Purpose	NAWAC advances animal welfare in Aotearoa by providing independent advice to Ministers and promoting best practice in animal welfare	
In 3 years time	Strengthening Codes NAWAC provides independent advice to strengthen codes of welfare	Credible and trusted adviser NAWAC enhances its reputation as a credible and trusted adviser
What we will do	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	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
Principles	Decision-making Informed Independent Collective responsibility	Conduct of hui Inclusive Prepared Focused Respectful Efficient and effective Free and frank

A summary of NAWAC’s work against each pillar in 2021 is as follows:

- **Strengthening Codes:** reviews of five codes in progress (one completed); enhanced secretariat capacity in late 2021 ensures future progress with code reviews.
- **Transparency: development** and launch of www.nawac.org.nz; publication of agendas and minutes, and other advice, development of guidelines for open meetings
- **Credibility/Trust:** advice to Ministers regarding pigs, greyhounds, rodeo and bees; stakeholder engagement during code reviews.

Membership

Members	Expiry of Appointment
Dr Gwyneth A Verkerk (independent chairperson) BVSc, PhD	31.10.22
Dr Arnja R Dale PhD, Chief Scientist RNZSPCA	31.10.24
Ms Ruth H Palmer MA (Hons), MPP (Distinction), layperson	31.10.24
Mr Nicholas (Nick) J Poutu MSc, Technical Adviser (Animal Threats) DOC	31.10.22
Dr Karin E Schütz MSc, PhD, Scientist	31.10.21
Mr Grant H Shackell Dip Ag, Dip Field Technology, MSc, Retired scientist (NAEAC Chairperson)	31.10.21
Dr Ingrid N Visser MSc, PhD, Founder of the Orca Research Trust	31.10.24
Dr Grant R McCullough BVSc, Veterinarian	31.10.23
Professor Craig B Johnson BVSc, CertVA, DVA, PhD, RCVS Registered Specialist, Professor of Neurophysiology, Massey University	31.10.22
Mr Peter W Mason BComm, Wellington SPCA	31.10.22
Mrs Sandra B Faulkner Partner Wairakaia Partnership	31.10.22
Professor Natalie Waran (NAEAC Chairperson)	31.10.24
Dr Mhairi Sutherland MSc, PhD, Scientist	31.10.24

Fees

Government policy requires disclosure of fees paid to members of statutory boards and committees. The daily fee paid to committee members during 2021 was \$400 for members and \$550 for the chairperson.

Members are paid the fee for attending 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 meetings or for carrying out significant extra work on the committee's behalf. .

Member	Fees paid during 2021 (gross)
G Verkerk ¹	\$10,154.86
A Dale	\$11,800
R Palmer	\$7,400
N Poutu ²	--
K Schütz ³	\$7,600
G Shackell	\$11,000
I Visser	-
P Mason	\$18,600
C Johnson	\$7,200
S Faulkner	\$1,600
G McCullough	\$2,400
N Waran	\$1,000
M Sutherland	-

1 The Chair undertook extensive liaison with animal welfare, industry and other groups, and with MPI, regarding the writing and content of draft codes of welfare, regulations, and regarding other NAWAC business, in addition to preparing for and conducting formal NAWAC meetings and special meetings.

2 N Poutu's as a public servant, does not receive meeting fees.

3 K Schütz's fees are paid directly to her employer as recompense for time lost from her primary employment.

Work plan

Strengthening Codes Programme:

Code of Welfare	Status at Nov 2021	Next Steps
Pigs	Review – ongoing	Awaiting Ministerial approval for public consultation
Dairy	Review – ongoing	Presenting for Ministerial approval for public consultation
Sheep and Beef	Review – ongoing	Public consultation anticipated mid 2022
Deer	Review – ongoing	Public consultation anticipated late 2022
Rodeo	Review – ongoing	Awaiting outcome of High Court judicial review
Poultry – including regulations	Planned review	Commencement 2022
Fin-Fish Aquaculture	Development	Information gathering 2022. Anticipated commencement 2023
Commercial Slaughter; Transport within NZ	Planned review	Anticipated commencement 2023

The NAWAC work programme is reviewed annually. The schedule for future code reviews will be determined as the work outlined above is completed.

Other Projects:

Project	Current Status	Key focus	Next Step
Wildlife subcommittee	Review Development	Trap testing guidelines Best practice guidelines	Anticipated completion mid-2022
Animals in Encounter, Entertainment and Exhibition (3Es)	Watching brief – rodeo and greyhound racing	Monitor progress: animal welfare reform	Reporting to the Minister as relevant
Zoos	Industry review	Development	Presenting to NAWAC - date to be advised
Insect	Development	Code of Welfare for Bees	Information gathering in 2022

Meeting summaries

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

Key items discussed at the 24 February 2021 meeting in Wellington were:

- **Pigs Code of Welfare review:** the subcommittee gave a progress report on the development of new standards for farrowing and mating systems. An update was given on the progress of the working group that is reviewing the balance of the code, and there was further discussion on the next steps towards public consultation of this code. Regular updates on the farrowing systems standards are available on the MPI website: [NAWAC review of pig crates | MPI | NZ Government](#)
- **Committee transparency goals** – procedures for meeting conduct are being developed to facilitate public attendance at NAWAC meetings. There was discussion on development of a conflicts of interest register, and the independent webpage is currently being developed.
- **Better provision of livestock shelter** - a discussion paper and presentation from MPI were shared. This will need to be considered and incorporated into the code reviews for pastoral animals.
- **NAWAC Strategic planning** – the committee reviewed its Strategic Plan.

A special Codes Meeting was held on 20/21 April in Wellington which focused on codes under review:

- **Pigs Code of Welfare** – the committee considered the draft brought forward by the subcommittee, discussed the scientific rationale for standards, and provided direction to the subcommittee.
- **Dairy Code of Welfare** – various aspects of this code under development by the subcommittee were discussed by the full committee.
- **Rodeos Code of Welfare:** The committee discussed a submitted draft code of welfare. It was decided to reprioritise the review of the code and a subcommittee was formed to begin pre consultation.

The 19 May 2021 meeting was held in Blenheim, in conjunction with a field trip to a salmon farm and an aquaculture research laboratory. Key items discussed at the meeting were:

- **Pigs Code of Welfare review:** The draft code of welfare, associated code report, cover letter and five domains assessment were shared and reviewed by the committee. NAWAC was satisfied that the requirements have been met to submit the Code to the Minister for approval to consult.
- **Dairy Code of Welfare review:** The draft code of welfare with suggested amendments was shared with the committee to be reviewed. Further discussion is needed by the committee in the coming weeks to complete the draft and the code report for it to be put forward for consultation.
- **Finfish Code of Welfare:** The committee visited a fish farm and research facility the day prior to the meeting, observing the current practices in New Zealand in preparation for the development of the Finfish Code of Welfare. The committee discussed what they observed on their visits and agreed to form a working group.
- **Greyhound Racing Review Submission:** NAWAC discussed the greyhound racing review and will draft a submission.
- **Transparency:** The committee reviewed the draft guidelines for public attendance at quarterly NAWAC meetings. Once the suggested amendments have been agreed, it will be available on the NAWAC webpage.

Key items discussed at the 17 August 2021 meeting in Wellington were:

- **Dairy Code of Welfare review:** Further points identified by the subcommittee to require further discussion by the full committee were debated. These particularly relate to management of cull dairy cows and will require further consultation with industry stakeholders to discuss NAWAC recommendations.
- **Rodeo Code of Welfare:** The committee agreed to the code review plan and discussed the level of pre-consultation that would be required.
- **Rabbit Code of Welfare:** NAWAC were presented with a draft code of welfare for rabbits, with an accompanying report. When NAWAC receive a draft code, the committee is required consider its suitability for recommendation. A subcommittee was formed to report back to NAWAC in November on its suitability for recommendation.
- **Meeting attendance guidelines:** NAWAC discussed advice around meeting procedures and agreed that virtual attendance should be possible for members of the public.
- **Presentations:** The committee received presentations from the Broad-casting Standards Authority, the Game Animal Council and Harness Racing New Zealand.

The 16 November 2021 meeting was held by videoconference. Key items discussed at the meeting were:

- **Commercial Slaughter Code of Welfare:** Following upholding of the complaint to the Regulations Review Committee regarding the minimum standard for chilling crabs, rock lobsters and crayfish, NAWAC discussed amending the standard to ensure the wording is clear that crustaceans are to be chilled and not frozen. The committee discussed and agreed upon the wording to be recommended for Minimum Standard 22(e)(i) of the Commercial Slaughter Code of Welfare.
- **Greyhound Racing Review:** The 3E's subcommittee provided an update to NAWAC on their meeting with Racing Integrity Board (RIB) and the committee agreed to write a letter of further recommendations to the Minister.
- **New Committee Guideline:** The committee agreed to publish Guideline 15: Approach to understanding why society engages with activities that use animals for Exhibition, Entertainment and Encounter (the 3Es) which includes principles to assist decision-making when considering the welfare impact of 3Es activities.
- **Rabbit Code of Welfare:** The subcommittee provided feedback on the draft code and NAWAC discussed how to incorporate this into the 2022 workplan.

Subcommittee reports

Wildlife

Chair: Nick Poutu

The subcommittee presented proposals for minor changes to Guideline 09: Assessing the welfare performance of restraining and kill traps to NAWAC to ensure the integrity of trap test results (ensuring they are representative of welfare performance when in operational use), the acceptability of the test procedures and to ensure the guideline remains fit for purpose considering emerging issues and opportunities. Proposed changes included clarification around the testing of gas and electrocution traps, the addition of information to improve non-target species exclusion, the removal of field testing of kill traps, guidance around acclimatisation periods for enclosure tests and the addition of a new section on testing reports.

There have been some delays in progressing the development of the good practice guidance for vertebrate pest control due to COVID 19 and NAWAC's extensive code review programme. It is anticipated that the draft will be finalised and recommended to NAWAC in 2022.

A member of the subcommittee reviewed applications for the sale and use of glueboard traps for rodents, which are restricted under the Animal Welfare (Glueboard Traps) Order 2009. NAWAC is pleased to see that the number of these applications has decreased substantially since 2015 and remains low.

Exhibition, Entertainment and Encounter

Chair: Peter Mason

The animals in Exhibition, Entertainment, and Encounter (3Es) subcommittee completed its work on the development of a 3Es Societal Cost/Benefit Analysis tool (the Tool). This was subsequently published as NAWAC Guideline 15 Approach to understanding why society engages with activities that use animals for Exhibition, Entertainment and Encounter (the 3Es).

The Tool has been designed with a focus of providing a mechanism to aid NAWAC in systematically gathering and considering the wider perspectives from those who have an interest in a 3Es activity. It aims to assist in collecting this feedback and provides a framework for NAWAC to understand how and why stakeholders engage, or do not engage with, a 3Es activity; and their reasoning for this. The Tool provides for the gathering of this information in a simple, accessible, and transparent format.

As part of its consideration of how society engages with the 3Es, NAWAC has also developed a set of principles that will underpin its decision making for 3Es activities. These principles would be used alongside an animal welfare impact assessment when considering the involvement of animals in the 3Es.

The Principles:

1. The animal and its welfare are paramount. It must be clear from the available scientific knowledge and good practice that, while the activity in question may provide certain benefits that society seeks from it, negative animal welfare impacts are kept to a minimum.
2. It must be clear that there are no viable alternatives to the activity in question that provide the same or similar benefit to society but pose less of a risk to animal welfare.
3. There must be sound evidence that the activity in question, in its current state, can mitigate any negative animal welfare impacts that it may inflict.
4. There must be sound evidence that the activity is being periodically reviewed to reduce or eliminate any remaining negative animal welfare impacts.

5. It must be clear from the available scientific knowledge and good practice, that the activity in question also allows opportunities for positive animal welfare when the whole of life of the animal is considered.

Rodeo Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Peter Mason

Due to ongoing public interest, including the submission of a draft code and report by a member of the public, NAWAC reprioritised the Rodeo Code review in May 2021 bringing it forward in its work programme.

On 28 October 2021 the Rodeo Code Review Subcommittee invited a select group of stakeholders, ranging across academia, advocacy, and the rodeo industry, to provide feedback on a stakeholder engagement document for the review of the rodeo code of welfare. To facilitate discussion and feedback, the engagement document raised 12 questions and was drafted in the format of a code of welfare that contained modified aspects of rodeo which the subcommittee suggested may be required to meet the purposes of the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

On 19 July 2021 SAFE and the New Zealand Animal Law Association instigated High Court proceedings challenging the validity of the current Code and contending that rodeo activities contravene the Animal Welfare Act. These proceedings are set down to be heard in July 2022. The subcommittee chose to continue development of a draft Code ready for recommendation to the Minister should one be required following the Court's decision.

Sheep and Beef Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Dr Gwyneth Verkerk

The working group and subcommittee for this code review was established in 2021 with meetings held by videoconference with the working group and initial development of the evaluation report by the secretariat. As the pandemic response impacted on secretariat resources, work on this code was suspended to allow focus on completion of the documentation for the draft dairy code proposed for public consultation, intending to resume in 2022.

Dairy Cattle Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Dr Karin Schütz

Work on this code review began in 2020 when a working group was established. Further meetings were somewhat delayed through 2021 because of pandemic restrictions however by mid-2021 the working group had largely completed their review task and the subcommittee finalised the documentation and developed the evaluation report. At the subcommittee stage there were several additional points to be addressed which included more consideration of end-of-life animals with respect to their selection and preparation for transport to processing plants. As a consequence there were several further meetings with the Farm to Processor Animal Welfare Forum to discuss these issues within the wider context of the supply chain. The subcommittee also proposed further areas where regulation might be required such as the use of electrified backing gates and electro-immobilisation devices, and in response to the directions of the Winter Grazing Action Group. Discussion on pain relief for castration was deferred for wider consultation during the review of the Sheep and Beef code. By November NAWAC had agreed the proposed draft for public consultation, with some further work required to complete the evaluation report. The draft was therefore held over until 2022 so that all documentation could be completed.

Pigs Code Review Subcommittee

Chair: Dr Gwyneth Verkerk

Following the 2020 High Court ruling that the Code Standards relating to farrowing crates and mating systems were unlawful and invalid, the Minister asked NAWAC to develop new standards. To do this work, NAWAC convened a pig code review subcommittee. As all aspects of the pig code were due for review, NZPork assisted to assemble a working group to provide their views on the balance of standards. During an intensive period over that summer, the subcommittee were hosted by NZPork to visit a range of pig farms. Meetings, mostly by videoconference for expediency, were held with a range of industry experts both in New Zealand and overseas, and with animal advocacy groups. Notes from these meetings were made publicly available on the NAWAC website in an effort to increase the transparency of our processes.

To assist its evaluation of the available science when considering new standards for farrowing and mating systems, NAWAC undertook a Five Domains analysis with the guidance of Prof Ngaio Beausoleil from Massey University. Whether existing systems met the behavioural needs of sows as required under the Act was central to the deliberation.

In late April and in May, NAWAC meetings were held to debate the proposals, with documents agreed at the May quarterly meeting for recommendation to the Minister. The documents were subsequently considered by Cabinet, with further work analysis of the likely economic impacts of change. There was no further progress on this code review in 2021.

Fish Code Development Subcommittee

Chair: Ruth Palmer

Building on planning commenced in 2020, the subcommittee continued information gathering. In April 2021 NAWAC was presented with a report prepared by MPI on the current state of fish farming in Aotearoa. Aquaculture is an expanding industry with a large number of animals involved. The fish welfare impacts are, however, largely unknown. At its May meeting the Committee conducted site visits to a salmon farm in Pelorus Sound and a NIWA fish research facility near Nelson. Further site visits planned for the subcommittee later in 2021 were disrupted by pandemic restrictions.

In November, at our annual joint meeting with NAEAC, we enjoyed a webinar focused on fish. Topics covered included:

- fish sentience and sensory biology,
- fish farming - including the farming of ornamental species for aquaria,
- the welfare of fish used in research, and
- fish wellbeing and welfare.

A key point of the day was that fish demonstrate social behaviour, are responsive to their environment and can alter their behaviour to adapt to changes to that environment. While in aquaculture there is an emphasis on fish health, more focus is needed on fish welfare and well-being.

The Committees also noted that there are approximately 1.37 million ornamental fish farmed for sale in Aotearoa – exclusive of small-scale breeders – and that the welfare of pet fish matters.

Rabbit Code Development Subcommittee

Chair: Dr 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. The Animal Welfare Act allows any party to write and present a draft code to NAWAC, who must then determine whether it has

merit and substance, in which case NAWAC should then progress it further. A subcommittee was tasked to examine it, and it was agreed that, although requiring further work on some aspects, the document provided a good base from which to develop a rabbit code. This work will continue in 2022.

Report of the Joint NAWAC/NAEAC meeting (November 2021)

Each year the two committees hold a joint meeting during which they take the opportunity to explore issues of mutual interest. In 2021 the meeting was held in November but in the form of a webinar due to travel restrictions.

Presentations were on topics of specific interest to the committees:

Fish physiology and life cycle – Dr Neill Herbert (Auckland University) informed us about the vast diversity of the fish world, how this affects their physiology, and their strategies for reproduction. He discussed also the demonstration of the ability of fish to develop cross-tolerance to stressors, in which exposure to one stressor can assist the animal to cope with a further stressor.

Fish sentience – Prof Calum Brown (Macquarie University) described their investigations of fish learning and memory. He provided evidence for time and place learning, differentiation of individuals, colour differentiation, and ability to pass on learning. Fish brains are organised somewhat differently in terms of function, but there is a lot of equivalence, and also evidence for areas associated with emotional learning. He identified a number of things which should be considered as opportunities for providing positive welfare for captive fish including stocking density management, brushes, environmental enhancements, good water quality management and potentially, playthings.

Aquaria and ornamental species – David Cooper (NZ Companion Animal Council) gave a presentation on the ornamental fish industry in New Zealand. Cold water are mostly goldfish and sold through pet shops and garden centres; tropical are 90% imported, of which most are bred in farms, but 4-5% may be wild caught. The overall trade in ornamental fish and associated equipment is significant and it is estimated 1.73m fish of which 78% are goldfish. There are many difficulties with trading platforms and knowledge of fish care, especially at retail level, where occasional high mortality rates are reported. David proposed that education is required so that purchasers understand that fish are not “disposable ornaments”.

Fish welfare and developing a code of welfare – Izzy Norris (Massey University) proposed a framework through which to consider the development of a code of welfare for fish. She emphasised that when developing welfare indicators, their temporal nature must be considered. To that end, she proposed categories of: present, past, persistent, predictive, and alerting, which could be used to develop an assessment of “lifetime welfare”.

Fish farming – Brianne Lyall (SPCA) gave an overview of the diversity and extent of fish farming globally, in which 27 species account for some 90% of the industry. Even within New Zealand diversity exists when the varying needs of species, live stage and farming systems. Stocking densities, water temperature, O₂ and CO₂ content of water, and fish behaviour all confound interpretation of available data. Brianne identified a number of opportunities for a welfare code to recommend opportunities to provide behavioural enhancement.