UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL RESEARCH OCEANIA

Allentown ANZ
Improving Life – it's in our DNA.®
powered by BioSafety

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Melbourne and Victoria AEC Members' Forum

Summary report of the workshop held 2 December 2024

About Understanding Animal Research Oceania

www.uaroceania.org

Understanding Animal Research Oceania (UAR Oceania) is an Australian non-profit organisation that explains why animals are used in medical and scientific research. We support greater understanding of how and why animals are used in medical, veterinary, scientific and environmental research in the Oceania region.

UAR Oceania works to help everyone understand how society benefits from the humane use of animals in research, and works with the scientific sector to ensure that when research uses animals, it meets the high standards of ethical conduct expected by the international research community and the public. We support the life-sciences community across Oceania to be open, courageous and credible in the way it approaches and discusses research, drawing together research organisations, industry associations, professional bodies, charities and others.

For further information or to join UAR Oceania please contact ajlear@uaroceania.org

About the AEC Members' Forum

UAR Oceania, in collaboration with the University of Sydney, created the AEC Members' Forum to provide a platform for AEC members within a specific region to meet face-to-face and discuss key and current issues that they may encounter or need to take decisions on as part of their AEC role.

While all AEC members undergo training for their position, science does not stand still, and neither do the related policy issues. The Forum provides space for AEC members to meet their counterparts from other committees and institutions, deliberate on topics that are emerging, changing or which can be challenging, and to discuss the roles of the AECs. The sessions are participatory and focused on knowledge building and sharing among AEC members.

This Forum was held in collaboration with the University of Melbourne to strengthen the understanding and networks of AEC members in Victoria and to support the deliberations of their committees. It does not replace AEC member training required by regulatory authorities, including that provided through ANZCCART's ComPass programme.

If you are interested in holding an AEC Members' Forum in your region, please contact policy@uaroceania.org.

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of all participants at the event, Understanding Animal Research Oceania, The University of Melbourne, University of Sydney or any other AEC Members' Forum partners.

Production and printing of this report was sponsored by **Allentown** and **Biosafety**.
All web references were accurate in January 2025.

Contents

Executive Summary

This report presents the discussions and findings from a forum focusing on various aspects of animal ethics and research methodologies. The discussions are categorised into four areas: The Regulation of Animal Research in Victoria; The 3Rs (Reduction, Replacement, Refinement); Assessing Humane Endpoints; and Giving and Receiving Feedback.

Discussion 1, on the role of Animal Ethics Committees in regulating animal research in Victoria, was led by Malinda Godino and Meagan McPharlin from Animal Welfare Victoria, who discussed the role of the current POCTA legislation in protecting research animals in Victoria, and where it fits in the legislative framework. They presented details on the legal definitions of protected animals and scientific procedures under the law, and outlined the regulatory systems in place, including the AEC. They provided details on the expected role of the AEC, and ran exercises on assessing scientific projects and identifying problems with requests.

In Discussion 2, the University of Melbourne's Professor Alastair Sloan presented his vision for Australia as an international leader in the 3Rs, before introducing three speakers who each shared a 3Rs initiative taking place in a Victorian institution, to showcase the scope of local 3Rs work. The first presentation, Developing a 3D chronic wound model using animal-free products, covered replacement work taking place at the University of Melbourne. The second presentation, Reduction: Creating a video training library of shared work to reduce the numbers of animals used in procedures at the Bionics Institute, and the third presentation, Refinement: The support and safeguard of animal well-being, shared approches to refinement taking place at WEHI.

John Inns led Discussion 3 on humane endpoints in animal research, emphasising the shared responsibility in ensuring minimal welfare impact while achieving scientific goals. Common humane endpoints and their practical application were examined, alongside the challenges in accurately assessing pain and distress using typical measures such as loss of body weight. The complexity of applying humane endpoints that are both practical and fit for purpose was underscored.

Discussion 4: Communication, was led by Bella Lear, who presented ideas for giving and receiving feedback as part of group discussions, drawing inspiration from the perfoming arts sector. Participants were invited to discuss their own experiences, and several groups noted the need to depersonalise feedback, and to ensure that comments are considered and clearly related to the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

Discussion 1

Regulation

Animal Welfare Victoria regulate the use of animals in research for the Victorian government. Malinda Godino and Meagan McPharlin opened the forum with a presention on the legislative framework in Victoria for animal research and teaching, their role as a regulator, and how the Animal Ethics Committee fits into that framework.

In Victoria, the use of animals is governed by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Act, which sets out principles of how animals should be treated in all settings, with the welfare of animals as a key driver. Around two million animals are used in the State of Victoria in research and teaching each year, with the licensing framework outlined on the following page used to ensure high welfare standards are maintained. More than 240 licences are held by universities, schools, small businesses and individuals. There are approximately 90 AECs registered with Victoria, overseeing around 3,000 projects per year.

For the regulator, social licence is an informal process by which the community accepts or does not accept the ways in which particular industries operate. Government regulators work on behalf of the community and ensure that social licence is met by the sector employing good practices and by public trust in the regulation. It is essential that this social licence is in place if the scientific and education community is to continue to use animals in research or teaching.

Animal Welfare Victoria understand that there is currently good social licence to use animals for scientific and education purposes in Victoria, with the majority of the community accepting that the use of animals in research leads to benefits for humans and animals. But expectations of the community regarding the use of animals in science and education are changing, with increasing numbers of queries from media and animal advocacy groups on topics such as numbers used, number of deaths, species used, rehoming, and frequencies of audits, as well as specific contentious topics such as the forced swim test and smoke inhalation studies.

The role of the AEC in regulation is governed by its institution. Governance and membership of an AEC is mandated under s2.2 of the Australian code to be balanced across categories. To be quorate category C & D membership must be at least one third of total membership, while the chairperson is responsible for impartially guiding the operation of the AEC. AECs review whether a particular project or activity using animals is ethical and meets legislative requirements, particularly whether the expected outcomes justify the proposed animal use.

AEC members are expected to be independent, balanced, knowledgeable and fair when faced with complex, difficult decisions and unknown outcomes. AEC members need to make both administrative and ethical decisions to ensure that animal use follows state legislation and the Australian Code.

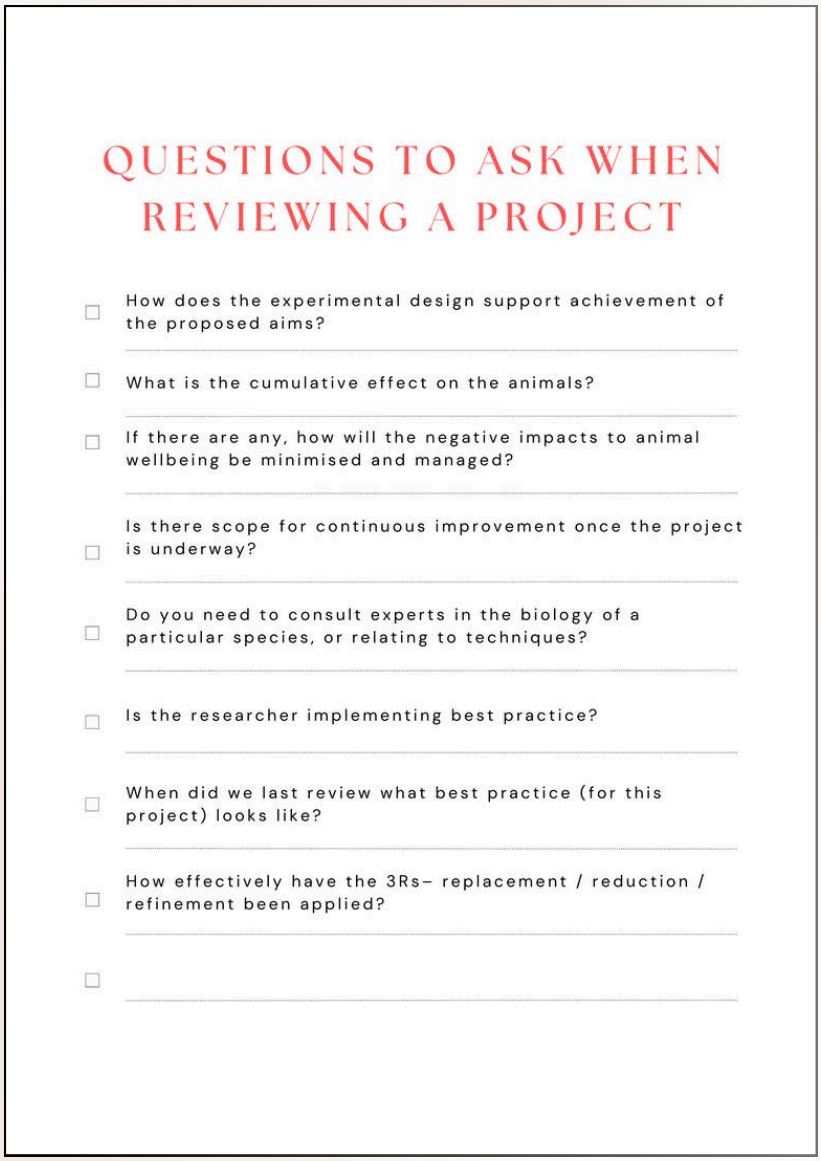


Figure 1. Questions to ask about project applications

Figure 2. The role of the AEC

Discussion 2

The 3Rs: An overview and three presentations

This session was led by the University of Melbourne's Professor Alastair Sloan, who introduced the topic of the 3Rs at Melbourne, and the need for coordinated action on the 3Rs (reduction, replacement and refinement) across Australia.

Professor Sloan's presentation introduced the 3Rs from their beginning with publication of "The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique" by Russell and Burch, to the principles we now know, which have developed over the past 50 years. The 3Rs were formally adopted in UK legislation in 2012. UK opinion polls (Ipsos-MORI, 2018) suggest public support for animal research is conditional on the 3Rs being applied, and the UK regulator expects application of the 3Rs in all project licence applications.

In the UK and elsewhere in the world, grants are available for scientific studies that expressly support the 3Rs through 3Rs centres, which are centrally funded grant-awarding bodies which work to develop and advance use of the 3Rs. These centres ensure that "alternatives" to animals are correctly funded, overseen and applied by research organisations. In the UK the NC3Rs fulfills this role, and its success has led to the establishment of 3Rs centres globally.

Prof Sloan showed how the NC3Rs' work has led development of understanding and application of the 3Rs. He gave an example of an NC3Rs project from his own career, in which a "tooth slice" preparation was developed to test new dental treatments as an alternative to an *in vivo* method. This method used just one animal to create ten slices; producing eight test slices with two controls for each animal so providing a ten-fold reduction in animal use for modelling periodontal disease.

A similar reduction model was used for assessing novel antimicrobial therapeutics for dental disease, and there are now over 500 citations for this model and those developed around this methodology.

The 3Rs in Australia

- Universities, institutes and agencies champion 3Rs in their guidelines and documents
- 3Rs awards are made as part of Animal Welfare Excellence Awards
- ANZCCART's Openness work allows showcasing of 3Rs research
- NSW's creation of the non-animal technologies network (NatNet): www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/nat-net/
- Wider coverage of 3Rs research at ANZCCART meetings

Prof Sloan conclued that funders and institutions could and should do more to lead, rather than follow when it comes to the 3Rs, with dedicated funding, research support and more content that shares practical 3Rs innovations.

Developing a 3D chronic wound model using animal-free products

Dr Rachael Moses, the University of Melbourne

Chronic wounds affect 420,000 Australians and treatment costs a total of $3bn every year. Those impacted suffer from pain, lack of mobility, psychological impact and increased morbidity. These factors are especially impactful for older people and those dealing with obesity or diabetes. Current therapies are unable to meet the needs of patients, and new treatments are needed.

This study sought to evaluate new treatments for chronic wounds which overcame the limitations of both monolayer *in vitro* models, and animal models. Funding requirements for the study stipulated that no animal products were to be used, so the aim of the project was to develop a viable 3D chronic wound model substituting all animal-based components and reagents for non-animal equivalents.

Dr Moses described the long process of sourcing suitable non-animal alternatives for cell-culture and other reagents, and then evaluating them to test their suitablility for the study. Once the required materials and reagents had been aquired, the 3D model was built by seeding fibroblasts into cell inserts using synthetic hydrogel, then adding keratinocytes and reestablishing a stratified epidermis, before carrying out histological analysis and assessing wound closure using biopsy punches. It was then possible to evaluate the wound healing in response to novel theraputics using the new 3D model.

Dr Moses found that a self-assembling peptide hydrogel model, based on PeptiGel® Alpha 4 which mimics the extracellular matrix, provided an effective 3D model for chronic wounds, and could be used together with non-animal derived reagents to study changes to chronic wound fibroblasts and epidermal keratinocytes. She was able to demonstrate that this model can be used to assess the suitability of novel compounds as candidates for the treatment of chronic wound injuries, so developing a new and completely animal-free alternative to *in vivo* models of chronic wounds.

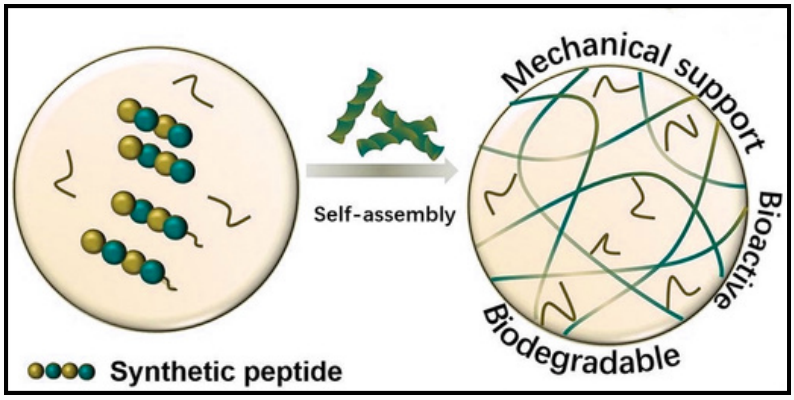


Figure 3.
Substituting animal-models with self assembling synthetic peptides

Reduction: Creating a video training library

Associate Professor Peta Grigsby, the Bionics Institute

Associate Professor Peta Grigsby presented an approach to reducing the number of animals used in experiments to the minimum necessary, beyond sample sizes and other statistical methods of managing numbers.

Reduction is concerned with enabling the proposed aims of a given study to be achieved with fewer animals, whilst still ensuring that sufficient numbers are used to collect meaningful data. One approach to reduction is to maximise the amount of data collected per animal, without compromising animal welfare.

At the Bionics Institute reduction is achieved through multiple techniques, including statistical methods (usually through study design, power calculations), internal controls and/or historical data, repetition of procedures or carrying out multiple procedures without causing greater harm and real-time data analysis between animal cohorts.

Surgical training is also used to reduce the numbers of animals involved in the development of new medical devices. The training includes prototype testing and surgical training in animal cadavers, inclusion of a small cohort of animals in AEC applications to allow for surgical training, a video library of surgical procedures, and live-streamed surgeries (of device development stages).

In this session, Assoc Prof Grigsby showed how the development of a surgical training library could serve as a strategy to reduce animal use, so that one animal can provide on-going training for limitless numbers of people.

Figure 4.
The microscope equipped with a video camera in the surgical suite

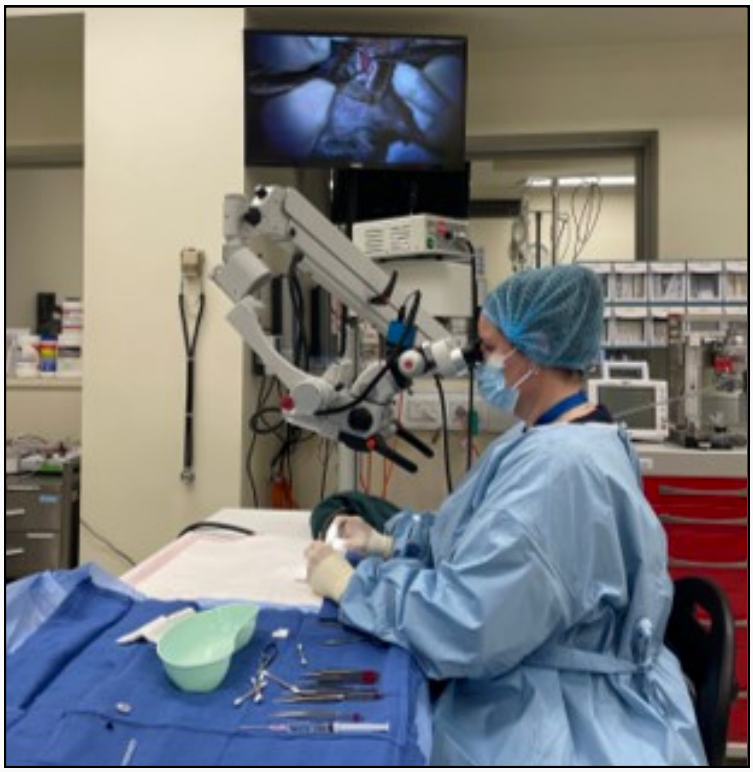
The surgical training library consists of 25 surgical procedures (both recovery and non-recovery), including protocols with mice, rats, guinea pigs and cats. The aim is to demonstrate techniques and to allow those learning to retain knowledge without relearning procedures and using additional animals. Staff can review the procedures at any time, and the videos are used both to support training staff in new methods and to provide refresher training under the institutional Competency Training Program.

For new Bionics Institute staff and students the video library provides initial observational training in anatomy and physiology, as well as leading to multiple collaborations, as new team members can be easily trained.

In the surgical suite a camera is simply attached to the microscope so that surgery can be viewed in real time and subsequently. This simple innovation has allowed researchers, engineers and the animal team to work together to troubleshoot device development, and to explain the process of surgery to the engineers as they watch, helping them to understand precisely what is needed from the devices. It has also enabled group training, as multiple staff and students can observe the surgery close-up simultaneously.

Surgeries have also been streamed over Teams conference calls to enable real-time troubleshooting with remote teams, and even with international collaborators.

Figure 5.
Surgery carried out on camera enables training, trouble-shooting and collaboration.



Since its introduction at the Bionics Institute, this approach has reduced device development time and allowed research goals to be met more quickly, while also reducing the numbers of animals needed to train research teams and correct surgical implantation tecniques.

Refinement: The support and safeguard of animal well-being

Dr Felicity Jackling, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Dr Felicity Jackling, Laboratory Manager at the Breast Cancer Laboratory of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI), showed an example of how their laboratory has refined a technique used to study mouse mammary glands in cancer research, to support better animal well-being while improving experimental outcomes.

The route of drug administration can dramatically impact the tolerability of a drug delivery procedure. In her presentation, Felicity highlighted a published study which showed that precoating the needle with sucrose reduced the time to passage, decreased observable stress-related reactions to the procedure and maintained plasma corticosterone levels similar to those in mice that did not receive gavage.

A similar method was employed in the delivery of drugs in the study of breast cancer in mice, and Felicity summarised how this refinement of drug administration had improved the tolerability of oral gavage delivery of drugs, leading to better animal welfare and experimental outcomes.

The development of this refinement technique in this area of research was the result of collaboration between the researchers, animal technicians, veterinarians and the WEHI animal ethics committee.

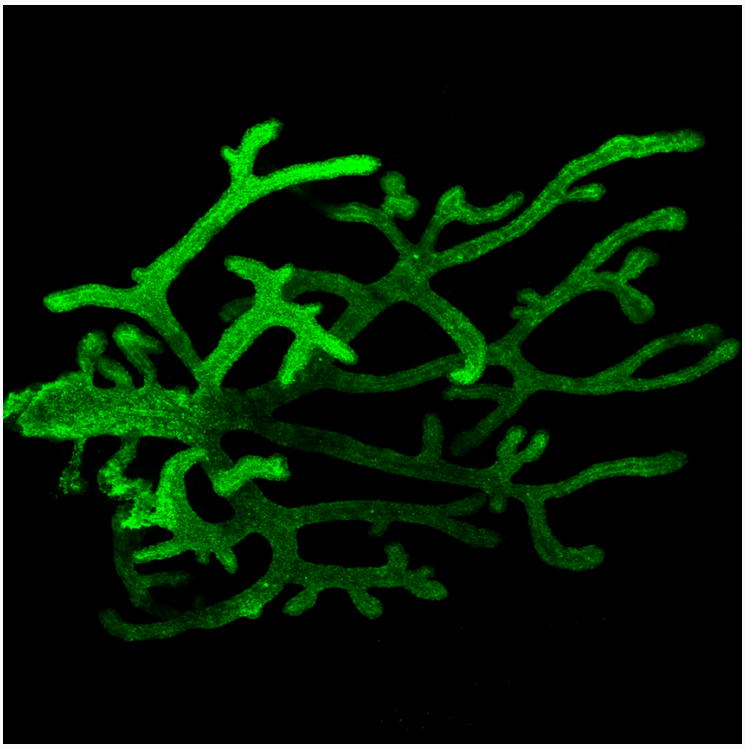


Figure 6.

Mammary gland of a 4 day-old mouse

Credit: Mammary gland, 4 day-old mouse. Olivia Harris, Felicity Davis, Bethan Lloyd-Lewis and Christine Watson, University of Cambridge. Source: Wellcome Collection. Image use under licence: cc 4.0

Discussion 3

Humane Endpoints

This discussion was led by Dr John Inns, who discussed humane endpoints, how they are defined and their scrutiny by AECs.

A humane endpoint of a study was defined as “a pre-defined point at which an animal’s involvement in a study is concluded in order to minimise the welfare impact while still achieving the scientific goals”. Ensuring that appropriate humane endpoints are adhered to is a shared responsibility of the researcher, the animal ethics committee, animal welfare officer/vet and the animal facility team.

Dr Inns gave his presentation and then led a discussion on humane endpoints and animal monitoring, focusing on the use of score sheets as a means of health monitoring and noting whether a humane endpoint had been reached.

When it is not possible to replace animals in research, the research team, overseen by the AEC, are ethically bound to minimise pain and suffering, while still achieving the scientific objectives. One way to minimise suffering is by setting clearly defined endpoints for the project.

The Code (3.1.26) identifies three key time points within a project:
Experimental endpoint/s – earliest time at which data can be obtained and the study completed.
Humane endpoint/s – humane killing required regardless of whether the aims of the study have been achieved.
Intervention point/s – action required to minimise pain and distress.

These anticipated and pre-defined endpoints can be complicated, because sometimes a sick mouse will recover, so a judgement must be made as to whether the animal should be killed to prevent its suffering.

Monitoring sheets can be used to determine if an intervention point or humane endpoint has been reached. The aim of using these sheets and a structured scoring system is to reduce observer variability and to provide a more objective approach to welfare assessment.

Monitoring sheets are expected to be designed for a specific protocol and used to support a team that includes researchers, technicians and vets in the detection of clinical signs of pain, distress or impending death.

However, they still rely on on good powers of observation, which take account of what is normal for an individual animal. Where monitoring sheets are used their impact on welfare should be reviewed and assessed to help guide care in future experiments. For example, the frequency of monitoring required should be considered and assessed following the experiments.

In designing and assessing the relevance of score sheets for welfare assessment, the AEC members present were invited to consider what might be appropriate for a particular protocol, what information might help assessement, and what specific numbers (hard endpoints) and interventions might be relevant. Specific items, such as the expected numbers of adverse events for the protocol, should be in line with the institutional policy, and reflected in tools such as score sheets that facilitate welfare monitoring and the correct application of endpoints.

For further reading on monitoring sheets see: Systematic approach for establishing humane endpoints (David Morton, 2000)

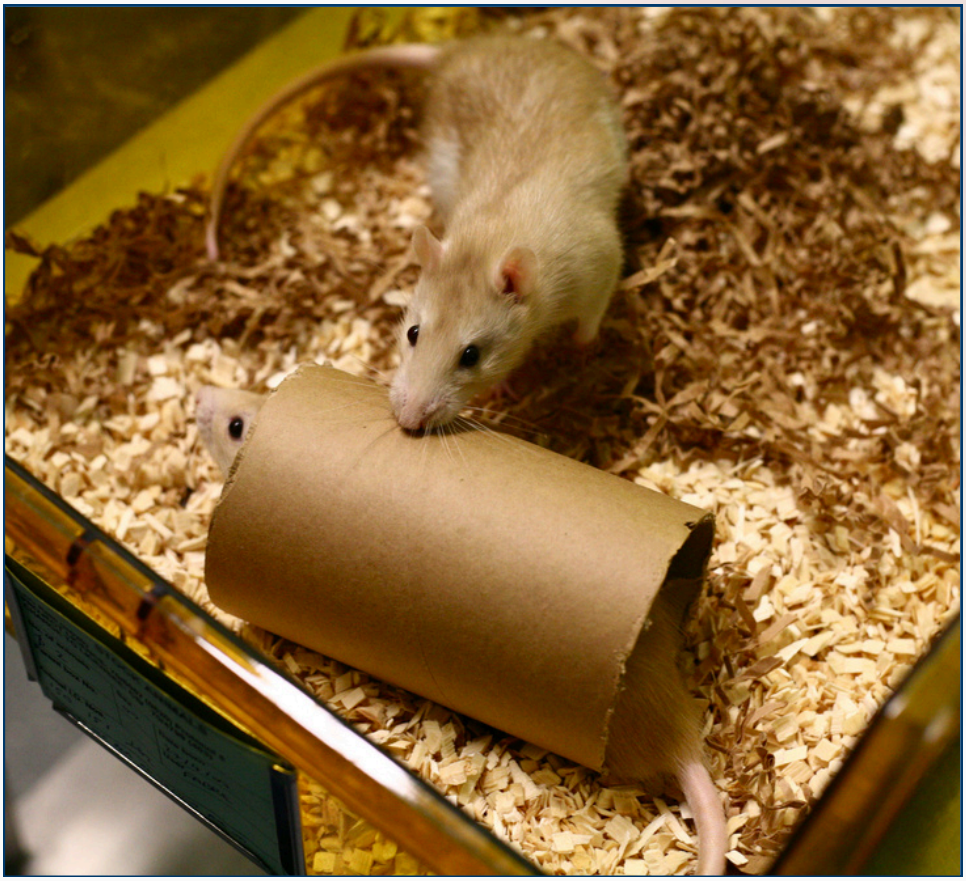


Figure 7. Brown rats in their home cage. Image by Understanding Animal Reseach

Discussion 4

Communication: Giving and receiving feedback on AECs

Bella Lear, Chief Executive of Understanding Animal Research Oceania and convenor of this AEC forum, concluded the day with a session on giving and receiving feedback in situations where feedback is given publicly, such as AEC meetings.

Participants were invited to consider the ways that performers actively seek feedback from their peers and other recognised professionals in order to develop and improve their performances.

In a scratch performance, a show is perfomed to an audience of peers and others with expertise and at the end of the performance criticism and suggestions for improvement are invited. In this way, very specific critical feedback is provided to help identify changes that would improve the audience's experience of a show.

When a researcher presents to the AEC they also invite constructive critcism of their project proposal from a group with particular expertise, who might identify ideas they have missed. While attending an AEC meeting can be a nerve-wracking experience for researchers, they are inviting the critique of the AEC to help improve their study design, noticing the details that they cannot and providing another viewpoint. Giving and receiving feedback will be a more positive experience for both the AEC members and researchers if they approach the process with the aim of collaborating to create a better project that meets the welfare needs of the animals and the study outcomes of the research team as well as possible.

Why is feedback important?

Why is feedback difficult?

Figure 8. AEC Forum participant responses: Why is feedback important? Why is feedback difficult?

Principles to employ when delivering critical feedback with a committee present

Don’t be mean, do be clear
No one likes criticism, but everyone benefits from perspective. Even when the feedback is critical, leave no room for doubt or interpretation. You are not being kind by failing to provide the right feedback, you are harming the other person and their project through inaction.

Be supportive and sincere
The aim of any feedback should be to help the other person improve and to get a better outcome for their project. Feedback will land better when you are sincere in wanting to help. Use praise where it is valid and deserved, but don't "sandwich" critical feedback, or it can all sound false. Striking a balance between being candid and sincely supportive is a difficult thing to do, and it will not always work out, which is ok. Focus on helping everyone get the benefit of your perspective rather than making criticism “land better”.

Be specific and objective
Refer to a specific item or point, and be as precise as possible. Do not criticise the person. In a scratch performance, the best feedback is often technical and highly specific because these changes can be made easily. Some committees require the feedback to reference the part of the Code that applies, and this can help prevent feedback from becoming generalised.

Don’t smile when delivering critcism
Don't laugh or make a joke either. Sometimes people do this to soften the critique and to be more empathetic but it looks insincere at best. In facilitation practice this is called "smiling demolition" and it can be very hurtful to the recipient.

When receiving feedback, listen
Try to ask clarifying questions to show you have understood. Treat the feedback as an opportunity to see another perspective. If you disagree, it is ok to say so, but be very clear about why, and focus on the specific detail. Remember that giving feedback is difficult to do, and thank the person for their time and input if appropriate.

Annex I

Agenda

9:30 - 10:00	Arrival and refreshments
10:00 - 10:30	Welcome and introductions
10:30 - 11:30	**Discussion 1: Regulation**
11:30 - 11:40	Comfort break
11:40 - 12:40	**Discussion 2: 3Rs**
12:40 - 12:45	Morning wrap-up
12:45 - 13:45	Lunch
13:45 - 14:45	**Discussion 3: End-points**
14:45 - 15:15	Break
15:15 - 16:15	**Discussion 4: Communication**
16:20 - 16:30	Closing comments
16:30 - 18:00	Networking Drinks

Annex II

Speakers

Bella Lear

Chief Executive, Understanding Animal Research Oceania
ajlear@uaroceania.org

Bella is a science communicator, and social researcher, who supports positive social change around scientific issues. As Head of Engagement at Understanding Animal Research, Bella created stakeholder and public engagement initiatives to change thinking about animals used in research. She was an instigator of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK, which she led for many years, as a way to drive open and constructive communication between the research community, policy makers and the public. Now leading Understanding Animal Research Oceania, Bella provides communications support to build better understanding and representation of animal-based research in Australia, New Zealand and the Oceania region.

Malinda Godino

Manager Scientific and Pest Animals Licensing, Animal Welfare Victoria

The Victorian Regulator for animals used in research and teaching is represented by Animal Welfare Victoria. The Scientific and Pest Animals Licensing team regulate animal use by administering scientific licences, monitoring compliance and enforcing legislation. Malinda Godino has an Honours degree in Science from the University of Melbourne. She started her career as a research scientist working on remediation of contaminated land. Malinda is a seasoned regulator, with over 15 years experience working in the invasive species, domestic animals and scientific licensing teams, and was also the senior advisor to two Chief Executives of Agriculture Victoria.

Meagan McPharlin

Senior Officer Scientific and Pest Animals Licensing, Animal Welfare Victoria

Meagan has a degree in Science and a Masters in Business Administration from Murdoch University. After 25 years working in the zoo industry as an animal keeper for everything from primates to reptiles, and then as a team leader predominantly involved with native species conservation programmes, Meagan commenced her regulatory career two years ago with the Scientific and Pest Animals Licensing team.

Professor Alastair Sloan

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Collaborations), the University of Melbourne

alastair.sloan@unimelb.edu.au

Professor Sloan joined the University of Melbourne in 2020 as the Head of the Dental School. A highly accomplished bioscientist, he holds a BSc in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Wales, and a PhD in Oral Pathology from the University of Birmingham. His research focuses on tissue repair and regeneration, the role of stem cells in oral tissue repair, development of innovative materials for clinical use and 3D organotypic culture systems for tissue repair and engineering. Professor Sloan was appointed Chair of the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) in 2023, and is vice-president of the International Association of Dental Research (IADR) Australia and New Zealand Division.

Dr John Inns

Animal Welfare Officer, Monash University

john.inns@monash.edu

John graduated from Cambridge University in England, but has spent the majority of his veterinary career in Australia. The first half of his career was in general veterinary practice, but this evolved into teaching roles at Sydney and Melbourne Universities. After a period of teaching the Diploma of Animal Technology at Box Hill TAFE, his career progressed into that of an AWO at RMIT and Latrobe Universities. He became one of the few veterinarians in Australia to achieve Membership of the ANZCVS in Medicine and Management of Laboratory Animals in 2018. After so many years immersed in the sciences he finally gave in to his artistic side and has recently completed an MA in Photography at Falmouth University.

Dr Rachael Moses

Research Associate, Melbourne Dental School
rachael.moses@unimelb.edu.au

Dr Moses' interests lie in natural compound pharmaceuticals for wound healing, in particular for chronic, non-healing wounds, and on promoting the 3Rs (reduction, replacement, refinement), through development of 3D wound models. Rae obtained her PhD in Tissue Engineering from Cardiff University, focusing on the underlying mechanisms of action by which drugs promote preferential wound healing responses. This work resulted in her inclusion as an inventor on a worldwide patent, in collaboration with QBiotics Group and QIMR Berghofer, Australia. In another collaboration with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in the UK, Rae studied effects of plant-derived saps on inflammatory, fibroblast and keratinocyte responses associated with impaired healing of tropical ulcers.

Associate Professor Peta Grigsby

Animal Research Team Leader, the Bionics Institute
pgrigsby@bionicsinstitute.org

Associate Professor Grigsby has over 20 years experience developing animal models for research, and working with species including monkeys, sheep, cats, guinea pigs and rodents. Peta obtained her PhD at Monash University and completed her postdoctoral fellowship in the USA, before working in the US in research for 17 years. She completed her Certificate in Clinical and Translational Research at the Oregon Health & Sciences University, and was a member of the Oregon National Primate Research Center's Animal Ethics Committee for eight years. Peta holds a Certificate in Veterinary Nursing, specialised in anaesthesia and analgesia, accredited though the Australian College of Veterinary Nursing, and was made an honorary Associate Professor with the University of Melbourne in 2024.

Felicity Jackling

Laboratory Manager, Cancer Biology and Stem Cells Division, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
jackling.f@wehi.edu.au

Felicity Jackling is laboratory manager in the Cancer Biology and Stem Cells Division at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. She obtained her undergraduate Science degree from the University of Melbourne and completed an Honours research project in the Department of Genetics. Within the same department she completed her PhD titled "A genetic investigation of congenital defects in alpacas". Post-PhD she moved into the field of medical research. Within her current role she facilitates research using mouse models to understand the relationship between stem cells and cancer.

Annex III

Participating organisations

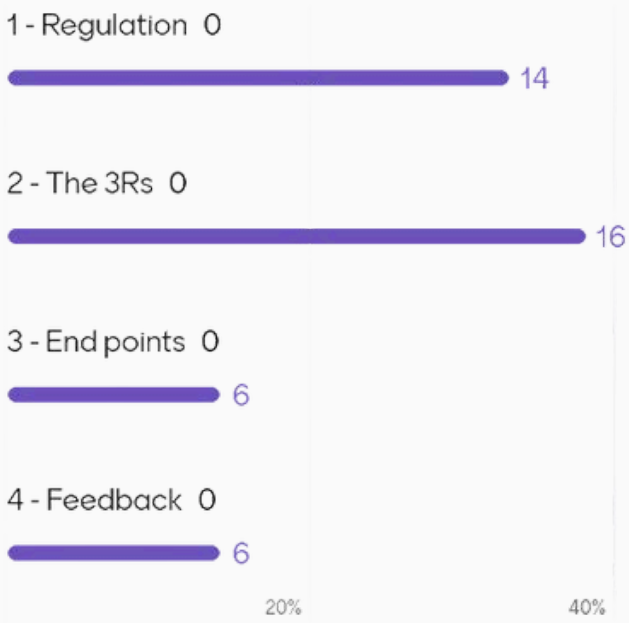
The University of Melbourne	Understanding Animal Research Oceania
ANSTO	St Vincent's Hospital
Monash University	The Baker Research Institute
ACDP / CSIRO	RMIT
The Florey Institute	WEHI
La Trobe University	The Murdoch Children's Research Institute
Animal Welfare Victoria	The Bionics Institute

Annex IV

Participant feedback

Overall experience

Favourite discussion



Participants enjoyed

Networking	Networking
The 3rs talk	Discussion with other AEC
AEC diversity	Meeting with colleagues
Meeting people	Meeting aec members
Talking to colleagues	Interactive sessions
Networking	Sharing with peers
Regulators presentation	Discussions
Networking	Learning
Chatting with members of other committees	Variety of interesting topics
Meeting people	Bella's enthusiasm!
Interactive sessions	The international work influencing the 3Rs
Putting Regulator faces to names and better understanding their approach to compliance.	Networking opportunities Collaborating on similar challenges Seeing how others tackle the same ethical issue
Hearing directly the perspectives of AWV, and being able to have shared discussions with members of other AECs	Kangaroo case study discussion
Opportunity to connect with people on different AEC committees. Engaging and relevant presentations.	Seeing a real life regulator
Interaction	Discussions with other AEC's, different processes
Gaining a broader perspective of the work of AECs outside my own AEC	Learning about others research
The 3R's	Presentation by Peta Grisby in plain language.
Information from other AEC' s members Meeting the regulators	Meeting people Hearing different opinions
Discussion with other AEC Bella's enthusiasm	Meeting and discussing with new colleagues
Presentations - very helpful.. Networking opportunities Q & A's	Peta' s presentation on training videos, clear and plain language content , relatable and relevant Felicity's discussion on oral vgavage was again well presented, plain language and a take away that
Agree with wallaby case study comment: what can go wrong with approval process	Hearing that there is no perfect monitoring sheet. Something we have always struggled with
Benefit of sucrose coated gavage needle	

Participants learned

- Others face the same challenges
- The reason we use number 5 a lot.
- That I should review monitoring sheets!
- Continuing work in the space of the 3Rs
- Number 5 is alive
- Different opinions and ways of looking at applications.
- The importance and impact we have within an AEC
- Regulators approach
- Similar issues across other facilities
- Not to smile when delivering criticism
- How different ethics meeting are run,
- That other AECs are more aligned with my own AEC than I thought.
- The 5 Domain model
- Universal commitment of individual AWC member to support ethical care and use of animals.
- Sucrose..thanks for the reminder
- Sucrose use in animals
- Gradations of compliance
- A bit about how the regulator works
- The use of sucrose
- Benefit of inviting investigators to attend a meeting
- The viewpoint of the regulator
- How other committee's work
- Practical ways the 3Rs are being applied in actual research.
- Communication tips reinforced.
- The 5 Domains Model
- 3Rs options.
- AEC similar concerns
- The level of no compliance!
- Sucrose for oral gavage
- We all have different opinions and ways of managing similar challenges both ethically and administratively
- Benefit of sucrose coated gavage needle
- Importance of feedback and effect Focus of investigators on reduction
- Breath of program.
- How to assess a monitoring sheet
- No incentive to report non compliance to AWV as they have become a more punitive than educative agency
- Australia is lagging behind in promotion and adoption of the 3Rs.
- 5 domains model
- Not to smile while giving feedback
- Views from other AEC members.

Even better if...

This is the first of a series of AEC meetings.

People waited for the microphone

More researchers attend this forum

More on audits,

More. Than annually

We could have our own NC3Rs body in Victoria / Australia

Although it may be different, I dont think it can be be better

More conflict examples that could be handled better

Longer opportunity to ask the regulators how they interprets specifics in the code. Still differences in opinions.

I knew where to find the meeting rooms

More case studies to work through with the regulator as a mediator

This was a repeat event

This is not a one-off event :)

I knew how to wave at the doors...

Continue annually with similar programs.

A researcher gave an account of their experience of the ethics process

If AWV had acknowledged we are generally experienced AEC members and presented accordingly

There were too many breaks without necessarily ways to encourage networking during the empty time

Annex V

Selected references & resources

Animal research and ethics resources

UAR Oceania
https://www.uaroceania.org

ANZCCART Australian Openness Agreement
https://anzccart.adelaide.edu.au/openness-agreement

IPSOS Mori (2018) Public Attitudes to Animal Research.
https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-05/18-040753-01_ols_public_attitudes_to_animal_research_report_v3_191118_public.pdf

Whittaker, DRA et al. (2022) Australian Community Attitudes towards the use of Animals in Research. https://anzccart.adelaide.edu.au/ua/media/664/attitudes-animal-research-survey-report2.pdf

3Rs

Hoggatt AF, Hoggatt J, Honerlaw M, Pelus LM. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down: a novel technique to improve oral gavage in mice. J Am Assoc Lab Anim Sci. 2010 May;49(3):329-34. PMID: 20587165; PMCID: PMC2877306.National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.

Moses, Rachael, L. (2023) Evidence for Natural Products as Alternative Wound-Healing Therapies. Biomolecules 13(3):444 DOI:10.3390/biom13030444

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2017 (Updated July 2018), Best practice methodology in the use of animals for scientific purposes.

NatNet: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/nat-net/

Norcopa website with details of 3Rs centres and events worldwide https://norecopa.no/

NC3Rs is the UK 3Rs centre. There website contains many valuable resources for driving the 3Rs www.nc3rs.org.uk

3RsC is the North American 3Rs Collaborative, with a wide range of free resources https://3rc.org/.

Russell, W.M.S. and Burch, R.L. (1959) The principles of humane experimental technique, London: Methuen & Co. Limited.

Humane end points

Morton, David, B. (2000) A systematic approach for establishing humane endpoints. ILAR J. ;41(2):80-6. https://doi:10.1093/ilar.41.2.80

UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL RESEARCH OCEANIA

Milton House, 123 Fitzroy Street
St Kilda 3182 VIC, Australia

www.uaroceania.org

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Allentown ANZ
Improving Life – it's in our DNA.®
powered by BioSafety