

6.5.3 Animal Care and Protection Act 2001

Animal welfare

The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* and the accompanying *Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2002* govern the treatment and use of all animals in Queensland. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is responsible for enforcement of the legislation. The purpose is to prevent animal suffering, to improve the welfare of animals and to ensure all use of animals for scientific purposes is justified, open and accountable. “Scientific purposes” is defined to include activities for the purposes of demonstration and teaching. The legislation covers animals described as “any live vertebrate, including live prenatal or prehatched creatures in the last half of gestation or development”, and includes amphibians, birds, fish, mammals and reptiles. It does not include the eggs, spat or spawn of fish, nor invertebrates such as octopi, squid, crabs, crayfish, lobsters and prawns. Further details of the categories covered by the legislation can be obtained from the DPI&F website www.dpi.qld.gov.au under “Using animals for scientific purposes” and “What is an animal?”

The Act also requires compliance with the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*. The current version is the 7th edition 2004, which can be downloaded from www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/_files/ea16.pdf. The Code defines an animal for the purposes of use in teaching as “any live non-human vertebrate, that is, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock, wildlife, and also cephalopods such as octopus and squid”. National codes of practice are available for most livestock industries, and outline acceptable standards of husbandry and management. There are also Model Codes of Practice covering areas such as transporting livestock, saleyards and abattoirs. In Queensland, the national livestock codes are used as the minimum standard. These Model Codes of Practice are available from the CSIRO website www.csiro.au/

If you intend to use animals for scientific purposes (which includes teaching), in order to comply with the Act:

- 1 you (or your employing institution) must register with the DPI&F and nominate the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) that will assess your animal use
- 2 you must ensure all animal use is approved by the AEC before the activity
- 3 you must provide an annual report to the DPI&F of activities where animals are used.

An employer may register with the DPI&F as a “user of animals for scientific purposes” to cover employee activities requiring the use of animals for scientific purposes. An animal ethics application must be made to the AEC for each “use of animals” or “type of use of animals” for a series of similar events. AECs may approve activities that are frequently repeated in a school program. Approval can be sought for a three-year period but activities must be reported annually to the AEC.

The Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee (QSAEC) is required to meet and assess written applications for every educational activity that involves using animals for scientific purposes in Queensland schools. The QSAEC is a cross-sector committee linking Education Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland, and includes members drawn from the scientific and wider community to bring a diversity of knowledge, values and beliefs to the committee.

Animals must not be used for scientific purposes in any Queensland school without written approval from the QSAEC. The QSAEC meets once a term — usually during the third week of each term. There are at least four meetings of the QSAEC each year.

The main task of the members of the Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee is to weigh up the benefits and costs of using animals in schools. The QSAEC members decide whether the proposed activities have justified the use of animals and that the welfare of those animals has been considered. More information on the QSAEC and its activities can be found at <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/qsaec.html>

Employing authorities are currently considering ways they can support schools to comply with requirements. You should check with your employing authority for the details of any guidelines or processes in place to assist you to meet the requirements of the legislation.

Further information and resources on animal ethics can be found at <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/animal-ethics.html>

Source: Biology Senior Syllabus

© The State of Queensland (Queensland Studies Authority) 2004
Amended 2006