



THE ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN

2007-2012

Animal Welfare Science Centre

Strategic Plan

2007 - 2012

Background

The Animal Welfare Science Centre was established in 1997 by the University of Melbourne, Monash University and the Department of Primary Industries (Victoria) as a collaborative Centre for research, teaching and training in animal welfare.

The Centre also has a formal collaborative agreement with the Department of Animal Science at the Ohio State University (OSU). As part of this agreement, the Centre provides and delivers animal welfare teaching modules into course curricula at OSU, assists in the establishment and delivery of training programs on animal handling and welfare for the livestock industries in the US and partners OSU in collaborative animal welfare research.

The Centre has considerable research and teaching capacity in animal welfare science and has made a number of important national and international contributions to research, teaching and training.

The Centre provides collaborative support and focus for each of the partner organisations' academic and research resources in animal welfare and comprises the one of largest groups of animal welfare researchers in the world.

The Centre conducts research across 3 program areas:

1. Welfare methodology.
2. Housing and husbandry effects on animal welfare.
3. Attitudes to animals and animal welfare, and farmer, consumer and community behaviour.

These programs support the fourth program area:

4. Tertiary and post-graduate education and training

Through these programs, the Centre aims to:

- Develop scientifically defensible welfare methodology.
- Use scientifically defensible methodology to establish, amend or validate animal welfare standards and practices.
- Develop and support industry education and training strategies and provide scientific advice to support the modification of codes of practice and the development of quality assurance programs to introduce scientifically defensible welfare standards in the animal industries.

- Understand public and consumer attitudes to animal welfare to assist Governments and industry in
 - developing animal welfare policy
 - assuring local and international consumers, public and other governments of the sound welfare standards for Australian domestic animals.
- Ensure tertiary students entering the animal industries are better prepared to provide sound, science-based advice on animal welfare practices to industry, interest groups and the public.
- Provide high quality postgraduate and postdoctoral training for the next generation of researchers and teachers in animal welfare science.

A review of the scientific performance of the Centre was undertaken in 2002. The review was commissioned to evaluate the Centre's scientific performance over the first five years and to identify issues and opportunities that need to be addressed by the partner organisations for its future success.

The review made the following recommendations with regard to communications from the Centre:

“Communications and marketing strategies be developed to plan a more proactive role for the Animal Welfare Science Centre in industry and community education and public debate on the science associated with animal welfare, to achieve an improved national profile, through:

- *Engaging specialists in communications and marketing to develop and implement detailed strategies and plans for publicising the issues being addressed by the Centre and its achievements; and*
- *Identifying key stakeholders, including livestock industry funding bodies, the messages that need to be delivered to them, and mechanisms for effectively communicating these messages.”*

As a first step towards addressing the above issues, the Centre Board of Management directed that a Strategic Plan for the Centre be formulated to provide a clear path forward for the Centre and its staff.

This Strategic Plan has been prepared through extensive consultation with senior staff of the Centre, the Centre Advisory Committee, the Board of Management and key stakeholders.

A further review of the scientific performance of the Centre will be undertaken in 2009.

Operating Environment

Human-domestic animal relationships are inevitably unequal, involving human management and control of animals. Thus the management of animals by humans is basically governed by two important principles and applies to a range of animal uses from individual pets to livestock production. These are, on the one hand, management to comply with the objectives of human profit, benefits or pleasure, and on the other hand, management responsibilities under a duty of humane care of animals. The latter is based on the widely-held view in our community that the use of animals by humans is acceptable provided that such use is humane.

Animal welfare is an increasingly contributing perspective in society, strongly influencing views on animal use in society and the acceptability of various animal management options. It has its origins in an array of experiences, which can arouse strong sentiments but disparate individual targets for attention.

Stakeholders in the animal welfare domain thus include the public, generally as consumers, owners or concerned observers, special interest groups, businesses based on the commercial supply of animals and

animal products and those developing, implementing or auditing compliance with relevant policy at government or community level. Thus consumer and public attitudes to animal welfare have the potential to dramatically affect the use of animals in society, influencing for better or for worse, the operations of livestock industries, medical research, the management of feral and wild animals and the care of recreational and companion animals.

Failure to assure these stakeholders that the welfare standards for domestic animals are underpinned by sound science will not only risk the adoption of new technology in the animal industries, but has the potential to adversely influence the profitability and viability of these industries by affecting specific animal uses.

While consumer and public attitudes to animal welfare ultimately determine society's use of domestic animals, science has a critical role in underpinning society's decisions on animal use and the attendant conditions and compromises. Lack of awareness of factual information means that many people are ignorant of the conditions under which domestic animals live, how they are treated and their species-specific requirements.

Thus there are basically four key areas of activity necessary to rationally address animal welfare:

- animal welfare science
- understanding public and consumer attitudes to animal welfare
- public education and
- industry education

It is important to gain an understanding of public and consumer attitudes. Reliable and valid measures for monitoring community attitudes about animal welfare will assist Governments, industry and scientific and community groups in establishing research, education and regulatory policy in animal welfare. It is clear that policy makers and the livestock industries need to be able to respond to these community concerns either through appropriate public education programs, supporting research and/or by changing industry practices.

For example, research on contentious welfare issues is required to underpin welfare standards. Furthermore, through public education, science has a critical role in underpinning society's decisions on animal use and the attendant conditions and compromises.

Finally, while research can be utilised to underpin the establishment, amendment or validation of industry welfare standards and practices, it is critical to deliver industry education, through staff selection and training strategies, and modify legislation, codes of practice and/or welfare QA programs to achieve these welfare standards.

The Australian community, Industry and Government is served by three major organisations which carry out research into animal welfare and attitudes of the community towards animals:

- The Animal Welfare Science Centre
- The Centre for Animal Welfare & Ethics, (CAWE) at the University of Queensland and
- The Animal Welfare Unit of CSIRO

The Animal Welfare Science Centre has built upon key discipline strengths of animal behaviour, stress physiology and psychology and their importance in studying human/animal interaction, animal housing and husbandry and community attitudes/behaviour.

The Centre has received and continues to receive significant outside funding from the pork and poultry industries as well as funding from the wool and red meat industries however, it is important for the Centre to build upon existing linkages within all livestock industries, (especially dairy and lamb) and to work towards establishing a closer working relationship with the relevant funding bodies and industry organisations.

Our Vision

“Animal welfare and its constant improvement are societal and cultural norms”

Our Mission

“To contribute to improved animal welfare as a world leading provider of expert information, advice and education underpinned by rigorous research”

Values:

The Animal Welfare Science Centre adheres to and promotes the following values:

- Excellence:** Using high quality science in a range of established and emerging disciplines relevant to animal welfare.
- Relevance:** Meeting community needs.
- Responsiveness:** Consult with animal industries, animal welfare organisations, Government and the general community to address immediate and longer term animal welfare challenges relevant to Australia.
- Leadership:** Providing international leadership in animal welfare research and training, by providing authoritative advice, supported by high ethical standards.
- Balance:** Supporting all relevant forms of research and education, including physiological, behavioral, philosophical and attitudinal research targeted at animal welfare.
- Working with partners:** Supporting research and education across the Centre's partner organisations.
- Impact:** Providing even-handed and independent advice on policy, practice and commercial / social impacts.
- Collaboration:** Collaborating nationally and internationally.
- Accountability:** Operating at the highest professional and transparent standards and promoting a culture of rigorous project evaluation to demonstrate an improvement in animal welfare.
- Diversity:** Embracing a richly diverse workforce, operating in a collaborative, open, sharing and safe environment.

Scope:

The Animal Welfare Science Centre will conduct research and education activities building upon its key strengths in the areas of:

- Human / animal interactions
- Community attitudes to animal welfare
- Welfare methodology
- Housing
- Animal behaviour
- Stress Physiology
- Veterinary medicine
- Psychology

And will focus these activities in the following sectors:

- Farm animals
- Companion animals
- Animals in research

The Centre will also be responsive to emerging sectors including:

- Pest animals

Strategic Objectives:

This Strategic Plan covers the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2012 and has four strategic objectives:

1. To conduct rigorous, innovative, basic and applied research to improve animal welfare
2. To establish the Animal Welfare Science Centre as a leading international source of independent, authoritative animal welfare advice.
3. To provide relevant, high quality education and training.
4. To constantly improve the capability of the Animal Welfare Science Centre.

Objective 1 To conduct rigorous, innovative, basic and applied research to improve animal welfare

Key Strategies	Mechanisms
Identify research priorities	Regular meetings with stakeholders, report to board Conduct regular research planning meetings with partner organisation Produce annual, board-approved, RD&E priority plan
Align priorities and capability	Relevant senior scientists to assess on case by case basis
Undertake fundamental and applied research to support partner priorities and community needs	Review risks / gaps
Attract high profile international scientists	Source relevant funding Maintain range of facilities and technical staff
For every project, identify and engage the next user	Build in to every project development Develop mechanisms to measure adoption of project outcomes
Increase level of funding	Expand funding base (philanthropic trusts) Actively seek funding relevant to RD&E priority plan Explore the establishment of a charitable foundation

Key Performance Indicators – To be reported in Annual Report

- **Increase funding by 10% annually**
- **Increase invitations to present at conferences**
- **Increase the publication of papers in high quality journals**
- **Increase the impact factor of publications**
- **Increase the level of “repeat business”**

Objective 2 To establish the Animal Welfare Science Centre as a leading international source of independent, authoritative animal welfare advice

Key Strategies	Mechanisms
Increase awareness of Centre and its programs to Government, other stakeholders and the general community	<p>Ensure the Centre takes an active part in the AAWS</p> <p>Ensure Centre is represented on a wide range of advisory committees</p> <p>Ensure that Centre scientists identify the Centre when delivering and submitting papers</p> <p>Quarterly publication of electronic Centre newsletter</p> <p>Regular, well-advertised scientific and general seminars</p> <p>Conduct interstate Animal Welfare Science Centre seminars</p> <p>Encourage scientists to undertake scientific reviews</p> <p>Train staff on effective presentation and communication of research</p> <p>Train key staff on communicating with the media</p>
Increase awareness of the Centre and its programs in the international research and regulatory sectors	<p>Develop RD & E in North America through association with Ohio State University</p> <p>Through established and new collaborations participate in international research</p> <p>Develop relationship with OIE through Massey University network and AAWS</p>

Objective 2 **To establish the Animal Welfare Science Centre as a leading international source of independent, authoritative animal welfare advice**
Continued

Key Strategies	Mechanisms
Provide advice to Government	<p>Ensure the Centre is represented on advisory committees</p> <p>Develop linkages with Government and respond to Government needs</p> <p>6 monthly meetings with Minister's advisor</p> <p>Formalise the relationship with the Bureau of Animal Welfare</p> <p>Develop key research on public attitudes towards animal welfare</p>
Provide advice to animal welfare groups	<p>Maintain regular contact / communications with RSPCA and Animal Australia</p> <p>Develop key research on public attitudes towards animal welfare</p>
Provide advice to Industry groups	<p>Participate in industry scientific events and field days</p> <p>Develop a close relationship with industry groups</p> <p>Develop key research on public attitudes towards animal welfare</p>

Key Performance Indicators – To be reported in Annual Report

- **Ensure Centre representation on education, research, production animals AAWS subcommittees**
- **Ensure Centre representation on AWAC and sub-committees**
- **Publication of quarterly electronic newsletter commencing early 2008**
- **Establish bi-annual meetings with Minister's advisor**
- **Establish research linkages throughout the value chain, from producer to consumer**
- **Measure publication of books and chapters**
- **Measure seminar attendance**
- **Measure presentations given at outside conferences / seminars**
- **Maintain a log of contacts for advice**

Objective 3 To provide relevant, high quality education and training

Key Strategies	Mechanisms
Provide undergraduate education utilising staff of the Centre	<p>Continue existing teaching at UoM, James Cook and OSU</p> <p>Contribute to curriculum development at UoM, Monash, OSU and James Cook</p> <p>UoM, together with OSU and Monash, develop “Animals in Society” under-graduate course at Monash university</p>
Promote animal welfare science to undergraduate students	Active participation at University “open days” and summer schools
Attract and retain high quality post-graduate students	<p>Provide excellent supervisors and student environment</p> <p>Provide and source good post-graduate scholarships</p> <p>Provide and source post-graduate travel awards</p>
Attract high quality post-doc researchers	Provide excellent working environment
Attract / host overseas students	Maintain and expand collaborative linkages
Develop industry training packages where applicable	<p>A plan for adoption of research by the next user will be built into every project developed</p> <p>Through participation in AAWS process develop relevant packages</p>

Key Performance Indicators – To be reported in Annual Report

- **Re-launch GAW as a “school certificate” at Monash University and/or as a Graduate Certificate at University of Melbourne**
- **Increase number of post-graduate students**

Objective 4 To constantly improve the capability of the Animal Welfare Science Centre

Key Strategies	Mechanisms
Create a shared vision for the Centre	<p>Maintain and develop communication between staff at each partner organisation</p> <p>Ensure open communication between the Board and Centre staff</p>
Ensure Centre maintains it's research and educational capabilities	<p>Advise Government on the most efficient way to deliver animal welfare benefits in Victoria</p> <p>Develop a succession plan and develop future leaders</p> <p>Identify "gaps" in capability and where applicable conduct staff training and/or recruit and/or seek collaboration</p>
Develop a common understanding of Centre and partner priorities and roles	<p>Board to be cognisant of partner priorities and to be responsible for alignment of Centre priorities with those of partner organisations</p> <p>Board to communicate via approval of annual RD&E priorities document</p>
Create opportunities for staff development	Managers to assist staff towards professional development
Undertake an external review of the Centre each 5 years	Appoint independent review panel every 5 years to review Centre performance against KPI's commencing in early 2009
Demonstrate a future for the Centre	<p>Ensure the other 3 objectives are met</p> <p>Regular interaction between staff both formally and informally</p>
Work closely with Centre for Animal Welfare & Ethics (UQ) and the Animal Welfare unit of CSIRO to ensure effective coordination of national animal welfare R&D	<p>Meet regularly with CAWE and CSIRO to share information regarding current capacity and future intentions regarding capability</p> <p>Seek opportunities to collaborate and share resources with CAWE and CSIRO wherever practical</p>

Key Performance Indicators – To be reported in Annual Report

- **Sponsor communications with regard to animal welfare strategy between the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development**
- **Formulate succession plan in mid 2008, identify future leaders**
- **Undertake 5 year review in 2009**
- **Monthly meetings of Executive**
- **Quarterly planning / protocol meetings for all staff**
- **Conduct annual Centre R&D planning meeting**
- **In collaboration with AAWS, work with CAWE and CSIRO, describe current animal welfare R&D capability in Australia, identify future capability requirements and develop a consolidated national plan to achieve this.**

Copies of the Animal Welfare Science Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012 are available on request from:

Executive Officer
Animal Welfare Science Centre
The University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010

An electronic version is available from:
www.animalwelfare.net.au

For more information phone 03 8344 8933

