



National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

NAEAC is a statutory committee, established under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) and supported by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). NAEAC's role is to advise the Minister responsible for animal welfare on issues relating to the use of animals in research, testing and teaching (RTT). Its other functions include giving advice on the codes of ethical conduct that govern live animal use in RTT and providing information to the bodies that administer the codes (animal ethics committees (AECs)). NAEAC holds four quarterly general meetings each year and special meetings when required.

Selected items discussed at the 17 May 2019 general meeting included the following:

- **Operational plan:** NAEAC reviewed and approved its operational plan for the next 5 years. It is available for viewing, along with the committee's vision and strategy, on the MPI website: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/national-animal-ethics-advisory-committee/>
- **2018 annual report:** NAEAC are required by law to produce an annual report of their operations for the Minister responsible for animal welfare. The committee approved its 2018 annual report subject to some minor editorial changes. The report is available for viewing on the MPI website: <https://www.agriculture.govt.nz/dmsdocument/35319-naeac-annual-report-2018>
- **Zebra fish:** The Animal Welfare Act defines adult fish as animals but excludes those in the larval stage. Current practice in New Zealand has been to consider that zebra fish are animals covered by animal welfare legislation from the start of their juvenile stage at about 28 days. The vast majority of research using zebra fish is undertaken prior to this age and so is not presently covered by the Act. At the meeting, NAEAC resolved to recommend to the Minister that the definition of *animal* be changed to include all fish not just zebrafish from the point of yolk sac absorption.
- **The Three Rs:** In July 2018, NAEAC launched two new awards (funded by institutions that use animals for RTT) to recognise the 'Three Rs' (*reduction* and *replacement* of animals used in RTT and *refinement* of experimental techniques to minimise pain or distress). The deadline to receive applications for the \$50,000 research grant closed on 14 April 2019. At the meeting, the Three Rs award subcommittee provided a summary of the applications received including the proposed winner. The committee endorsed the subcommittee's nomination and it was moved that Dr Damian Scarf from the University of Otago, be awarded with the 2019 Aotearoa New Zealand Three Rs award research grant.
- **Website for NAEAC:** NAEAC agreed that it should have its own website if MPI could secure funding for it. It was anticipated that NAEAC content currently on the MPI website would be moved across to the new site. Maintenance and review of content would be shared between the Secretariat and NAEAC.