

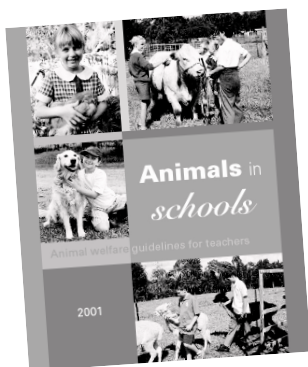
Animals in schools

During Term 1, Parts A and C of the second edition of *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers* were distributed to all schools in NSW.

This document contains valuable information for all schools that use animals for the purpose of teaching. The *Animal Research Act 1985* (NSW), its Regulation, and the Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, describe the legislative requirements of teachers that use animals for educational purposes. *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers* interprets these three pieces of legislation for teachers.

Part A provides information about the following:

- the need to include animals in the school curriculum only when there are no suitable alternatives available for achieving the educational objectives
- alternatives to the use of live animals in teaching
- approved activities that may be carried out involving animals. These activities are arranged into categories according to the level of risk to the animal



- the roles and responsibilities of the animal ethics committee, the school, the staff and students. It is essential that all schools have an Animal Welfare Liaison Officer (AWLO)
- useful feedback about a variety of issues that arise from using animals in schools
- application forms.

Part B of *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers* will be distributed to all schools in Term 4. Part B will provide information about the different species of animals that are commonly used in schools, as well as information about the approved activities appropriate for each species.

Part C provides case studies, presenting eight scenarios. Each scenario describes a decision-making process that a teacher would need to consider in order to decide whether the use of an animal was justified under the *Animal Research Act 1985* (NSW).

One of the major changes in the revised document is the categories of approved activities. The categories have been expanded to five. School and TAFE categories are now aligned.

Written approval, from the Schools Animal Care and Ethics Committee (SACEC), is required prior to the commencement of the activity when:

- students are to carry out category 4 or 5 activities
- teachers are to demonstrate category 5 activities
- either teachers or students are to carry out any activities that are not on the approved list.

The application forms are provided in Appendices 5 and 6 of Part A of *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers*.

In order to streamline the processing of these applications, teachers are encouraged to complete these application forms as thoroughly as possible.

The SACEC needs to assess whether the activity described in the application is essential for student learning. You must provide an educational justification for carrying out the described activity. In other words, the carrying out of the activity must be essential for achieving educational outcomes related to a Board of Studies approved school or TAFE course.

If the planned activity is to be carried out as a class activity, then questions 1–14 must be completed. If the planned activity is a research project, then questions 1–5 and 15–25 must be completed.

When completing the application for certification to demonstrate a category 5 activity the SACEC needs to assess whether the operator (teacher) has the relevant competence in order to carry out the activity at a level of *best practice*. This evidence may be provided through a variety of documents or verifications as suggested on page 51 (Part A) or through other appropriate forms of evidence. The documentation or verification must be supplied for the application to be approved.

The aim of these processes is to satisfy the SACEC that the welfare of the animal will be safeguarded at the highest possible level.

Teachers are reminded that these approvals are a requirement of the *Animal Research Act 1985* (NSW).

Please send applications to:

SACEC Support Officer
Department of Education and Training
Private Bag 3
Ryde NSW 2112

For more information about *Animals in schools: Animal welfare guidelines for teachers* or other information concerning the use of animals in schools, please contact the Schools Animal Care and Ethics Committee (SACEC) Support Officer, Sally Bannerman, telephone 9886 7426 or e-mail sally.bannerman@det.nsw.edu.au