

Animal Welfare Act 2002

Information for ECU Staff and Students

The **Animal Welfare Act 2002** (The Act) provides for the welfare, safety and health of animals, regulates the use of animals for scientific purposes, and for related purposes. The Act replaces the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1920- 1976**.

The Act provides for the protection of animals by:

- regulating the people who may use animals for scientific purposes, and the manner in which they may be used; and
- prohibiting cruelty to, and other inhumane or improper treatment of, animals.

The Act intends to

- promote and protect the welfare, safety and health of animals;
- ensure the proper and humane care and management of all animals in accordance with generally accepted standards; and
- reflect the community's expectation that people who are in charge of animals will ensure that they are properly treated and cared for.

Although the Act covers the general welfare and care of animals, the information below is for the information of staff and students who use animals for research and/or teaching and gives information on the significance of the Act and its practical implications.

Implications for researchers, students and staff at Edith Cowan University

- Edith Cowan University is licensed as a scientific establishment by the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development to perform scientific activities using animals.
- Compliance with the regulations of the **Animal Welfare Act** and the **Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes** by the University, its staff and students is a requirement for the granting of the Licence by the Minister.
- The licence has been issued and is displayed at the Joondalup campus. A copy has also been provided to the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Biomedical and Sports Science.
- Individual researchers are no longer required to hold a personal licence to use animals for scientific purposes. An APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO PERFORM OPERATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS to the Department of Health is no longer required.
- The Animal Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University is responsible for determining that staff and students are experienced and competent in the use of animals for scientific purposes, and in caring for and handling animals of the kind to be used or supplied.
- Any activity using animals for teaching or research at Edith Cowan University requires prior approval of the Animal Ethics Committee.
- Research using animals must not commence without prior written approval of the Animal Ethics Committee.

Administration of the Act

The Act is administered by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. The animal facilities and the operations of Animal Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University are subject to external inspection by Officers of the Department of Local Government. Only Scientific Inspectors have the power to inspect institutional facilities and to access the Animal Ethics Committee information and records. However, they may be accompanied by a General Inspector.

Further Information Regarding the Licence

The Act requires institutions to be licensed to use animals for scientific purposes (scientific establishment licence). The license defines scientific purposes as:

- acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in a scientific discipline, other than in prescribed circumstance, and includes –
 - teaching
 - research
 - product development or testing; and
 - carrying out a prescribed activity.

Edith Cowan University holds a licence for the supply and use of animals for scientific purposes. The licensing of scientific establishments replaces the individual licences issued by the Health Department of WA to researchers performing operations/experiments on animals.

The licence states that a person must not use animals for scientific purposes unless the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) the person is
 - (i) a scientific establishment that holds; or
 - (ii) a member of staff of, or a student at, a scientific establishment that holds a licence authorising that use;
- (b) the animal ethics committee of the scientific establishment has given approval, in accordance with the scientific use code (the ***Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes***), for that person to so use the animals; and
- (c) the person uses the animals in accordance with that licence and approval.

Responsibility for animals and their use at Edith Cowan University rests with the Vice Chancellor who signed the application for the licence on behalf of the University. The information provided in the licence application is detailed on a public register. Edith Cowan University is responsible for the actions of its Animal Ethics Committee.

Under the Act the University as a licensee must ensure that:

- (i) all staff and students comply with the conditions detailed on the licence;
- (ii) all staff and students continue to abide by the regulations of the ***Animal Welfare Act*** and the ***Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes***
- (iii) the licence is exhibited to the public at each place that animals are normally used.

The licence will be displayed at the Joondalup campus at appropriate location(s).

Note: the requirement to display a licence does not apply to field sites where research/educational activities using animals are undertaken. However, at such sites the operator/researcher must carry a copy of the licence on his/her person. Researchers using animals at field sites should contact the Research Ethics Officer, Animal Ethics Committee for a copy of the licence.

Offences under the Act

Offences under the Act have penalties ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000 and 5 years imprisonment.

Copies of the Animal Welfare Act 2002

Copies of the ***Animal Welfare Act*** and the ***Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*** Act are held in the Research Ethics Office.

For further information contact:

Research Ethics Officer.
Animal Ethics Committee
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