



eShepherd™ Animal Ethics Committee Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the terms of reference, including the roles, responsibilities, composition and operating guidelines of the Gallagher eShepherd Animal Ethics Committee (*eShepherd AEC*).
- 1.2 As a registered user of animals for scientific purposes, Gallagher eShepherd Pty Ltd (*eShepherd*) must comply with the requirements of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (ACPA)* and the "*Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*" (8th edition, 2013) (*Code*); in particular, clauses 2.2.1 and 2.2.18 of the *Code*.
- 1.3 In accordance with the abovementioned legal and regulatory framework, the *eShepherd AEC* will apply the principles that govern the ethical conduct of eShepherd staff whose work involves the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
- 1.4 These Terms of Reference are publicly available on the Gallagher eShepherd Pty Ltd website [2.2.1(2)].

2 Scope of Responsibility

- 2.1 The primary responsibility of the *eShepherd AEC* is to ensure that all activities relating to the care of use of animals for scientific purposes are conducted in compliance with the *Code*. [2.3.1]
- 2.2 The *eShepherd AEC* will recommend to the Head of *eShepherd* any necessary measures to ensure that the standards required by the *Code*, and of any relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth laws and regulations, are maintained.
- 2.3 The *eShepherd AEC* must [2.3.2]:
 - 2.3.1 review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the *Code*; and
 - 2.3.2 review applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities, including procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line, and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the *Code*. In reviewing applications, the *eShepherd AEC* may decide that:
 - 2.3.2.1 an application to commence a project or activity is approved or not approved;
 - 2.3.2.2 an application to amend an approved project or activity, is approved or not approved;
 - 2.3.2.3 approval is granted with or without conditions or deferred subject to modification;
 - 2.3.2.4 an approval is suspended or revoked;

- 2.3.2.5 conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities [clause 2.3.2ii of the *Code*] and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the *Code*;
 - 2.3.2.6 monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities;
 - 2.3.2.7 take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
 - 2.3.2.8 take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
 - 2.3.2.9 approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of *eShepherd*;
 - 2.3.2.10 provide advice and recommendations to *eShepherd*;
 - 2.3.2.11 report on its operations to *eShepherd*;
 - 2.3.2.12 ensure that, where a project involves more than one institution, formal procedures exist by which the project has met ethical approval from the responsible AEC and complies with Clauses 2.6.4 - 2.6.7 of the *Code*.
 - 2.3.2.13 maintain a register of all proposals and projects submitted to the *eShepherd* AEC;
 - 2.3.2.14 comply with the reporting requirements of *eShepherd*, the *Code*, the National Health and Medical Research Council (*NHMRC*), and the relevant government authority (in Queensland, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries);
 - 2.3.2.15 perform all other duties required by the *Code*.
- 2.4 In performing their duties, Committee members must consider the *Code*'s Governing principles [1.1]:
- 2.4.1 Respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. This respect is demonstrated by:
 - 2.4.1.1 using animals only when it is justified;
 - 2.4.1.2 supporting the wellbeing of the animals involved;
 - 2.4.1.3 avoiding or minimising harm, including pain and distress, to those animals;
 - 2.4.1.4 applying high standards of scientific integrity;
 - 2.4.1.5 applying Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) at all stages of animal care and use:
 - 2.4.1.5.1 the *Replacement* of animals with other methods;
 - 2.4.1.5.2 the *Reduction* in the number of animals used;
 - 2.4.1.5.3 the *Refinement* of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals; and
 - 2.4.1.6 knowing and accepting one's responsibilities.
 - 2.4.2 The care and use of animals for scientific purposes must be subject to ethical review by the *eShepherd* AEC.
 - 2.4.3 A judgement as to whether a proposed use of animals is ethically acceptable must be based on information that demonstrates the principles in Clause 1.1 of the *Code*

and must balance whether the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved is justified by the potential benefits.

- 2.4.4 The obligation to respect animals, and the responsibilities associated with this obligation, apply throughout the animal's lifetime, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing, husbandry, use of the animal in a project, and provisions for the animal at the conclusion of their use.

3 Monitoring the care and use of animals

- 3.1 The *eShepherd AEC* must monitor the use of animals, housing conditions and the care of animals in facilities [2.3.2.4].
- 3.2 Monitoring shall include:
- 3.2.1 Monitoring of the acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and care of animals and relevant procedures in approved projects.
- 3.2.2 Assessment of compliance with the Code and decisions of the *eShepherd AEC*.
- 3.2.3 Inspection of animals, animal housing, the conduct of procedures, records and reports [2.3.17].
- 3.3 The *eShepherd AEC* will conduct monitoring through:
- 3.3.1 Review of reports and other relevant documents at scheduled meetings.
- 3.3.2 Delegation of monitoring to Veterinarians when required and to help ensure that monitoring is regular and ongoing [2.3.18].
- 3.3.3 Site inspections of animal facilities, minimum once per year [2.3.21].
- 3.3.4 Monitoring of project compliance in accordance with the approval (and any relevant conditions) from the *eShepherd AEC*).
- 3.4 All *eShepherd AEC* members are invited to attend the inspection, and a Category C or D member of the AEC is to participate in the inspections [2.3.20].
- 3.5 Inspections may be announced or unannounced.
- 3.6 Photographs and videos will be required for remote monitoring when the *eShepherd AEC* is physically unable to inspect [2.3.23].
- 3.7 The *eShepherd AEC* will maintain records and take minutes (including the names of attendees, observations, any identified problems, recommended actions, ongoing or outstanding issues, and outcomes [2.2.30, 2.3.22] of all inspections. Minutes are to be tabled at the following AEC meeting for approval. Identified problems must receive appropriate follow-up and the *eShepherd AEC* must be advised and given opportunity for input. Outcomes of follow-up and related discussions by the *eShepherd AEC* must be recorded in the minutes of meetings.

4 Accountability

- 4.1 The *eShepherd AEC* is responsible to the Head of *eShepherd*. Accordingly, the *eShepherd AEC* has the Head of *eShepherd*'s approval and support to act as an AEC in accordance with these Terms of Reference, the ACPA and *the Code*.

5 Reporting mechanisms

- 5.1 The *eShepherd AEC* must comply with the reporting requirements of *the Code* [2.3.28], ACPA and all other relevant state, territory and international legislation and regulations.

- 5.2 The *eShepherd AEC* must submit a written report annually on its activities to the Head of eShepherd. The report should include information on [2.3.29]:
- 5.2.1 Numbers and types of projects assessed and approved or rejected;
 - 5.2.2 The physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the institution;
 - 5.2.3 Activities that have supported the educational needs of eShepherd AEC members, and of personnel involved in the care and use of animals;
 - 5.2.4 Administrative or other difficulties being experienced; and
 - 5.2.5 Any matters that may affect the institution's ability to maintain compliance with the Code and, if necessary, the provision of suitable recommendations.
- 5.3 The *eShepherd AEC* reports annually to Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, on behalf of all eShepherd researchers. The *eShepherd AEC* also reports to other State and Territory Governments and regulatory bodies as required.

6 Membership

- 6.1 In compliance with the Code [2.2.4] there will be four categories of *eShepherd AEC* members, with at least one person from each four categories of membership (Category A-D).

7 Confidentiality

- 7.1 Committee members must maintain confidentiality regarding the content of applications and the deliberations of the *eShepherd AEC*, in accordance with the confidentiality agreement signed at the commencement of membership.

8 Executive Committee

- 8.1 In accordance with the membership provisions of the Code [2.2.23], the *eShepherd AEC* may establish an Executive. The Executive will comprise the chairperson and at least one member from Category C or D. The *eShepherd AEC* may delegate the following functions to the *eShepherd AEC*, for ratification at the next quorate *eShepherd AEC* meeting:
- 8.1.1 Approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities. Minor amendments may include a change to an approved project or activity where the proposed change is not likely to cause harm to the animals, including pain and distress.
 - 8.1.2 The Executive must not approve new applications.

9 Revision

- 9.1 The *eShepherd AEC* Terms of Reference will be reviewed as necessary in response to changes in legislation and the Code and at a minimum of every three years.

10 References:

- Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition, 2013
- Animal Care and Protection Act 2001
- Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012

11 Contact

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