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	CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Animal Ethics Committee Policy for Grievance Procedures	

The following policy has been prepared to assist CHM Alliance Pty Ltd AEC in handling and documenting grievance procedures related to the use of animals in research and teaching.

Reference must be made to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007.

Requirements of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013*:

Clauses 2.1.7 (ii) and 2.2.29 and Section 5 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013* specified that organisations must:

- establish mechanisms to respond to enquiries or complaints concerning the use of animals within the organisation and ensure that personnel and students may voice concerns without jeopardising their employment or careers
- establish and make known procedures for the fair resolution of disagreements between AEC members, between the AEC and investigators, teachers or trainers, or between the AEC and the organisation.

Clause 2.1.7 states:

Proposals must be assessed ‘...in a manner that is fair to applicants and acceptable to all members including the need to provide AEC members with information in a timely manner.’

Clause 2.2.29 states:

‘Irreconcilable differences between the AEC and an investigator or teacher must be referred to the governing body of the organisation for review of the due process. The ultimate decision of an AEC after such a review must not be over-ridden.’

Guidelines

1. A grievance procedure is a mechanism for handling concerns or complaints from staff within the organisation and also from people outside the organisation. It will also be used for resolving disputes between researchers or teachers and the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). A formal record will be kept of all steps in the process.
2. The AEC has an appeal mechanism in place for investigators or trainers who feel that the AEC is unfair or for AEC members who feel that decisions being made by the AEC are unacceptable. It should, however, be noted that the *Animal Research Act 1985* does not allow for the approval of research (the issuing of Animal Research Authorities), except with the approval of and in accordance with the directions of the organisation’s Animal Ethics Committee.

3. Procedures are in place to handle the following:
 - a. Complaints from independent people who are not associated with research.
 - b. Complaints by staff within the accredited research establishment without jeopardising the person's employment or entitlements.
 - c. Disputes between investigators or trainers and the AEC.
 - d. Serious disagreements between members of the AEC.
 - e. Disagreements between the AEC and the organisation's management.

Types c, d and e may need referral to a higher authority than the AEC such as the responsible Director.

Guidance on policy matters will be sought from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in the case of an irreconcilable dispute.

4. All complaints will be treated confidentially.
5. Investigation of a complaint or dispute may include:
 - Interviews of the complainant, the subject of the complaint and witnesses
 - Unannounced inspection of the facility or animal(s) in question
 - Seeking expert advice on technical matters from outside the organisation
6. Any member of an AEC receiving a welfare complaint is obliged to raise the matter with the AEC as soon as possible.
7. Staff must be made aware of what grievance procedures exist.