



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 welfare issues arising from 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 15 February 2018 general meeting included the following:

- **Meeting with the Minister, Hon Meka Whaitiri:** The Minister met with members of her independent committee for the first time. The Minister reported that animal welfare was important to the new government and that she was willing to meet with NAEAC on a regular basis.

The Minister asked NAEAC about their current priorities and the following topics were noted: the age at which zebra fish should be considered animals under the Act; Predator Free 2050 and the implications of gene drive for future research; animal use statistics and new reporting requirements which would, in the near future, increase the number of animals reported to MPI as being used for the purposes of RTT.

The Minister provided a brief summary of her work experience (including in the public service), time in Parliament and passion for agriculture. Apart from Agriculture, her other portfolios included Crown/Māori Relations, Local Government and Customs. NAEAC members too, provided further detail about their current skills and areas of expertise.

The Minister asked NAEAC if they had a view on Wai 262. It was noted that most organisations conducting research on native fauna had some provision for consulting with iwi before a proposal reached an AEC.

- **Election of deputy chairperson:** The Act requires NAEAC to elect one of its members as its deputy chairperson, at its first meeting each year. Professor Craig Johnson, the New Zealand Veterinary Association nominee on the committee, was elected to the role of deputy chairperson for 2018.
- **Strategic and operational plans:** The committee decided to hold a strategic planning day in June to consider its priorities for the coming 5 years. The new strategic plan will inform the makeup of an operational plan and the milestones to be achieved and measured against NAEAC's statutory functions. It was anticipated that both documents would be adopted by the committee at their August 2018 general meeting.
- **Zebra fish:** NAEAC are considering whether zebra fish should be defined as animals earlier than 30 days post-fertilisation. The first step in this assessment involves collecting the opinions of both national and international experts on this topic.