

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
Government of South Australia
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

8th August 2014

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Chairs and Executive Officers of the South Australian Animal Ethics Committees (AECs), which met this week to discuss the proposition put forward by the Premier on the 8th of July to abolish all Statutory Committees (including AECs). CSIRO was the only animal ethics committee not represented at that meeting; however the Chair of that committee has subsequently endorsed the content of this letter to you.

As CEO of ANZCCART (The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching), I have a professional interest in the operation of AECs but I am not directly affiliated with government, or any of the Institutions currently licenced to use animals in South Australia. I was asked by Dr Deb Kelly (Manager, Animal Welfare, DEWNR) to act as the Chair for the meeting as an independent, yet interested and informed individual, as she considered that it may have been seen to be a conflict of interest if she chaired the meeting.

The AEC Chairs and Executive Officers group (The Group), were unanimously opposed to any change to the current requirement for the Minister to licence anyone (individual, company or institution) who may need to use animals for research or teaching purposes. The Group was also noted that, whether or not animal ethics committees are appointed by the Minister, they will have to continue to exist. Their primary role is to ensure the welfare of animals used in research or teaching in South Australia. Approval from a properly constituted AEC is a strict requirement of all Australian research funding agencies, all reputable scientific journals world-wide and the conditions of licence under which we all operate. In short, all research and teaching activities involving animals, including livestock, wildlife and biomedical research would essentially cease in South Australia if AECs did not exist. AEC approval is also vital to ensure that any animals used in schools are adequately protected, as well as the teachers who care for them and supervise their use.

The Group also offered their unanimous support for the work done by the Animal Welfare Unit within DEWNR to monitor the effective execution of the duties and responsibilities of all AECs in South Australia and through them, to ensure that the welfare of all animals used for scientific purposes in this State continues to be adequately monitored and protected. Dr Kelly's unit has worked hard to ensure that all AECs are meeting the requirements of the Code and the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* and that they are working consistently and collaboratively at all times. This service is greatly appreciated by all members of the Group and the Institutions they represent.

When it comes to the question of whether or not AECs should remain as Statutory Committees and how their members are appointed, opinions among the group varied and I understand most, if not all, the AEC Chairs will write to you individually to express their own views and reasons behind them.

Yours sincerely



Dr Geoffrey W Dandie
CEO, ANZCCART