

Doing animal experimentation in a national organisation with regional responsibilities under state legislation.

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**Deputy Chief CSIRO Livestock Industries**

**CSIRO is Australia's national science agency and one of the largest and most diverse scientific research organizations in the world**

## **CSIRO:**

- 6,500 staff
- 55 sites
- Located in all States and Territories

## **Key CSIRO research areas include:**

- Agribusiness
- Environment
- Energy
- Information and communications
- Manufacturing and materials
- Minerals
- Sustainability

**CSIRO has 10 AEC's**

**Operate in all States except Tasmania and Northern Territory**

- Affiliation with the University of Tasmania AEC.



# The use of animals in research in Australia.

## **The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (The Code) underpins legislation in Australia.**

- Researchers who receive funding from the NH&NMRC must abide by the code
- CSIRO is not eligible for funding from the NH&MRC
- CSIRO is a signatory to The Code and CSIRO policy states that all staff must abide by The Code.

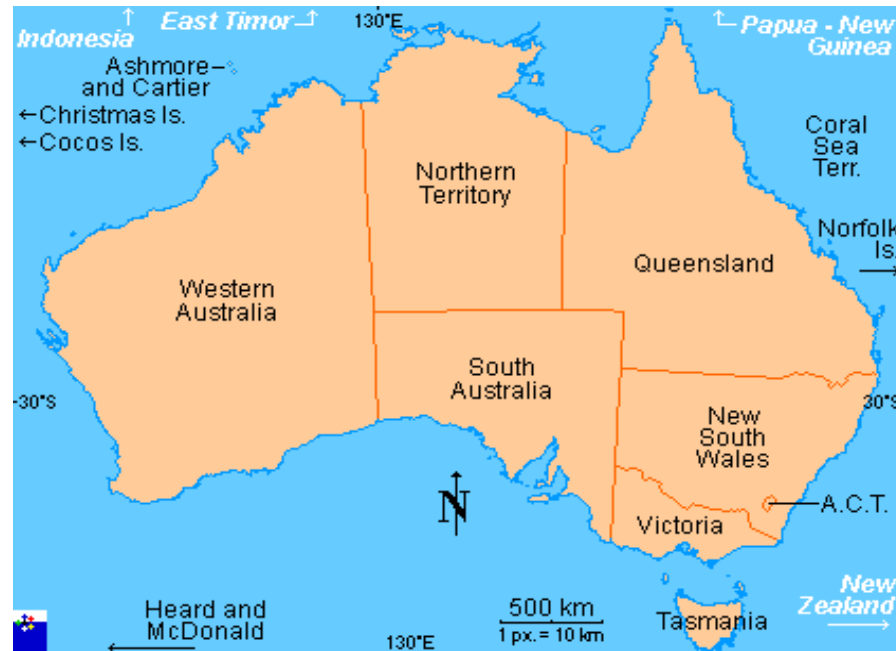
## **The Code is embodied in state legislation that governs the use of animals in research and teaching.**

- Legislation is enforceable at the state level
- Will The Code continue to underpin legislation?

# The use of animals in research in Australia.

## In Australia we have 8 States and Territories

- Each has its own legislation covering the use of animals in research and teaching
- AEC's must be registered in a state to operate
- AEC approval must be gained in the state(s) where the work is to be carried out
- Who covers work conducted by Australian researchers overseas?



## A worse case scenario?

### **Multiple sets of legislation overseeing animal experimentation in Australia.**

- CSIRO's Division of Marine and Atmospheric Research conducts research on migratory patterns of Great White sharks.



# Tracking Great White Sharks.

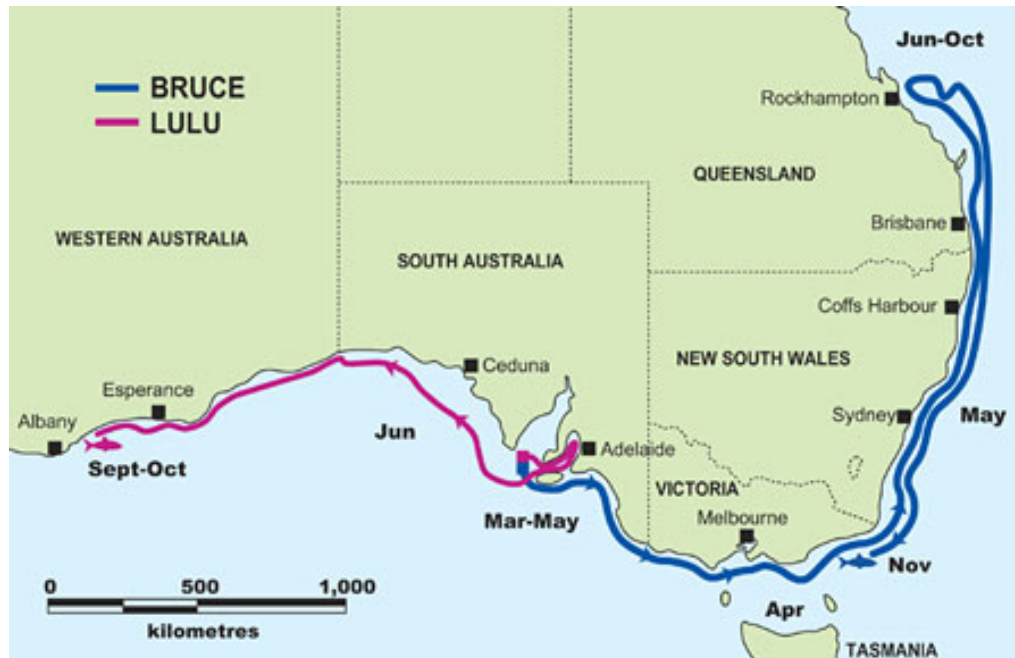
## **The work is done out of South Australia in collaboration with University colleagues.**

- South Australia does not include fish in animal research legislation: no AEC approval required?
- CSIRO does not receive NH&MRC funding: no AEC approval required?
- University partners receive NH&MRC funding: AEC approval required.



# How much AEC approval is required?

**Great White Sharks have no respect for State or International boundaries or AEC's**





## Solutions?

- **AEC's can be registered in more than one state**

- Sustainable Ecosystems AEC registered in Canberra, N.S.W., and Queensland
- One CSIRO committee?
  - Work load and familiarity with work

### **Approval through another organizations AEC**

- Accountability, what happens if things go wrong?

- **Recognition of other AEC approvals between states**

- Some progress in this area, but still a long way to go.



## Collecting animal use data

### **NH and MRC require researchers who receive their support to submit animal use statistics each year**

- CSIRO and State departments do not receive NH&MRC funding
- WA requires all AEC's registered in that state to complete NH&MRC animal use statistics

### **Each state collects their own data**

- The data is not in a format that can be collated easily
- Who will collate the data: no one will step forward to take on the role or to fund an initiative.

Researchers say tests on animals are essential to advance human medicine. However, an Age investigation shows an experiment is done every 69 seconds in Victoria.

## Sacrificed for science

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### HOW MANY?

Animal use in Victoria

1997 324,308	2001 441,296
1998 352,740	2002 459,133
1999 475,887	2003 469,809
2000 545,621	2004 N/A

Source: Animal Use in Victoria  
Report 2004, Animal Use in Victoria

### TYPES USED

- 280,136 mice
- 37,567 rats
- 11,810 guinea pigs
- 2763 rabbits
- 83 primates

Source: Animal Use in Victoria

### PURPOSE TYPES OF PROCEDURES

25% for minor surgical interventions	13% in intensive physiological challenges
17% serious without recovery	7% which have death as an end point
15% in major physiological challenges	6% major surgery
15% in occupational research	2% major surgery

### WHO DOES EXPERIMENTS

- Primate research is carried out by:
- Melbourne University
  - Monash University
  - CSIRO
  - Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney



**ABOVE:** Separate photos of a macaque's hand reaching for a lever and grasping it to obtain a reward. Melbourne University researchers partially covered the area to test how quickly the monkey would recover the use of its hand.  
**RIGHT:** A macaque monkey.

# When is an animal being used in research?

## **CSIRO Livestock Industries has 3 properties that are used both for commercial production and research.**

- Relatively easy to differentiate those involved in mainstream experimentation
- Those animals on commercial properties where specimens are collected? e.g. fecal material for worm counts, wool sampling from commercial harvest.
- The farm dog?





# The straw that breaks the camels back

**Repetitive experimentation represents a challenge to a number of AEC's; when is enough enough?**

**Within CSIRO there are two key areas that fall into this category**

- Product registration:
  - AEC's and the 3R's versus registration requirements
- Teaching/training



- The Australian Animal Health Laboratory conducts veterinary training courses in the recognition of animals diseases that are exotic to Australia.
- The courses are run on a repetitive basis and involves the infection of animals with viral agents.
- The AAHL AEC would like to replace the use of animals with videos; ie implement the 3R's
- Does this provide equal training in the recognition of viral disease symptoms?
- If one student can be accredited without the use of animals, is the use of animals in the course no longer justified?



# Pushing the boundaries: when the AEC wants to go the next step

## The Code and State Legislation outline the minimum requirements for the use of Animals in Research and Teaching, there is scope to go beyond.

- CSIRO is Australia's national research agency and there is expectation in the general public that we will be "best practice".
- Within **some** sectors of CSIRO's research community and AEC's there is an equal commitment to push forward.
- There is a need for AEC's to balance their desire to move the boundaries with researcher's expectations and financial resources.
  - e.g. crayfish and environmental enrichment
- There is a need to balance CSIRO message with industry needs
  - Mulesing; industry will stop mulesing by 2010, CSIRO LI has already.

# The challenges facing us all

**How do we recruit external members to our AEC's**

**Increasing work loads**

**Limited resources**

**Increasing accountability**

**Impact of the Chair**

**New areas get greater scrutiny**

**Face to face meetings**

**etc, etc**



# The system still works

**Although there may be limitations within the current Australian system it still functions effectively because of the work of a wide range of dedicated people who have a belief and commitment to the outcomes.**

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# Thank You

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