

Planning Workshop 2 - Wildlife Feeding and Interaction

Facilitator: Dr David Newsome, Murdoch University

Panel members:

Dr Peter Mawson, Species and Communities Branch, Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia

Michelle Plant, Wildlife Interactions

Dr Michael Hughes, Curtin University

Dr Ronda Green, Wildlife Tourism Australia

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been an increase in the range of 'interactive' experiences offered in wildlife tourism, accompanied by increased moves by governments towards effective management of such interactions. This workshop comprised a series of short presentations by panel members that review key issues, perspectives and policy developments. This was followed by group discussion to make recommendations to assist in guiding government policy and management approaches Australia-wide.

1. Overview

David Newsome

Close contact and the feeding of wildlife are some of the most controversial issues in wildlife tourism (see Appendix 1). We are aware of the impacts but at the same time many visitors desire close contact and feeding. Such experiences are also linked to high levels of visitor satisfaction.

Discussion:

- Wildlife is an important reason for people visiting Australia
- Survey data indicates that wildlife tourists are looking for more authentic, well managed and sustainable experiences
- Many overseas feeding operations will not work/ are not suitable for Australia
- Any rise in international visitation means that visitor expectations would need to be managed

2. Regulation of wildlife interaction in WA and concerns regarding impacts on wildlife

Peter Mawson

See presentation notes in Appendix 2.

Discussion:

- 'One size will not fit all' therefore need case by case flexibility to manage and regulate
- Need better public education with regards to adverse impacts on wildlife
- This needs to be carefully pitched.
- Educate people through schools
- There is a lack of good science (limited evidence) to strongly support our position on negative impacts
- Need a uniform position across Australia

3. Queensland legislation and policy

Michelle Plant

Notes covering Michelle's presentation are given in Appendix 3.

Discussion:

- Need to identify operators using best practice and publicise to industry
- Good to have more national consistency
- Agency to oversee on a case by case basis
- Do agencies have the political 'clout'
- Policy guidelines needed
- Need for licences/regulations
- Legislation needs an educational component
- Threat/problems associated with over legislating
- As noted before needs an educational strategy at the school level
- Work with new Animal Welfare Strategy
- WTA and others to flag 'positive' operators

4. Recent review of wildlife interactions by WA Government

Mike Hughes

- Presented details of WA human wildlife interaction review in previous concurrent session
- Avoid repetition and present issues, questions raised by review relating to wildlife interactions
- Use the three core elements in the review
 1. Policies, guidelines and responsibilities
 2. Appropriate and inappropriate forms of interaction
 3. Feeding
- Pose questions relating to each of these

1. Policies, guidelines and responsibilities – is it possible to legislate for all interaction circumstances?

- DEC governed by CALM Act (1984) and Wildlife Conservation Act (1950) and derivative notices
- Responsible for conservation and management of wildlife irrespective of the land tenure
- Wildlife interaction management complex
 - occur across a range of land tenures
 - over a large area
 - a complexity of experiences
 - a wide variety of species
- Universal guidelines not easily devised or applied
- Operators may be managed through licensing controls
- Public management more of a challenge – largely uncontrolled, lack of management presence, lack of knowledge etc...

2. Appropriate and inappropriate interaction – most people don't want to see negative impacts on animals or people, how should a negative impact be defined and at what point does it occur?

- Impacts seems to be specific to particular experiences

- Depends on species
- Type of interaction
- Location of interaction
- Group size
- Stage in lifecycle of species etc...eg breeding times particularly sensitive to disturbance
- What may be appropriate for a species at one point of the season may not be appropriate at another

3. Feeding – is feeding OK? Is it possible not to feed and still provide reliable, consistent wildlife tourism viewing experiences as the market demands?

- Many operators including DEC rely on feeding as a core part of business
- A ban on feeding might result in operators going out of business and downturns in wildlife tourism
- Also difficult to enforce in the public arena, away from operator or agency assisted interactions
- Perhaps officially condoned, tightly controlled feeding could serve as an example of responsible interaction using appropriate food in regulated quantities
- ie promote responsible interaction through demonstration rather than prohibition

The overarching question (in a WA context) is:

Given the public and tourist demand for a complex variety of wildlife interactions over a large geographical area across a range of land tenures, how can DEC effectively enact their wildlife conservation and management responsibilities?

5. Wildlife Tourism Australia policy on wildlife feeding and interaction

Ronda Green

The WTA policy is attached as Appendix 4. This has been developed through substantial consultation among the members of WTA, who include wildlife tourism operators, government, researchers and NGOs.

The following were listed as some constraints to sustainability:

- Need for more education (as most have good intentions), but this needs money
- Include education of public about WILD animal behaviour
- Lack of policing/ resources
- Promotional images featuring feeding etc.

6. Final discussion

- Guidelines should be consistent with the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (Appendix 5).
- Recommendations were made that were fed into the conference resolutions (see conference resolutions).

Appendix 1. Wildlife Feeding

David Newsome

The spectrum of wildlife feeding activity

Incidental

- Campsites
- Fishing sites
- Picnic and day use areas
- Tourist accommodation

Unstructured

- Ponds and lakes
- Back yard feeding
- Evolving attractions

Structured

- Semi captive wildlife tourism
- Wildlife tourism attractions
- Conservation management

Perceived advantages of feeding wildlife

Making that 'connection'

Promotes awareness of wildlife

Value added tourism product (enhanced viewing opportunities)

Close contact

Enhanced photo opportunities

Educational benefits

Increased visitor satisfaction

Bird feeding enriches the urban environment

Feeding birds helps to reduce the negative ecological effects of habitat loss and intensive farming

Winter feeding in northern hemisphere to compensate for periods of natural food shortage

Component of rare species recovery strategies

Perceived disadvantages of feeding wildlife

Semi-domesticated states

Aggressive behaviour

Loss of fear of humans

Abnormal concentrations

Road kill

Pollution and erosion

Attraction of nuisance species

Displacement of less dominant animals

Nutritional deficiencies

Increased susceptibility to disease

Decline in breeding success

Feeding may escalate towards other things!

Touching

Manipulation

Entertainment!

Appendix 2. Wildlife Feeding and Interactions in Western Australia

Peter Mawson

Legislation

The regulation of all wildlife feeding and interactions is governed by:

- *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and *Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970*
- In specific areas of the State provisions of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* also apply.

Other specific legislative instruments are also in place to manage high profile and high risk wildlife interactions, e.g.:

- *Wildlife Conservation (Close Season for Bottlenose Dolphins in Shark Bay Marine Park) Notice 1995* (covers the mechanism by which the feeding of dolphins at Monkey Mia is regulated)
- *Wildlife Conservation (Close Season for Whale Sharks) Notice 1996* (covers matters relating to commercial and non-commercial interactions with whale sharks in State waters)
- *Wildlife Conservation (Close Season for Marine Mammals) Notice 1998* (covers matters like no feeding, minimum approach distances for vessels)

All licences that are issued to facilitate commercial interactions with wildlife [e.g. boat-based viewing of whales, dolphins and dugong plus swim-with interactions with dolphins (3 licences only) and interactions with nesting marine turtles] are issued pursuant to Regulation 15 of the *Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970*.

Examples of Wildlife Interactions and Associated Problems - Non-Feeding

- Swim-with interactions with Australian sea lions were discontinued because too many people were being bitten while actively swimming with the animals. The risk of attack from Great White Sharks that were attracted to sea lion populations also made this type of interaction unacceptable.
- Visitors to Carnac Island throw objects at sleeping sea lions hauled out on the beach in an effort to get them to move or enter the water where the visitors can attempt to swim with them. Other visitors fail to appreciate the risks associated with close approach to sea lions and allow (or even place) small children within only a few meters of adult sea lions.
- People swimming (at least 3 to date) with manta rays in Ningaloo Marine Park during licensed whale shark tours have been attacked and injured by the rays which breach and fall back on top of swimmers or ram them. Some injuries have been serious (broken ribs). The risk of more serious injury or drowning is real. This problem may need to be managed via Close Season Notice to ensure adequate separation between swimmers and manta rays.
- Members of the public walking their dogs in public open space adjacent to the Swan River Marine Park are allowing their dogs to chase and harass migratory waders resting and feeding in the Marine Park. Low fences and signage have been installed in an effort to address the problem, but some dog owners still show a complete disregard for the welfare of the wildlife.
- Commercial incentives have influenced the behaviour of at least one individual involved in licensed marine turtle interactions on beaches in the Ningaloo Marine Park. The person is due to face court later this year on multiple charges.

Examples of Wildlife Interactions and Associated Problems - Feeding

- Members of the public continue to feed bottlenose dolphins in the waters of Cockburn Sound (off Fremantle) and Koombana Bay (Bunbury) which results in repeated begging by some animals to their detriment. Several dolphins have died as the result of ingesting fishing hooks and at least one has been killed (speared to death) by frustrated recreational fishers intolerant of the begging behaviour.
- Feeding of wild dingoes at the wet mess of a mining camp resulted in the animals losing their fear of people and expecting handouts. The situation escalated until the dingo numbers at the site increased, aggression amongst the animals increased and they started to bite the people involved in the feeding activity. Withdrawal of the food supply and local reduction in dingo numbers restored matters.
- Supply of bird seed for native parrots at three locations in the south west of WA resulted in increased local bird densities. Outbreaks of virulent strains of psittacosis at each site resulted in a number of bird deaths at each site and placed the human population at risk (psittacosis is a notifiable disease under Health legislation).
- Tour buses entering selected National Parks have been providing seed for tour patrons to feed to wild birds. The birds have become habituated to the feeding and the schedule of the bus tours. At other times of the day birds are conspicuous by their absence around the parking area, detracting from the experience that the rest of the park users experience.
- Daily feeding of wild pelicans on the foreshore at Kalbarri has habituated a number of birds to expect food from anyone with fish. This creates conflict with recreational fishers (often children) fishing in the mouth of the Murchison River as the large and aggressive birds detract from the fishers' experience at this location.

Solutions for Better Management of Wildlife Interactions

Unless specifically addressed in Close Season Notices, the Department's capacity to manage wildlife interactions rests on the courts' interpretation of the term "take" which includes the rather archaic wording "to disturb or molest". Plans are in place to replace the *Wildlife Conservation Act* with a new Biodiversity Conservation Act and associated regulations. Drafting of the new legislation is under way and it is intended that provisions will be made that allow for better and more flexible management of wildlife interactions, including the issue of feeding.

In addition to legislation there is an ongoing need for improved public education via the full range of media.

Appendix 3. Review of recent legislative and policy developments in Queensland

Michelle Plant

Nature Conservation Act 1992 & Regulations 1994

- Govern commercial wildlife interactions
- Commercial interactions on park – require Commercial Operators Licence
- Commercial interactions on private land / public land – require Commercial Wildlife Licence – Wildlife Interaction (subject to an amendment to regulations March 2004)

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service are responsible for the management of National Parks and management of protected native wildlife. Aim to limit impacts.

Background to new regulation:

Primarily to address risk management

- identify risks to wildlife and general public/staff
 - encourage sustainable use
 - encourage implementation of appropriate management controls over the activity to limit impacts
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- Some wildlife tourism operations have developed over decades with limited controls in place
 - Increasing demand – increases pressure on the wildlife and the site to accommodate the activity
 - Concern over example set for interactions with wildlife in a variety of settings
 - Concerns over effect on the wildlife targeted (and wildlife indirectly affected) by the activity – e.g. encouraging exploitation of food source, nutritional deficiencies, onward affects on the wildlife's behaviour, population effects, localised environmental degradation etc.
 - Lack of monitoring to assess impacts and determine effects on wildlife
 - Increasing evidence of impacts occurring on and off site
 - Problems are exacerbated when activity located alongside protected area - conflicting agendas of neighbouring management – confusing message for public – e.g. one side fence no feeding / other feed

Example of problems previously associated with a commercial wild bird feeding activity:

- Without visitor management – signage or information visitors cannot differentiate between operator on private property or QPWS run activity – visitor confusion
- People were leaving the feeding area on private property to offer feed to birds within the park – in contradiction to park policy / costs to management of neighbouring property to manage impacts / strain on relationships
- Birds fed all day / everyday – with variations relative to visitation / feast or famine
- Visitors directly and inadvertently feeding incidental species – which can become a problem / may require relocation / euthanasia
- Risks to people and wildlife enticed into closer proximity to traffic and roadway / build up of faecal contaminants associated with lack of hygiene measures – potential for disease transfer / negative interactions – between wildlife and people

- Property damage
- Litter
- Legal liability for people leaving the property to feed the birds

Commercial Wildlife Licence – Wildlife Interaction

- Applies to anyone making money from activity interacting with wildlife on private or public land / but not in protected areas
- Involving 'common' – free ranging wildlife
- Operators were consulted as to the development of the regulation and licence requirements
- Feeding is the key activity but applies to all activities involving interaction that might disturb or interfere with normal behaviour inc. spotlighting / handling – physically restraining
- At present focusing on large operations – but intention is to address smaller operations as well
- Prior to lodging an application an operator must familiarise themselves with the Act
- Can apply as individual or corporation
- Providing details of operation – where / when / how / what species intend to interact with
- Must have approved **Interaction Plan**
- At present 12 licences have been approved of which 11 apply to feeding activities – involving a range of wildlife including – parrots, kookaburras, lorikeets, dolphins, pademelons, gliders, bandicoots, possums and a variety of other birds.
- Licence is not transferable – if someone buys activity must reapply
- At this point government is maintaining a proactive collaborative approach – working towards positive / responsible management of interactions - but violations of interaction plan can attract warnings and fines

Interaction Plan

Operator is required to provide details of:

- Species

- Target and incidental / dangerous / venomous / capable of injuring a person (legislation does not permit interaction with dangerous wildlife)

- Description of activity including:

- What types of interactions will be engaged in, how it will be conducted and by whom
- If involving feeding, provide details of food/ diet type and amount, regularity of feeding and time of day, anticipated numbers to be fed
- How will operator ensure the likelihood of illness is minimised – inc. hygiene measures
- How operator will minimise the likelihood of harm – risk management
- Detail risks wildlife exposed to if being attracted to the site, and how this will be managed – will there be any danger to human health and safety
- Public liability insurance details
- Provide a site plan
- Detail any foreseeable impacts on the behaviour or conservation of the animals in the local area, as a result of the activity.
- What other species of animals may be affected by the activity – that are not the focus of it (incidental species) how will their involvement or exclusion be managed

- If an animal is sick or injured, what arrangements for having the animal assessed or treated are planned
- What measures will be taken to minimise the likelihood of the spread of zoonotic diseases (that can pass from wildlife to humans or vs. vs.)
- Written approval from local government that the activity abides by local laws
- Does the activity comply with environmental and nuisance laws
- What impacts are likely on neighbours and how will these be managed if there is a problem
- The operator is responsible to engage in dispute resolution if required
- If the activity is taking place on public land or land that is not owned by the operator – they must have written permission
- **Education**
 - What information will be delivered to the clients – e.g. ecological role, education and conservation
 - Must provide copy of promotional materials and or signage
- **Monitoring**
 - Requirement to monitor, numbers of animals fed, illness or injury that are a result of the activity, incidences of aggression, complaints
- **Consultation**
 - provide for consultation requirements, i.e. how problems or concerns were identified and how operator will act to resolve issues if and when they arise

Benefits of this approach

- Represents and opportunity for operators to legitimise their activity relative to wildlife agency management objectives
- In theory the licence encompasses a collaborative approach
- The Interaction Plan provides operators with a clear framework for issues to address
- Operators with clear management guidelines for their activity and knowledge of wildlife management theory will be well placed to obtain a licence
- Wildlife can be prone to intentional or accidental exploitation without clear parameters for appropriate interaction – licence requirements will help ensure the resource on which wildlife tourism activities are dependent, is used wisely and that the animals welfare is given due consideration
- Some activities (particularly those involving feeding) can impact on the health of the wildlife, if the impact is negative; it may difficult to implement health care. The Interaction Plan may work to ensure operators employ preventative strategies in their management practices to limit any impacts their activity may have.

Possible constraints of this approach

- Humans can sometimes be adverse to change, without a clear understanding of the need for the regulation, some operators and participants may be challenged by the concept/reality of applying restrictions to existing interactions
- Small businesses with limited resources may find it difficult to prepare the Interaction Plan or to find the funds to upgrade their activity
- Activities may have evolved from a persons experience in the field, without a background in wildlife management or environmental management theory, assistance may be required to review the activity (representing additional costs)

- There may be no existing / tested model to guide improvement – development of more sustainable practices and stakeholder attitudes (and licence conditions) will need to remain flexible
- At this stage an operator can get a licence based on the Interaction Plan, without demonstration of commitment – it may be difficult to redress problems after the licence has been granted
- In some locations there may be a history of strained relationships between stakeholders – all parties invariably need to work together to develop a Plan that effectively addresses local concerns / past issues will need to be overcome in order to work effectively

Recommendations

- Any third parties involved in preparation of Interaction Plans will need to ensure the process contains an educational element to impart a positive understanding of the wildlife agency management agenda – highlighting this as an opportunity not a constraint – furthermore to communicate basic principles of wildlife management and practices to ensure the operator is empowered to maintain commitment to the Interaction Plan and to a process of adaptive management to identify and ameliorate problems as they are recognised
- Subject to the costs to employ a consultant potentially being prohibitive, there may be a need for government support/contribution – Landcare provides an example of government extension to help inform improved management on private land
- Wildlife management agencies may also need to make their involvement more transparent to the general public, thereby offering the operator support for any restrictions they need to place on participant/wildlife interactions – Guidelines for Fish Feeding, on the Great Barrier Reef provides an example
- Demand for activities as they currently exist may have developed over decades – repeat customers come with expectations based on past experience – education campaigns need to be developed to influence these expectations as early as possible – to diffuse negative reactions and encourage public support for change (otherwise ‘black market’ Interactions may be initiated by disgruntled participants - in less appropriate settings with no management or operator guidance)

Appendix 4. Wildlife Tourism Australia's policy on tourist-wildlife interactions

Tourist-wildlife Interactions Wildlife Tourism Australia Inc. Policy Document, February 2005

Feeding of wildlife by tourists and tourism operators

Wildlife Tourism Australia (WTA) recognises that there are many situations where feeding of Australian wildlife could cause considerable harm to humans, individual animals, populations or ecosystems, especially in wilderness areas or other relatively intact natural areas. There are other situations where appropriate feeding probably does no harm or may have a positive effect on animals and/or humans. In particular, close interaction with wild animals may well increase concern for wildlife conservation amongst many tourists.

WTA believes that wildlife in wilderness areas should be kept as fully wild as possible, and should not be fed for tourism purposes in such areas. WTA also believes that indiscriminate feeding of wildlife in any situation is unacceptable. However there are many other human activities that are far more detrimental than responsible feeding in certain non-wilderness localities. Humans and other animals have been interacting for many thousands of years, creating a continuum between totally wild animals and those whose behaviour is greatly modified by humans. These days, there is also a continuum between situations where animals are kept in close confinement for tourism purposes and those where the animals are totally unmanaged by humans. Some fluctuation in food availability due to seasonality of tourism, while potentially damaging in some situations, is not necessarily more detrimental to animals than naturally fluctuating resources (fruiting trees etc.). There are many clear-cut cases of harm caused by some feeding practices, but scientific opinion is divided as to how much is too much in other situations. The whole issue is clouded by philosophical viewpoints and personal preferences intertwined with actual ecological or welfare concerns.

Thus WTA does not take either the view of 'never feed anything anywhere' or the opposing view that 'feeding can never do any real harm'. While attitudes of our members do vary, most agree that whether or not feeding of wildlife should be allowed 'depends on the situation'. The difficulty in treading this middle road lies in determining the criteria by which we decide when, where, how and what is acceptable for feeding.

What criteria should be used to decide whether feeding of wildlife should be allowed in a particular situation?

WTA believe that feeding of wildlife by tourists or tourism operators should be permitted only in situations where ALL of the following criteria apply:

- a. feeding is unlikely to seriously modify the behaviour of wildlife in a natural area: e.g. feeding is in a captive setting such as a zoo or a highly-modified area such as some farm-stays; or the animals being fed have already become dependent on humans and cannot find enough food on their own (e.g. after being nursed as orphans or after an injury)

- b. feeding is unlikely to modify the ecosystem or community (including areas adjacent to the actual feeding area): e.g. when feeding occurs in captive situations or highly-modified habitats as above; when it does not involve highly-aggressive or predatory animals (e.g. currawongs) that might increase their population to the detriment of other species; when it does not unduly increase the populations of herbivorous animals (including seed-eaters) that may negatively impact neighbouring native plant-life
- c. feeding can be properly supervised and/or monitored and kept on a small scale
- d. visitors receive appropriate guidelines and education on the feeding of wildlife (see details below)
- e. appropriate foods are used: these should be prominently communicated to visitors and where possible made readily available
- f. the animals being fed are not likely to present a danger to humans (remembering that some which would present no danger to healthy adults may be a problem for the disabled or small children)
- g. humans (including both those engaging in hand-feeding and others the animals may subsequently encounter) are not likely to present a danger to the animals: e.g they are unlikely to cause spread of disease; unlikely to entice animals towards human habitation or man-made structures such as roads and car parks (which could make them susceptible to collisions with vehicles, or to become too trusting and thus vulnerable to other humans who will mistreat them); or where social disruption may result - especially separation of mother and young
- h. feeding does not contravene state or federal legislation pertaining to conservation or animal welfare

Importance of education

WTA believes that education of tourists and the public about the feeding of wildlife is extremely important. It should be presented in different formats for different ages, and also in different languages in areas where non-English speaking visitors are common. Because of the diversity of situations, it is difficult to find clear criteria for all situations, but what is ultimately presented to the tourist must be easy to follow. Education and interpretation should be designed to make people aware that:

- a. being allowed to feed animals in one situation does not mean it is acceptable to feed the same species or other species in all situations
- b. 'little bits add up' - each tourist may be one of many to feed a particular animal
- c. appropriate foods must be used: what is eaten by humans may not be healthy for other animals and what is appropriate for some species might not be so for others
- d. animals should not be given sufficient quantities of food or fed so regularly as to become dependent on human handouts
- e. animals should be fed in an appropriate manner (not rushing up to an animal,

not sneaking up and startling it, not holding food in such a way as to invite being accidentally bitten etc.)

- f. animals can bite, scratch, kick etc. and should not be treated with the same lack of caution as a domesticated pet
- g. if animals accustomed to being fed become a serious pest or danger, they may need removing or even destroying, so what seems like a kindly act may have the reverse effect
- h. predatory or highly-aggressive species, if regularly hand-fed, can increase their populations to the detriment of other wildlife
- i. there are penalties for inappropriate behaviour towards animals (where this is in fact true)
- j. regular feeding of animals may disrupt their behaviour and (in addition to effects on the animals themselves) may detract from the pleasure others enjoy in seeing wild animals behaving as they have for millennia

Other forms of wildlife interaction

Other forms of wildlife interaction (e.g. swimming with seals or dolphins, walking through colonially-breeding bird colonies, or generally spending time in the presence of habituated but not food-seeking animals) can be highly rewarding for tourists, but similar concerns apply as to feeding.

WTA believes that when interacting with wildlife, visitors should either be accompanied by professional staff or educated in appropriate behaviour. Where well-run operations allow such interaction, visitors are already routinely requested not to approach animals but to allow animals to approach them if they wish. This message could also be conveyed in a variety of ways in unsupervised areas (e.g. wetlands with prolific birdlife, or camping areas with good bird life or habituated wallabies).

WTA believes that regulations limiting interaction can sometimes be detrimental to conservation. On private lands, tourist interaction with wildlife is often discouraged by governments. Consequently farmers and other landholders have no prospects of earning money from wildlife and often respond by killing them or destroying their habitat in order to facilitate farming or development. Tourists crave interaction with wildlife, yet most Australians have never seen, let alone interacted with most Australian species. It should be possible to devise more than two options for wildlife on private land: tolerated isolation or death. A third alternative is to permit appropriately managed interaction with wildlife. We suggest that it should be feasible to develop policies or guidelines based around the essential tenets of humane treatment, species preservation and the desirability of encouraging private land holders to preserve natural ecosystems.

Summary

In summary, interactions between tourists and wildlife can be valuable in fostering concern for wildlife among tourists, and provide much pleasure. However such opportunities need to be provided in such a way as to minimise negative effects on wild animals and ecosystems.

Appendix 5. Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS)

Introduction

- The AAWS is an agreed blueprint for the future of animal welfare in Australia.
- The Strategy is a shared vision which aims to enhance welfare outcomes for all animals.
- The Strategy builds on strong foundations laid by the Australian Government, key industry groups, community organisations and the States and Territories.
- The AAWS was developed following extensive stakeholder consultation.
- The Strategy recognises that expectations regarding animal welfare are changing across the Australian community.
- The Strategy was endorsed by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) in 2004.

Goals of the AAWS are to achieve:

- An enhanced national approach and commitment to ensure high standards of animal welfare based on a concise outline of current processes;
- Sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on national and international benchmarks, scientific evaluation and research, taking into account changes in whole of community standards; and
- Effective communication, education and training across the whole community to promote an improved understanding of animal welfare.

Aims of the AAWS

- The AAWS will work toward a consistent national consultative approach to animal welfare.
- It will encourage constructive involvement by broad community, industry and government interests.
- The AAWS provides a platform for effective education and training aimed at promoting an improved understanding of animal welfare.

The Australian Governments role

The Australian Government recognises the importance of animal welfare. Its leadership role involves:

- Providing \$6 million over 4 years from the 2005-06 Financial Year to assist the implementation of the AAWS.
- Establishing an AAWS Advisory Committee to advise the Government and AAWS working groups.
- Establishing an implementation team in the Animal Welfare Unit in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) which is providing national coordination of the AAWS implementation.

Role of the Working groups

- Following an AAWS national workshop in 2005, involving around one hundred stakeholders, working groups were established to represent the six animal use sectors.
- Working groups will facilitate AAWS implementation by developing robust and inclusive action plans for their sectors.

- Action plans will map out the priority actions and responsibilities for stakeholders to successfully implement the AAWS within their sectors.
- Working groups will be supported by the AAWS Advisory Committee which represent Governments, the Australian Veterinary Association, intensive and extensive agriculture, Australian Veterinary teaching and research organisations and animal welfare groups.

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's role in developing action plans

- DAFF is facilitating the process, and providing funding to support stakeholders in their development of action plans.

What is the role for stakeholders in developing action plans?

- It is critical that all stakeholders, including State and Territory Governments, have ownership of these plans.
- Stakeholders must provide in-kind contributions and leadership to advance the timely implementation of the AAWS.

Attachment 1

The six key animal sectors under the AAWS are as follows:

Livestock and production animals
 animals in research and teaching;
 companion animals;
animals used for work, sport, recreation or on display;
animals in the wild; and
 aquatic animals.

Attachment 2

The AAWS Advisory Committee includes the following members:

- Dr John Drinan, Independent Chair
- Dr Gardner Murray, Australian Chief Veterinary Officer/Special Adviser
- Prof Ivan Caple, Chair, National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare (NCCAW)
- Dr Hugh Wirth, National President RSPCA
- Dr Robin Vandegraaff, Chair, Primary Industries Standing Committee Animal Welfare Working Group
- Mr Keith Adams, Former Chair National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Quarantine Committee
- Mr Warren Starick, NFF representative, NCCAW
- Dr Kevin Doyle, Australian Veterinary Association
- Assoc Prof Heather Yeatman, University of Wollongong
- Dr Maxine Cooper, Primary Industries Standing Committee