



GHD Animal Ethics Committee Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures

The GHD AEG Terms of Reference have been prepared in accordance with Section 2.2.1 of the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition 2013* (hereafter referred to as the Code). The purpose of the Terms of Reference is to provide guiding principles for GHD's AEG to assess and approve projects that involve the use of animals for scientific purposes.

The primary responsibility of the AEG is to ensure, on behalf of GHD that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

The vast majority of environmental projects work that GHD undertakes is environment assessment and not research. It is for this reason that the GHD Animal Ethics Group (GHD AEG) has been established to tailor ethical standards to field assessments for environmental assessment rather than research and animal experimentation. The term 'scientific purposes' used in this document includes all animals that are encountered during activities.

The AEC will operate in accordance with the governing principles of the code where respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (Clause 1.1 of the code). This respect is demonstrated by:

- a) using animals only when it is justified
- b) supporting the wellbeing of the animals involved
- c) avoiding or minimising harm, including pain and distress, to those animals
- d) applying high standards of scientific integrity
- e) applying Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) at all stages of animal care and use:
 - i) the Replacement of animals with other methods
 - ii) the Reduction in the number of animals used
 - iii) the Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals
- f) knowing and accepting one's responsibilities.

Membership

In accordance with Section 2.2.4 of the above mentioned Code, the GHD AEG contains at least one member of each category (A, B, C, and D) Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of the AEG membership. The membership of the committee will remain as:

- Category A - one member
- Category B - three members
- Category C - one member
- Category D - one member

The GHD AEG meets at least quarterly.



A GHD internal animal ethics sub-group has been established to assist the GHD AEG in the distribution of information throughout the company and to assist with the monitoring and auditing of projects. The members of the GHD internal animal ethics sub-group have been selected based on their breadth of knowledge in ecological fauna assessments. Members of the GHD internal animal ethics sub-group must be authorised by the GHD AEG.

Definitions

Operating Centre Manager – Is responsible for company performance and people management across a geographic area (e.g Victoria, South Queensland, North Queensland)

Principal Researcher – Is a Senior or Principal Zoologist with extensive experience in fauna field surveys. Experience may be across terrestrial or aquatic environments or may also be for a specific target group (e.g turtles)

Service Group Manager – Is responsible for company performance and people management for a specific discipline or series of disciplines such as natural resource management

Service Line Leader – Is an Australian Technical Leader role within the business with the responsibility for the oversight of technical development and alignment with market requirements. Animal Ethics occurs within the Natural Resources and Aquatic Sciences Service Lines.

Technical Services Leader Australasia Is a technical leadership role within the Australia Leadership team who has responsibility for the oversight of technical services across Australia.

Oversight for animal ethics is the responsibility of a Principal Consultant appointed by the Technical Services Leader Australasia as Chair of GHDs Animal Ethics Committee. The Chair of the committee works collaboratively with the Australian Natural Resources Service Line Leader and reports directly to the Technical Services Leader for Australasia.

Specific AEG Tasks

1.1 **The GHD AEG will review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable (see clause 1.3) and conform to the requirements of the code (Clause 2.3.2 i) by:**

- a) The judgement as to whether a proposed use of animals is ethically acceptable must be based on information that demonstrates the decision complies with the governing principles of the code (clause 1.1). The approval must balance whether the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved is justified by the potential benefits.
- b) Assessing application for the use of animals for scientific purposes only after the group is duly notified and provided with the information required for the GHD AEG to make a determination.



- c) Assessing whether the information provided by the Principal Researcher adequately and concisely details appropriate justification of the proposed animal use, the impact on the animals of the proposed use and adequately shows the means by which it will be minimised.
- d) The application must demonstrate that it complies with the Principles of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement.
- e) Assessing high risk procedures applications (procedures not in the GHD Standard Operating Procedures or those that, for a particular reason are considered high risk), against the guidelines and standards developed for the ethical treatment of animals (e.g. the Code).
- f) Review and approve, reject or request modification to high risk field survey applications.
- g) Seeking clarification of and/or agreement to amendments to a proposal from the Principal Researcher. The Principal Researcher may be invited to address the GHD AEG in person or via a teleconference or videoconference link.
- h) Making decisions on the basis of consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort to resolve differences, the GHD AEG should explore with the Principal Researcher ways of modifying the project in a way that may lead to consensus. If consensus is still unachievable, the GHD AEG should only proceed to a majority decision after members have been allowed a period of time to review their positions, followed by further discussion.
- i) As per Section 2.2.27, the AEG will advise the Principal Researcher of the AEG's decision in writing as soon as possible.

1.2 GHD AEG will review applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities, including procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line, and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code (Clause 2.3.2 ii)

- a) GHD does not currently hold or breed wildlife in facilities, and has no intention to do so.

1.3 The GHD AEG will conduct follow up review of approved projects and activities (Clause 2.2.32 iii) and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the code (Clause 2.3.2 iii)

- a) Review all post survey reports for low, medium and high risk projects and assess their compliance with Code and GHD's Standard Operating Procedures.
- b) Review Adverse Incident Reports arising from field surveys and determine compliance with Standard Operating Procedures. Identify improvements and amendments to the Standard Operating Procedures arising from the review of adverse incidents. Communicate requirements or amendments to approved researchers.
- c) Review field survey audits and identify projects for future audits in each State.
- d) Review approved researchers (Principal Researchers, Associate Investigators and Field Assistants) compliance with codes and GHD policies and procedures.



- e) Recommend changes to the Standard Operating Procedures as required.
- f) Approval for the project may be withdrawn if:
 - a. an inspection detects activities that are non-compliant with the Code;
 - b. an animal is used in a way other than as approved by the GHD AEG;
 - c. The GHD AEG becomes aware that an activity or project is associated with a higher negative welfare impact than was approved.
- g) The GHD AEG will advise the Principal Researcher if approval has been withdrawn. The Principal Researcher may seek clarification of the reasons for rejection from the GHD AEG and subsequently, provide additional information. The GHD AEG must consider any objection raised and additional relevant information provided.
- h) The GHD AEG will maintain a record of proposals and projects by:
 - i. Requiring electronic notification of all Projects involving GHD Standard Operating Procedures. Notifications to be emailed to the GHD AEG email and maintained in the email repository.
 - ii. Requiring electronic post survey completion reports to be emailed to the GHD AEG email where the record will be maintained in the email repository and reviewed at each quarterly meeting.
 - iii. Authorising the secretary to retain all documentation associated with GHD AEG business (including minutes, proposals, decisions, declarations and resolutions of conflicts of interest, correspondence, etc.).
 - iv. Reviewing all low and medium risk projects at quarterly meetings and high risk projects as they arrive.

1.4 The GHD AEG will monitor the care and use, of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care and use of animals in facilities (Clause 2.3.2 iv) by:

- a) Carrying out annual inspections/audits of GHD activities in the field by a GHD AEG members.
- b) Authorised delegates (GHD internal animal ethics sub-group member) to carry out inspections/audits of sites and activities on behalf of the GHD AEG. Delegates must prepare written reports for the GHD AEG following inspections (at least three audits to be conducted per year).
- c) Viewing animals during site inspections, monitoring activities and ensuring appropriate records (at least three audits to be conducted per year as described above). Including the review of project notification documentation and project details in accordance with GHD quality systems.
- d) Receiving post survey completion reports for low, medium and high risk procedures to confirm animal use is consistent with and in accordance with the approved application for the activity.
- e) Receiving and reviewing reports on adverse effects that impact on the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes.



- f) Identifying immediate changes to the Standard Operating Procedures should the nature of an adverse incident require immediate changes.
- g) Receiving and reviewing annual animal use returns in accordance with state reporting requirements.

1.5 GHD AEG will take appropriate actions regarding the unexpected adverse events (Clause 2.3.2 v)

- a) The AEC must take appropriate action in response to unexpected adverse events to ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised, the issue is addressed promptly, and activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately (see Clause 2.1.5 [v] [d]). Actions may include consulting with relevant people and, where necessary, suspending or withdrawing approval for the project or activity.
- b) Identify specific mitigation actions that should be incorporated into the Standard Operating Procedures.
- c) Identify specific mitigation measures that require immediate communication to approved researchers for implementation.
- d) The GHD AEG will authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal by:
 - i. Reviewing and approving a Fauna Euthanasia Assessment Procedure, detailed in the Standard Operating Procedures, to inform all GHD staff of the procedures for the emergency treatment or euthanasia of fauna.
 - ii. Assigning responsibility and determining appropriate steps for the emergency treatment or euthanasia to Principal Researcher as detailed in the Standard Operating Procedures.

1.6 GHD AEG will take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance (Clause 2.3.2 vi)

When projects or activities that are in breach of the code are detected the AEC must ensure that:

- a) actions are taken to ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised, the issue is addressed promptly, and activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately (see Clauses 5.2 [i] and 5.4 [i]) of the code). Actions may include suspending or withdrawing approval for the project or activity
- b) Reporting non-compliance and recommending remedial action to the activity Principal Researcher and Natural Resources Service Line Leader.
- c) Reporting significant contraventions of the Code, Standard Operating Procedures, or approved project procedures, to the Natural Resources Service Line Leader. Serious non-conformance issues will be referred to the relevant Service Group Manager and Operating Centre Manager and dealt with in accordance with GHD's People Manual.
- d) Making recommendations to the Natural Resources Service Line Leader regarding training and personal development needs of GHD AEG members and GHD staff in relation to the use of animals for scientific purposes.



- e) Making recommendations to the Natural Resources Service Line Leader regarding the facilities and other resource needs of GHD AEG members and GHD staff in relation to the use of animals for scientific purposes in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures.

1.7 GHD AEG will approve guidelines for the care and use of animals` on behalf of the institution (Clause 2.3.2 vii)

- a) Reviewing plans, policies, and procedures including fauna survey notification forms, post survey and adverse incident report templates, audit and project approvals templates and any other documentation provided by GHD.
- b) Considering information/comments provided by any persons who have concerns regarding the care and use of animals.
- c) Considering information/comments provided by delegates (GHD internal animal ethics sub-group) who conduct inspections/audits on behalf of the GHD AEG.
- d) Making recommendations reflecting a consensus view of the GHD AEG.
- e) Making comments in its internal annual report to GHD.

1.8 GHD AEG will provide advice and recommendations to the institution (Clause 2.3.2 viii)

- a) The AEC must provide advice and recommendations to the institution regarding the care and use of animals for scientific purposes conducted on behalf of the institution, and strategies required to ensure that the requirements of the Code are maintained and that matters affecting animal wellbeing are addressed.
- b) The GHD AEC will annually review the Standard Operating Procedures to achieve GHD's commitment to animal welfare.

1.9 GHD AEG will report on its operations to the institution (Clause 2.3.2 ix)

- a) Submitting an annual internal report as per Section 2.3.28 of the Code on the activities of the AEG to the administrating authority (GHD).
- b) Submitting any reports relating to use of animals for scientific purposes as required by each State in which the GHD AEG is registered.



2. Appointment of Members of the AEG

2.1 The AEG members will be appointed, re-appointed, or retired, according to the following procedures

- a) There are no fixed terms for GHD AEG members.
- b) In the event that a GHD AEG member requests to leave the GHD AEG, they must provide a minimum of three months' notice to allow one meeting for transition between newly appointed and outgoing members. In exceptional circumstances such as ill health this can be waived.
- c) Upon notification of an outgoing group member, the GHD AEG Chair and GHD AEG member will seek suitably qualified candidates for the appropriate class of member.
- d) GHD AEG member appointments require the approval of both the GHD AEG Chair and GHD Technical Services Leader - Australia.
- e) In the event that the Chair resigns, the GHD AEG would decide on a suitable replacement.
- f) Before appointment, all members of the GHD AEG should acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the Terms of Reference of the GHD AEG and any requirements for confidentiality required by the institution, including how advice may be sought without breaching confidentiality.
- g) If GHD AEG member does not fulfil their responsibilities, it will be managed according to GHD AEG Grievance Procedure.
- h) The role of secretary of the committee will be provided by GHD and will be a fauna ecologist. The secretary is not a member of the committee.

2. The GHD AEG will require that all members declare any conflict of interest by:

- a) Prior to their appointment – by notifying the GHD AEG of all real or potential conflicts of interest.
- b) As matters arise – by declaring all real or potential conflicts of interest and the nature of that interest. This must include all real or potential conflicts within any items on the meeting agenda or any other matter relating to membership of the GHD AEG.
- c) All declarations of real or potential conflicts of interest are to be recorded in the relevant meeting minutes.

3. The GHD AEG will deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises, including any situation where a member of the GHD AEG has an interest that may be seen to influence the objectivity of a decision by:

- a) Requiring a member whose objectivity may be influenced by an interest to leave the meeting during the consideration and decision making process.
- b) Recording the method of dealing with any conflict in the relevant meeting minutes.
- c) Considering and responding to any concern or claim raised by another party that a GHD AEG member has a conflict of interest that may have influenced the objectivity of an GHD AEG decision.



- d) Advising complainants, in writing, of the GHD AEG's response to any concern or claim relating to conflict of interest. If the complainant is not satisfied with the GHD AEG's response, a grievance may be lodged as per the GHD AEG Grievance Procedure.

Approval and Declaration

The GHD AEG Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures are approved.

15 May 2017

Jill Hannaford
–Technical Services Leader
Australia

Date

The GHD Animal Ethics Group agrees to comply with the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition 2013* and the GHD AEG Terms of Reference and Operation Procedures.

15 May 2017

Dr David May
GHD AEG Chair
Service Line Leader Natural Resources

Date