WILDLIFE ETHICS COMMITTEE

Wildlife Ethics Committee Conflict of Interest Procedure

Purpose

This procedure outlines how the Wildlife Ethics Committee (WEC) members will manage any conflict of interest that arises as part of the decision making process of a matter (application and related documents) before the committee.

Scope

During their appointment to the WEC, and before any deliberations of the WEC, members must declare any interest that could influence the objectivity of their decision making as set out in the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (8th edition 2013)* (the Code) in Clause 2.2.16. The Code also sets out that "Procedures for declaration of interests and management of perceived or actual conflicts of interest involving AEC members, and experts whose advice is sought by the AEC, must require people with a conflict of interest to remove themselves from the AEC's decision making on matters that relate to the conflict of interest" (Clause 2.2.21).

Procedure

Types of conflict (as outlined in the WEC Terms of Reference) are perceived, potential and actual and could be:

- Applicant on an application
- Personal close relationship to an applicant on an application
- Staff member applicant on application
- Business interest in the application
- Financial interest in the application

Procedure for members related to a meeting where there is a conflict of interest will be:

- Prior to a meeting any conflicts are flagged by members to the WEC Executive officer.
- Any conflict is assessed by all members of the committee to agree on action for conflict.
- Relevant papers for applications, adverse events or amendments are circulated to another member to ensure quorate.
- An item on meeting agenda exists to raise any conflicts for the agenda.

- Member identifies conflict in meeting and steps out of the meeting during the discussion of the application or related matters.
- If conflict exists for an application different member attends meeting or the duration of the discussion due to conflict.
- Another member is available in (by phone or physically) and has read the relevant application.
- Document in minutes who participated in what part of the meeting.
- Reports approved in a meeting and if a conflict is flagged another member of the same category is contacted out of session to ensure a quorate for approval.

Procedure for matters reviewed by the Executive Committee if a standing member of the Executive committee declares a conflict for a project:

- A member without conflict is included in follow up for the application or amendment or adverse event.

If experts are consulted in relation to a project then the committee will determine if there is a conflict before discussing the project.
If the Executive Officer declares a conflict of interest, although not a member of the committee, should step out of the meeting to ensure the discussion is not hampered by the presence of the Executive Officer.

Responsibilities

Position	**Responsibility**
WEC executive officer	Manage procedure to WEC for review biennially.
WEC members	Review procedure biennially.
WEC members	Use procedure in day to day responsibilities on committee.
WEC Chair	Ownership of procedure.

Associated Documents and References

National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition*. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.
Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (8th edition 2013)
WEC Terms of Reference
Animal Welfare Act 1985

Contact

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