

RSPCA Australia/AWC/VPC joint workshop

Development of a national strategy towards humane vertebrate pest control



Communiqué

Vertebrate pest management in Australia has significant implications for wildlife conservation and agricultural production. At the same time, it raises some serious animal welfare concerns. To address these concerns, a workshop jointly organised by RSPCA Australia, the Animal Welfare Centre, and the National Vertebrate Pests Committee and sponsored by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Australasian Wildlife Management Society and the Pest Animal Control Cooperative Research Centre, was held in Melbourne on 4-5 August 2003.

The aim of this workshop was to develop a national and common approach towards humane vertebrate pest control and to identify the required research, development and education (RD&E) and legislative/regulatory actions required to overcome present deficiencies, together with a mechanism to deliver this approach.

The workshop was attended by representatives of thirteen state, territory and federal government agencies with responsibilities in the area of vertebrate pest control, as well as relevant industry groups, non-government organisations, and key researchers in this field. The agenda included discussion of key principles underpinning humane vertebrate pest control, priority issues and crucially, the coordination and implementation of a national approach to humane vertebrate pest control.

The consensus of the workshop was that a national approach to humane vertebrate pest control should include: uniformity of approach across jurisdictions; coordination and collaboration of control efforts; the development of nationally acceptable pest animal control practices; the optimisation of RD&E resources in pest animal control; and the identification of national priorities for increasing the humaneness of vertebrate pest control. The need for a national coordinating body that would have the ability to effectively implement and coordinate such a national approach was seen as a key requirement.

The implementation of such a national approach should result in:

- minimisation of animal suffering during vertebrate pest control operations
- a balance between welfare considerations and other national objectives served by vertebrate pest control
- increased on-ground recognition of the need for humane control practices, and
- the development of more humane control methods.

A working group made up of representatives of the main stakeholder groups has been given the responsibility of utilising the results of the workshop to develop the national approach to humane vertebrate pest control. This exercise will involve regular interaction with the full workshop group and will focus on six areas:

Organised by



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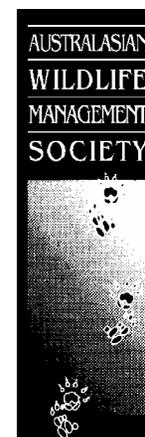
Animal Welfare
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Vertebrate Pests
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- Reviewing current control techniques, codes of practice and best practice.
- Identifying RD&E priorities
- Development of a consistent state/national framework to humane vertebrate pest control
- Understanding public attitudes and awareness and their implication for humane vertebrate pest control
- Integration of animal welfare into the planning, implementation and evaluation of control programs
- Coordinating and implementing this national approach

A discussion paper on this workshop and on-going activities will be circulated to all participating individuals and groups, as well as being made available via the RSPCA Australia website.

8 August 2003