



**Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water
and Environment
Animal Ethics Committee**

RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

The *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition, 2013* (the Code) requires that, in the consideration of applications to conduct research using animals, Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) must weigh the predicted scientific or educational knowledge to be gained against the potential effects on the wellbeing of animals (1.3). Only those projects that are essential and justified and conform to the requirements of the Code and relevant legislation should be approved (2.2.1 (viii)).

Further, approved projects must be the subject of inspections or monitoring on at least an annual basis (2.2.26). The frequency and timing of inspections will be determined by factors such as the frequency and accessibility of sites, the amount, type, and variety of scientific activities, and the severity of potential effects on animal welfare (2.2.32).

It is envisaged that a Risk Assessment Framework will assist the AEC in determining the frequency and timing of monitoring of projects and their animal housing / holding facilities, and whether or not additional conditions of approval are required.

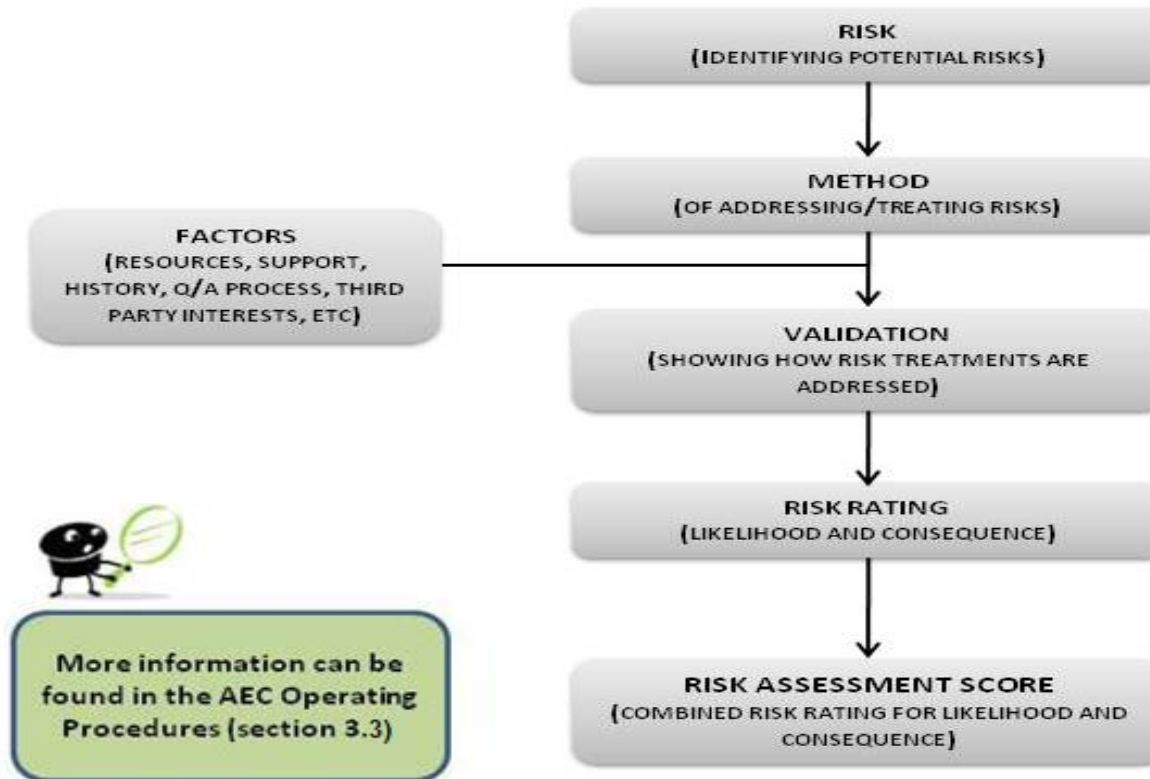
Risk Matrix

The Risk Matrix is made up of a combination of Consequence, or the impact of an activity on animal welfare, and Likelihood, or probability of such an impact occurring. A model is described overleaf for determining the level of Consequence, Likelihood and then the overall Risk Assessment Score.

As well as assessing the potential risk of project activities on animal welfare, the Risk Matrix can also be used to assess the potential risk of approving a new project location, new and novel procedures, or new Chief Investigators.

Projects that score highly on the Risk Matrix may be the subject of early or urgent monitoring by the AEC Animal Monitoring Officer and/or the AEC, additional conditions of approval, and/or alteration of project parameters to reduce the risk to animals and/or investigators.

RISK ASSESSMENT MODEL



Consequence: The consequence of an issue is the effect or outcome a particular project issue or activity will have on the welfare of an animal. Consequence relates to the importance of an issue.

Consequence	Score	Definition
Negligible	0	Very insignificant impact on animal welfare; unlikely to be measurable.
Minor	1	Possibly detectable but minimal impact on animal welfare.
Moderate	2	Maximum acceptable level of impact on animal welfare.
Severe	3	Very serious impacts on animal welfare, including injury or possible euthanasia of animals.
Catastrophic	4	Widespread and permanent irreversible damage or loss, including deaths of animals.

Likelihood: The likelihood is the conditional probability of an event occurring. It relates directly to the impact of the event, not the activity surrounding the event.

Likelihood	Score	Definition
Rare	1	May occur in exceptional circumstances.
Unlikely	2	Uncommon, but has been known to occur.
Possible	3	Some evidence to suggest this may possibly occur.
Occasional	4	May occur.
Likely	5	It is likely or expected to occur.

Risk matrix: The Likelihood multiplied by the Consequence gives the risk value.

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Negligible (0)	Minor (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe (3)	Catastrophic (4)
Rare (1)	0	1	2	3	4
Unlikely (2)	0	2	4	6	8
Possible (3)	0	3	6	9	12
Occasional (4)	0	4	8	12	16
Likely (5)	0	5	10	15	20

Risk Assessment Score and Outcomes:

Risk Ranking	Risk Value	Description and Outcomes (AEC Response)
Negligible	0	No issue – indirect monitoring only – e.g. via annual reports (and photos/video footage, if deemed necessary)
Low	1-4	Acceptable – indirect monitoring only – e.g. via annual reports (and photos/video footage, if deemed necessary)
Moderate	5-11	Active management required - may require monitoring by AMO* and/or further conditions of approval
High	12-14	Intervention required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require monitoring by AMO* • Further conditions of approval and/or other permits required.
Extreme	>15	Urgent action required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project application may require alteration to reduce risk to animals and/or investigators. • Project will require strict monitoring by AMO* and may require strict conditions of AEC approval. • May also require other permits.

*AMO = Animal Monitoring Officer