



Attitudes Towards Animal Welfare

A RESEARCH REPORT

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ORIGINAL

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Executive summary

This report represents the results of research undertaken by TNS Social Research for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) in May and June 2006. The overall objective of the research was to understand community views on animal welfare and current roles and responsibilities.

Broadly, the research was required to provide the Department with feedback for the key audiences with regard to:

- Awareness of the topic of animal welfare
- Interest and propensity to engage
- Sources of awareness
- Key 'levers' or 'hooks' for engagement
- Issues and approaches that deserve caution.

Overall, the key outcomes from the research are a detailed understanding of awareness and attitudes with regard to animal welfare in Australia and a clear direction for the way forward in the development of a communications strategy to engage key audiences.

While the primary target audience for the research was the general public, other audiences were also identified for inclusion. Overall, the four distinct audiences of interest included:

- The general community
- School-aged children
- Farmers and primary producers
- NESB and Indigenous communities.

The research was exploratory and developmental in nature thus providing the foundation for decision making on future communication priorities and activities. Specifically the research sought to identify what aspects of animal welfare have the greatest salience with the population, and explored what language and phrasing for communicating about the topic will resonate best with the population.

The results show that **engagement** with the issue of animal welfare is very high and that a communications strategy about animal welfare issues would be met with interest from the general public and would not need to justify itself, particularly if promoting prevention of animal cruelty.

In addition, the research supports the need for **public awareness raising** and the provision of **balanced information** on animal welfare issues in Australia. Challenging of existing assumptions (e.g. 'I just know how to care for my pets') to counter complacency will be required should there be particular animal welfare issues addressed by the AAWS that require greater engagement and behaviour change.

The general community was not aware of an Australian government presence in relation to animal welfare, with participants particularly **unaware** of any activities being undertaken in relation to the AAWS. There was support for the idea of the strategy, however, and openness in general to information. There was great potential for the communication strategy to ‘fill the gap’ in information and provide a more balanced perspective on issues than is currently available.

The research suggests that a **multifaceted** strategy constructed using an **umbrella** position and message supported by specific activities and messages for key sub groups and contexts will have greatest impact.

Overall, the recommended themes and messages for the general community are those based on **collective responsibility** and the **social benefits of animals** however these varied slightly for other target audiences. The report outlines the most appropriate communication approaches (themes and channels) that should be considered for each key audience.

1. Background and Research Objectives

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), developed over five years and endorsed by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council in May 2004, outlines directions for improvements in the welfare of animals. It is a blueprint for the future of animal welfare. Through consideration and recognition of previous efforts and activities, together with a commitment to the way forward being informed by research and planning, the strategy aims to protect and promote the welfare of all sentient Australian animals.

Increased community awareness of the importance of sound practices and roles and responsibilities in relation to animal welfare will support the implementation of the policy. Communications which serve to inform and educate key groups and influencers as well as the general community will be critical. While a significant body of research already exists on attitudes to animal welfare,¹ primary research was required to determine how best to communicate on the policy issues and develop an effective strategy to engage the community and raise awareness.

Stakeholder engagement will be a key element for achieving overall policy objectives. A comprehensive investigation of issues and mechanisms for engaging key interest groups is being undertaken by the Bureau of Rural Sciences under a separate contract. While stakeholder organisations' views have not been explored in this project, collaboration between the two projects will be important for the ultimate development of an effective communications strategy. Achieving a research outcome which does not overtly challenge or conflict with existing messages will be important for developing an effective communications strategy which is endorsed at the local level and does not create confusion in the community. Appropriate cross pollination of research findings and ideas would also serve to further alert stakeholders to the research direction hence increasing the likely take up and support for research recommendations.

The primary audience for this research was the general public. The Department identified several key target groups which are of particular interest for targeting in a communications strategy. To simplify the research process, and as a result of discussions with the Department, TNS Social Research (TNSSR) classified the key target groups into four distinct audiences. These being:

- **General community:** including community members of rural and urban communities, those with companion animals and consumers of animal products.
- **School age children:** encompassing children from urban and rural areas aged between 12 and 17 years.

¹ See Australian Animal Welfare Stakeholder Analysis (2005), Bureau of Rural Sciences, and Kellert and Berry (1980) *Knowledge, affection and basic attitudes towards animals in American society*.

- **Farmers and Primary Producers:** encompassing farmers and primary producers within regional and rural areas.
- **Indigenous and NESB:** Indigenous community members and those from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds were included as separate target groups and TNSSR partnered with Cultural Partners to provide the Department with specialist research for these groups.

1.1. Research objectives and outcomes

The research was required to provide the fundamental information on how, when and where to begin talking about the broad issue of animal welfare. It explored the different needs and likely reactions from sub sections within the general community to assist in the development of an overarching umbrella communications strategy, or a staged or multi-pronged approach to more effectively target each group, as deemed necessary.

The overall objective of the research was to understand community views on animal welfare and current roles and responsibilities and uncover the most effective means (messages and channels) to engage the community's attention and raise awareness of the issues, assisting in behaviour change in the longer term. The research was highly exploratory and developmental in nature thus providing the foundation for decision making on future communication priorities and activities.

Broadly, the research was required to provide the Department with feedback for the key audiences with regard to:

- Awareness of the topic
- Interest and propensity to engage
- Sources of awareness
- Key 'levers' or 'hooks' for engagement
- Issues and approaches that deserve caution.

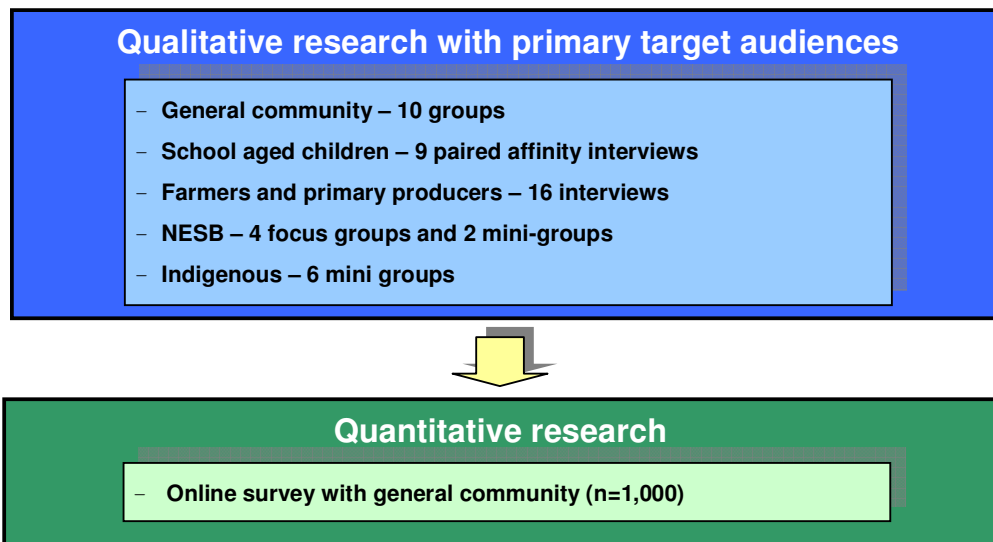
The key **outcomes from the research** are a detailed understanding of awareness and attitudes with regard to animal welfare in Australia and a clear direction for the way forward in the development of a communications strategy to engage key audiences.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research design

The research combined a mixed methods approach, including a qualitative study aimed at exploring issues in detail, followed by an online survey to quantify community perceptions uncovered in the qualitative phase.

The following is a summary of the research design.



2.2. Qualitative research

General community

Recruitment of the general community groups, children's interviews and farmers/primary producers was conducted by a professional recruitment organisation, with Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) accreditation and compliance with privacy legislation.

Prior to the research, several key factors were identified that were used to differentiate participants for the general community research, into separate groupings. These included:

- Attitudes towards animal welfare
- Metropolitan and regional representation
- Demographic factors such as age and life stage.

Given the potential for social acquiescence to bias the research findings, participants with roughly similar general attitudes towards animal welfare were recruited for different groups. Recruitment of ‘like’ groups was conducted using an attitudinal scale to provide for better group harmony and comfort in discussing attitudes and beliefs. Practical screening questions were developed by TNSSR to separate participants into broad, attitudinally diverse groups at the recruitment stage.

The following table shows the structure of the general population focus groups (n=10).

Attitude	Metropolitan	Regional
Strong affection for animals	2 groups	2 groups
Pragmatic about the use of animals for practical benefit of people	1 group	1 group
Strong interest in mastery/ control over animals	2 groups	2 groups
Total	5 groups	5 groups

In order to explore nuances across rural and urban communities, the research was conducted in a range of locations across Australia, as follows.

State	Metropolitan	Regional
WA	Perth	Geraldton
NSW	Sydney	Dubbo
Queensland	Brisbane	Toowoomba
Victoria	Melbourne	Shepparton
Tasmania	Hobart	Campbell Town

School age children

The attitudes and perceptions of school age children were canvassed in the study to identify any marked differences from older community members. Paired affinity interviews (n=9), with two participants (friends), were conducted with children aged 12 to 17 years, to enable the provision of information in a secure and safe environment, and to ensure that research biases such as social acquiescence were reduced. Locations for these interviews were aligned with the general community group locations, and interviews were conducted in participants’ homes.

Farmers and primary producers

Recruitment of farmers and primary producers was conducted by a professional recruitment organisation, with IQCA accreditation and compliance with privacy legislation.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a range of farmers and primary producers, as specified by the Department. Interviews were chosen over group discussions to ensure that existing relationships and dominant rural personalities were removed from the information gathering perspective. In addition,

interviews allowed for the research to be conducted over a range of locations. As with general population audiences, farmers and primary producers were recruited to ensure a range of attitudinally diverse participants.

The following table shows the structure of the interviews with farmers and primary producers (n=16).

Type	Location	Total interviews
Commercial fisher	Geraldton, Hobart	2
Aquaculturalist	Geraldton	1
Horse breeder	Geraldton, Toowoomba	2
Dairy farmer	Shepparton	2
Sheep farmer	Shepparton	2
Dog breeder	Toowoomba	1
Beef farmer	Toowoomba, Regional Tasmania	2
Pig farmer	Dubbo	2
Poultry farmer	Dubbo, Hobart	2
		16

Non-English speaking background communities

A series of four focus groups (6-8 people) and two mini groups (3-4 people) were conducted across six language communities:

- Arabic
- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- Greek
- Italian
- Vietnamese.

Groups were held in three sites (Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide), as depicted below:

Language	Sydney	Melbourne	Adelaide
Mandarin	-	1 mini group	-
Cantonese	-	1 mini group	-
Greek	-	-	1 focus group
Italian	-	-	1 focus group
Arabic	1 focus group	-	-
Vietnamese	1 focus group	-	-
Total	2 groups	2 groups	2 groups

Participants for groups were recruited from general community members, and composed to ensure a mix of gender, age, length of residence and English proficiency level. Groups were conducted in the first language of the participants and moderated by expert bi-lingual moderators. The stimulus materials were translated into the appropriate languages for the groups.

Indigenous communities

A series of small discussion groups and paired affinity interviews were held with Indigenous Australians in metropolitan and regional locations across three States/Territories (NT, NSW, Qld). Remote communities were not included in the research. A total of six small groups (2-4 participants) were conducted by Indigenous researchers on site. Respondents were drawn from two distinct groups in the community:

- General community – including males and females, aged 20 – 55 years
- People involved with aspects of agriculture, fisheries, livestock and farming – including fishers, students studying agriculture and land management, crocodile farmers, and former cattle workers, aged 25 – 50 years.

Recruitment was conducted through a combination of centralised recruiting, liaison with local organisations and local networks. All groups were moderated by experienced Indigenous researchers.

Sites included in the research were as follows:

Sites	Location	General community	Pastoralists, primary producers, industry-related
NSW	Rural – Illawarra/ Dapto & Nowra	1	1
QLD	Regional – Cairns	1	1
NT	Urban – Darwin	1	1
Total participants		17	18

Interview/group content and process

In order to cover the breadth of material and topics, group sessions and interviews followed a structured discussion guide which allowed ample scope for exploration of relevant issues. Participants were shown a range of stimulus materials, including groupings of the six animal use sectors, themed message boards, and a selection of the AAWS printed materials, in order to stimulate discussion.

Specifically the discussions sought to uncover:

- The perception of animal welfare as a concept
- Sources of awareness
- Key community concerns in relation to animal welfare in Australia

- Current levels of awareness of the AAWS
- Key animal welfare issues for each animal sector and an awareness of the differences in issues between sectors
- Key messages and channels for communications developments.

For further details on the focus group discussion guide, please refer to Appendix A.

Children in the research were asked to create a picture using words and images, to represent 'important things to tell people about animal welfare'. The children were then asked to describe their compositions to the moderator, in their own words.

2.3. Quantitative research

The quantitative phase of this study was conducted using the TNS Onlinebus survey. The TNS Onlinebus is a regular survey run by TNS (once every two weeks) with a random selection of respondents from the TNS Online Panel, into a wide range of issues relevant to the general population.

Omnibus surveying (such as the TNS Onlinebus) provides the ability to:

- Understand general community views on a range of issues
- Provide data that is broadly representative of the general population and from which generalisations can be made
- Turn around data in a very small time period.

Given the relatively short nature of the quantitative survey (six questions in total) and the need for quantitative data to provide insight into the qualitative research in a timely manner, the TNS Onlinebus was considered to be the ideal methodology to conduct the quantitative component. For details of the questionnaire used in the survey, refer to Appendix B.

The TNS Onlinebus utilises the TNS Online Panel as its key sample frame. The TNS Panel has in excess of 350,000 active members in Australia who have all agreed to be contacted to take part in online research. This can be considered to be one of the most robust online sample frames currently available. Essentially, the composition, recruitment process and sample matching processes/weighting utilised for the TNS Online Panel ensure that the findings are representative of the Australian population, both in terms of demographic distribution and attitudinal perspectives. For details on structure and representativeness of the TNS Online Panel, refer to Appendix C.

The survey sample is representative of the national population, with quotas set on an equal ratio of males and females in both capital cities and non-capital city areas. The sample breakdown is maintained for each survey, as follows:

State/Territory	City	Other	Total
NSW	200	100	300
Victoria	200	70	270
Queensland	120	60	180
SA/NT	80	20	100
WA	50	20	70
ACT	40	0	40
Tasmania	40	0	40
Total number (n)	730	270	1,000

2.4. Notes on qualitative and quantitative research

The study included both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Each type of research had unique advantages to exploring community perceptions toward animal welfare.

Qualitative: Qualitative research is designed to identify different attitudes that people hold, and explore how these attitudes were formed. In this project it was used to explore, for example, what the community considered the concept of animal welfare to mean, and how messages about the topic should be delivered. Qualitative research uncovered a range of attitudes and opinions that were quantified in the online survey.

While participants were included in the research to represent a broad range of views and experiences, and to ensure that findings were inclusive of the wider community, it is important to note that the qualitative findings presented in this report are not statistically representative, and results cannot be generalised to the Australian population.

Quantitative: Quantitative research is used to answer the “how many” questions – specifically, for example, how many people were engaged with the topic in relation to other important issues, and what types of messages held most salience. Quantitative research produces the ‘hard’ data that is quoted in the figures in this report. Where percentages are quoted, these results were generated from the quantitative phase of the study.

3. Awareness and Perceived Importance

3.1. Interest and engagement

The research revealed a high interest and emotional engagement with the topic. All groups were generally easily engaged in discussion on animal welfare issues regardless of their attitudinal stance or whether they personally had frequent interaction with animals.

Participants were open to discussion and information and while some issues were more salient than others (see later discussion), participants appreciated the breadth of issues in scope, when prompted or challenged with stimulus material.

A communications strategy about animal welfare issues would be met with interest from the general public and would not need to justify itself, particularly if promoting prevention of animal cruelty. See separate discussion of farmers' attitudes in Section 5.1.

3.2. Perceptions and interpretation of 'animal welfare'

Participants were asked to describe and define what animal welfare means to them. The initial interpretation of animal welfare was typically narrow and negative. Without prompting or stimulating of ideas, the term was frequently associated with 'animal cruelty'. Despite the positive notion of 'welfare' as being about (good) wellbeing 'animal welfare' most often connotated negative images of poor wellbeing or mistreatment of animals².

International issues were very top of mind (whaling, bears, seals etc) and often discussion began with these types of examples of animal cruelty. **Environmental and conservation** issues were also raised in discussion and there was a strong association with environmental conservation and the protection of native animals i.e. degradation of the environment negatively impacts animal welfare.

The most prominent Australian issues were:

- Cruelty to pets
- Livestock (treatment and transport)
- Farming practices (chickens and pigs, intensive farming)

The **RSPCA** was frequently mentioned across all groups. While other animal welfare organisations or activist groups were raised in some discussions, the RSPCA were spontaneously well recognised and frequently associated with the concept of animal welfare (see also communication channel discussion in Section 6.4).

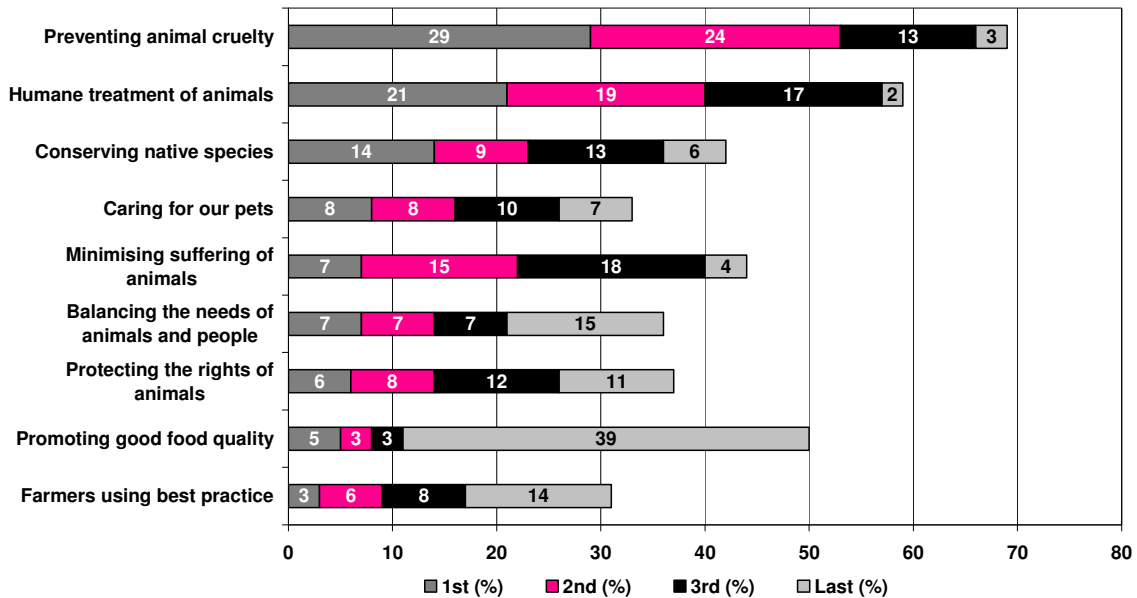
² This finding is parallel with research in the health arena which has found that a term such as 'mental health' is usually associated more with 'mental illness' than with a more positive (healthy) mental condition.

Another key concept raised in association with animal welfare was that of **legislation and law enforcement** – something underpinning the frequent mention of the RSPCA and animal cruelty cases which came to the public’s attention when perpetrators were prosecuted.

Further discussion in groups and moderation using stimulus material led to discovery of a greater breadth of issues. Initial discussion was often idealistic in nature. Through greater exploration of alternative view points the complexity of issues began to emerge although they were not always initially appreciated or spontaneously provided from participants.

Findings from the online survey conducted with the general community confirmed the qualitative findings, with over half of the sample nominating both ‘preventing animal cruelty’ and ‘humane treatment of animals’ as a first, second or third preference when asked to rank out of eight options what animal welfare meant to them (see figure below). These interpretations of animal welfare were far more salient than concepts related to food quality, as evidenced by the high proportion of respondents who nominated ‘promoting good food quality’ as their **last** preference (39%).

Figure 1: What good animal welfare means to me (%)



3.3. Awareness and understanding of animal welfare issues

Despite a keen interest in the topic and ease of discussion, it was evident that on an individual level, there is a **shallow understanding of the issues**. For most, any knowledge of animal welfare issues was based on personal experience with animals, and/or exposure to information through the media or animal welfare groups, and when challenged on the complexity of these issues, it is clear that there is a need for balanced information.

As indicated earlier, the general public is easily emotionally engaged with the topic of animal welfare, however when challenged for factual information, responses are often **narrow or superficial**. Awareness and knowledge appears to stem largely from media reports (often sensationalist) on distressing stories of animal cruelty. Discussions also revealed a certain amount of misinformation in relation to issues such as farming practices.

Some particular issues had greater salience with the community, and higher awareness, depth of understanding and accuracy of knowledge was evident, for example:

- RSPCA 'No kittens for Christmas' campaign
- Japanese whaling
- Environmental issues (pollution or conservation of native species).

These issues were subject to greater public debate with information disseminated via communications and education campaigns as well as through the general media. This demonstrates the role and impact of information in building greater awareness and understanding.

There appeared to be **assumptions** made by the general public about animal welfare and the existence and enforcement of legislation to protect animals from mistreatment. This was raised particularly in relation to animals used in research and testing, a topic which the general public knew about but did not particularly want to think about (see later discussion of animal groupings). Again, superficial awareness was evident as the general public felt that testing cosmetics on animals may involve cruelty but few were aware of facts around the management and treatment of animals in this context assuming that 'there must be someone looking after that'.

These assumptions and expectations reflected a complacency or apathy in relation to animal welfare by the wider community. This complacency is underpinned by a lack of concern for animal welfare in Australia – while the issue is of great importance, it is not seen as a problem when compared with animal treatment in overseas cultures.

While the research did not undertake to benchmark awareness and actual behaviours with regard to animal welfare practices, there appeared to be some (potential) ignorance with regard to some individual behaviours, particularly related to the care of companion animals ('I just know how to care for my pet, I've grown up with animals'). This may represent a barrier to the effectiveness of communications directed at these audiences.

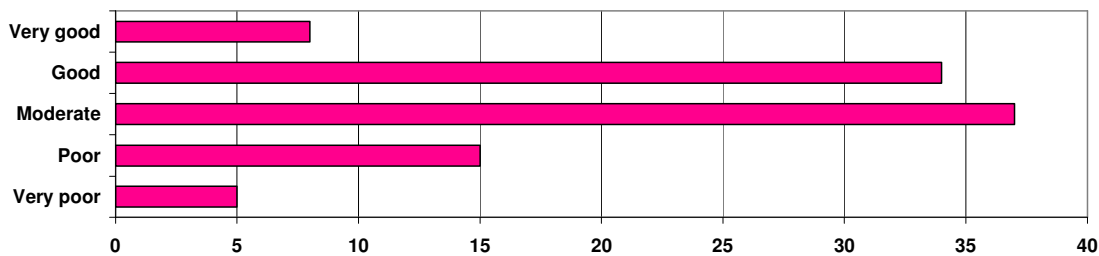
The research supports the need for public awareness raising and the provision of balanced information on animal welfare issues in Australia. Challenging of existing assumptions (e.g. 'I just know how to care for my pets') to counter complacency will be required should there be particular animal welfare issues addressed by the AAWS that require greater engagement and behaviour change.

3.4. Animal welfare in Australia: A problem?

International cases of animal cruelty were frequently raised in discussions and in comparison the standard of animal welfare in Australia was believed to be fairly high. This belief was reinforced by the feeling that Australian animal cruelty cases – while often prominent – are relatively few. Particular cases of intensive farming were seen by some as extreme (negative) practice, but these were not seen as normal practice.

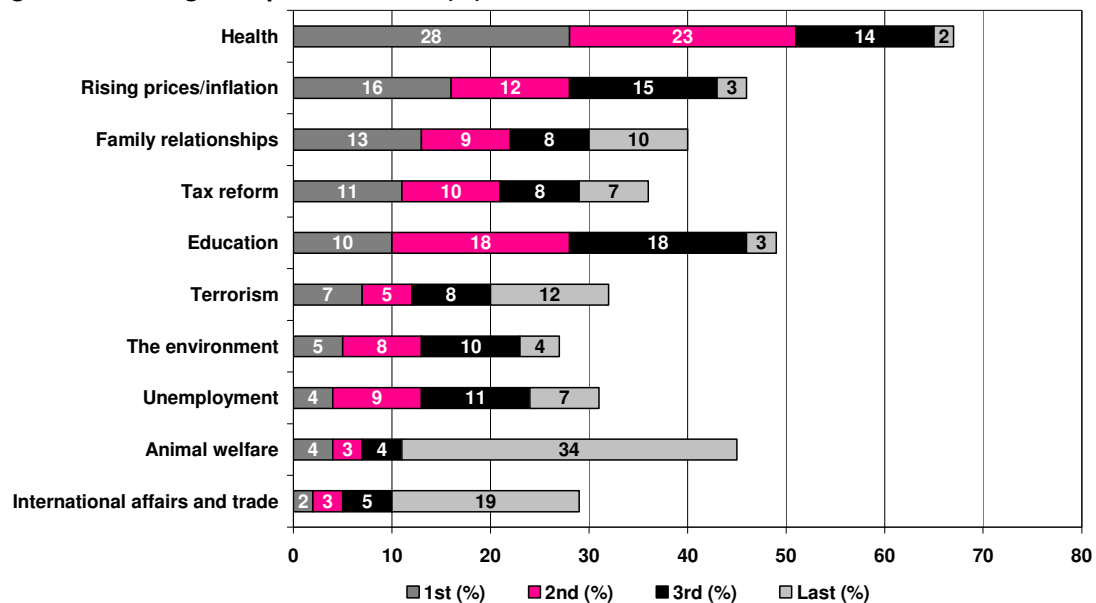
In the quantitative study, respondents were generally positive about Australia’s performance on the issue of animal welfare, with 42% rating it as good or very good, and a further 37% rating it moderately (see figure below).

Figure 2: Australia’s performance on the issue of animal welfare (%)



There is a strong sense that while the issue of animal welfare is important and can and should attract attention and discussion, it is not a significant problem in Australia and therefore rates low in the hierarchy of other ‘important’ issues vying for Government attention. The quantitative findings also support this, as evidenced below, where few respondents rated the issue 1st, 2nd or 3rd, while a third (34%) rated it **last**.

Figure 3: Ranking of important issues (%)



3.5. Sources of knowledge

The main sources of information on the issue are media stories (sensationalist and negative) or information from animal welfare groups or lobbyists. There is a basic awareness that the media is not necessarily a balanced source of information however participants in some groups were less skeptical and tended to believe what they had heard via these sources.

The main sources of information were from passive information seeking rather than actively contacting relevant sources or self education. When interest was sparked (eg via a news story) some participants cited that they would go to the internet for further information. Participants commented that this usually revealed information from extremist animal welfare groups and there was a dearth of more balanced information available.

Currently the main sources in relation to animal welfare are:

- Media, news, current affairs
- TV programs and documentaries
- Schools/kids projects
- Internet – after seeing something on TV
- RSPCA – commonly mentioned and well recognised.

The quantitative study reinforces that there are mixed levels of openness to information on the topic – a third reported ‘there is enough information’ (33%), and further 14% reported there is ‘more than enough’, while the majority of the population reported ‘there is not enough information’ on animal welfare (44%) or ‘there is nowhere near enough information’ (8%). This suggests that while some segments of the community may be harder to engage than others, a significant proportion of the population (52%) is open to receiving information on animal welfare, although in general they are unlikely to be active information seekers in relation to animal welfare issues.

3.6. The need for a Government strategy

There is recognition of an absence of balanced information in relation to animal welfare, and in this sense there is a perception that the government has a role to play in the provision of this information. Discussion in the groups often highlighted the fact that in the absence of information on the topic there are expectations and assumptions that the government is doing ‘something’ regarding rules and regulations in the treatment of animals.

However, while recognised, the role of government is also complex. It is evident that there are challenges in relation to the role performed by the government in relation to animal welfare. In the eyes of the general community there was debate over where the government stands on this issue, particularly in light of the multi-faceted role that is played, in terms of law enforcement and regulation. Some in the community question government’s commitment to animal welfare. For example, some felt that arresting animal activists on farmers’ properties implied that the Government was not committed to

animal welfare. However, from a farmer's perspective, there was doubt as to whether the regulatory environment (eg health inspections, red tape) equated to a government which was supportive of their industry.

The general community was not aware of an Australian government presence in relation to animal welfare, with participants particularly unaware of any activities being undertaken in relation to the AAWS. There was support for the idea of the Strategy, however, and openness in general to information. There was great potential for the communications strategy to 'fill the gap' in information and provide a more balanced perspective on issues than is currently available.

Participants were reassured that although there was some assumption that this was happening already. There was interest in the detail of what would be involved in such a strategy. A communications strategy which promotes the AAWS would need to include specifics on activities and outcomes as discussions highlighted that vagaries would be met with scepticism and doubt with regard to agenda or actual substance.

4. Animal working groups

The six animal use sectors represented in the AAWS were included as a topic for discussion in the qualitative research. This was used as a method to discuss animal welfare in further detail, but also to gauge the importance of different animal groups among different audiences. For most audiences the discussion was heavily drawn to companion and livestock animals, followed by animals used in research.

4.1.1. Companion and guide animals

Participants felt a strong affinity with this group of animals, with many noting that this group does not represent a concern in terms of animal welfare issues in Australia. For many pet owners there was a sense that their own animal was well looked after, and beyond that there was a belief that people in the community will contact the RSPCA or police if they see an animal welfare issue, and some action is usually taken against the owner to protect the animal.

I think they're pretty well looked after, domestic animals, I mean there's still the odd ones that you read in the paper that are horrific ... (Metropolitan group)

During discussions about these animals the RSPCA pre-Christmas campaign (don't give a pet for Christmas) was raised, there was high awareness of this campaign, and strong endorsement of both its purpose and its messages.

There was some discussion over the wording 'companion' (versus 'pet') with the word itself seeming to lessen people's concern about animal welfare for this group. The word 'companion' was viewed to imply 'care' (different to farm animal or work animal) – therefore its role is to be loved and cared for, as they fulfil that function of a companion/value. Also, companion implies interactive (unlike, for example, a pet snake). 'Pets' were seen to encompass a wider range of animals – fish, spiders, rats, guinea pigs, snakes – beyond cats and dogs, though it should be noted that 'companion' did imply companion and guide animals whereas 'pet' did not seem to evoke guide animals.

4.1.2. Livestock and production animals

Of all the animal groupings the most concern was raised about this group. The level of animal welfare was thought to depend on whether the animal was an ongoing asset (which are well looked after) or bred for slaughter:

If it's a milk producer you will look after it because you want it to produce milk, if it's a wool producer you will look after it because you want it to produce wool, but if it's there to be slaughtered you want to get it as quickly and efficiently as possible ... (Metropolitan group)

Some of the key concerns raised in relation to livestock included:

- Caged chickens and battery hens – discussion over quality and price
- Cruelty in mass production of animals (e.g. French methods used to produce foie gras from geese)
- Feeding to speed growth, hormones to accelerate growth
- Forcing vegetarian animals to become carnivores (e.g. boosting their feed with other animal by-products)
- Mulesing of sheep
- Transportation and shipping of livestock
- Hamstringing of cattle in the Middle East.

The 'hottest' issues were around the live sheep trade and caged chickens, largely due to recent coverage of issues by television programs such as '60 Minutes'. As discussion unfolded among participants there was a sense of raised group awareness as members 'educated' each other on different farming practices. Overall this points to a need for more information – many participants were keen to know more and were looking for a reassurance of what animals may experience during, for example, treatment and slaughter. In particular a greater understanding of **why** these practices are necessary is sought by the general community (e.g. mulesing).

4.1.3. Animals used in research and teaching

Overall there was real sense among participants that although little is known about what actually happens to animals in research, that 'someone' must be looking after animals used for these purposes. Most participants agreed that the use of animals for research was an 'unfortunate necessity', but that there is a practical reality to their use.

The use of these animals in a balanced, humane way was raised, but there was admittance by some that they didn't think about the outcomes for these animals, rather they focussed on the need for 'essential' research (developing cures for diseases such as cancer), trusting that research was being done for the 'right' reasons. This was discussed as the difference between 'unavoidable cruelty' – testing medicines or growing cancers on animals – and 'avoidable cruelty', such as cosmetics testing.

Further exploration of this issue uncovered an **idealistic** view among those who felt that it would be cruel to test products such as cosmetics on animals, but had not made an active stance to avoid or reject these products.

Some participants questioned whether regulations were in place to ensure the wellbeing of these animals, while others assumed this must be the case.

4.1.4. Animals used for work, recreation, entertainment and display

This grouping was seen to be too broad. Animals used for work were regarded quite differently to those used for sport, recreation and on display, with a stronger assumption that animals for work are probably better treated and more valued to the owner than those in the other categories. Generally many hadn't given these types of animals much thought. Some were confused about whether this category included zoo animals or circus animals.

The key matters raised in relation to these animals included:

- Doping
- Retirement/ euthanasia when didn't come up to expectation (e.g. racehorses, greyhounds)
- Profit
- Restraint
- Exploitation – e.g. bears, circus animals but general assumption is that circus animals are happy doing what they're doing, bred and trained for that purpose – but some performing animals are not treated well.
- Work dogs – seen to be treated well
- Animals in zoos – thought to be treated well in Australia.

4.1.5. Native and introduced wildlife and feral animals

Overall most participants were highly aware of wildlife, and the issues surrounding pests and feral animals. One of the key findings for this animal group was the issue of pests, including both native and feral animals. **Pests** were a real issue for farmers, who often spoke at length about the topic. Dingoes and kangaroos were a key problem, and one cattle farmer spoke of these native animals not 'deserving' any animal welfare due to financial costs they incurred. Dingoes often damage livestock (and calves in particular), reducing the value of hides and meat, while kangaroos compete for food and water. Farmers were pragmatic about the fact that these animals must be destroyed to save valuable stock. It was often felt that 'greenies' advocated for pests with no real understanding of the impact they had on livestock.

When I think about animals I think about two types – the animals that make money for us and the pests that don't (Poultry farmer)

One regional group considered whether culling had restrictions, limitations or protection issues now, noting that there hadn't appeared to be any in the past ('we all used to shoot 'roos'). Some wondered whether there was a governing body to deal with pests in a recognised way. Some felt there was a need to balance the culling of pests:

I think if anything is taken to the extreme, what once was a pest could become extinct, so there's a balance between the two. If you're a farmer and they're a pest you need the liberty to deal with that pest but not to point where they're made extinct (Regional group)

Another issue raised in relation to these animals was the connection to the ecosystem, and the loss of the natural environment. Many participants discussed their concerns over the destruction of habitats due to the clearing of bushland, introduced non-indigenous species, disease, pollution, spraying, and urban development. This led to discussion of the upsetting of ecological balance and species becoming extinct.

While many farmers raised the topic of drought and pests as key issues of relevance to them, some participants thought that bushfires and drought were not so concerning as there are natural mechanisms to recover from these, however it was felt that wildlife species do require protection in the interim while their habitats are restored.

4.1.6. Aquatic animals

For many participants aquatic animals were rarely considered in their thoughts on animal welfare, apart from issues relating to whaling or dolphin-safe tuna. In most cases people hadn't considered the welfare of fish in particular, but were more concerned about the environmental issues relating to the ocean and our waterways – pollution and sewerage were often mentioned. One farmer felt that it is impossible not to consider the impact of any activity on the environment and waterways:

It's a whole new world; you've got to look at everything. It's not just about my pigs. There's waste to think about, the runoff, the impact on dams, and little things like the yabbies. (Pig farmer)

Few participants mentioned the issue of farmed fish, however in one coastal metropolitan group there was a discussion relating to the overcrowding of these fish, though this didn't seem to be a major concern for these participants as these fish weren't seen as animals requiring any particular welfare. This aligned with the views of one particular commercial fisher who noted that he had never considered some of the key issues for animal welfare and had not really considered how fish died as a result of his activities.

5. Specific target audiences

5.1. Farmers and Primary Producers

All farmers considered the issue of animal welfare to be of considerable importance. However, it is important to note that generally, farmers automatically referred to the **care** of their production animals – there were few initial comments related to other types of animals, aside from working animals, and working dogs in particular, and feral animals and pests.

Caring for animals underpinned the entire concept of ‘animal welfare’ for farmers. The care related to all aspects of the animals life, including how the animal was born, reared and slaughtered. There was a strong relationship between animal welfare and the performance of the farm.

Caring for animals and animal welfare generally included:

- Animal husbandry
- Food
- Shelter and protection from heat/sun, and cooler weather
- Crowding issues in pens/sheds (e.g. chickens, pigs)
- Transport issues – safety and crowding
- Health – protection from pests and disease
- Veterinary assistance when required, particularly advice on feeding.

In some cases the term ‘animal welfare’ caused some sense of fear and mistrust among farmers, due to its use in a sensationalist (perceived) manner by the mass media. In general it was a term seen to be aligned with the ‘greenies’, and other groups felt to have a biased, uninformed view of how to care for animals. There appeared to be a distinct preference for the term **animal care** rather than welfare, having greater relevance in terms of the physical aspects listed above and the resulting returns on investment.

There were several reasons why farmers considered the issue of animal welfare important:

- **To farmers personally:** Most farmers indicated that it was essential for them be aware of, and actively supporting animal welfare practices on their farms. There were a variety of reasons for this including financial reasons (investment return), market demands (consumer driven), and personal orientation.

I hate seeing cruelty to animals; I think all farmers are the same. They respect their animals – that’s their livelihood (Pig farmer)

Caring for stock means more money (Cattle farmer)

My niche is free range; therefore I have to be certain that I meet the welfare requirements to be called a “free range farm” (Poultry farmer)

- **To farmers as an industry:** Farmers also indicated that the issue of animal welfare was essential to their industry – for example the dairy and meat industries. Some farmers also felt that good animal welfare related to the conservation of the wider environment.

Sick and skinny cows can be seen from the roadway – people who don’t know about cows see them and think that we are all cruel and not feeding our animals – this makes us all look bad and we get placed under more scrutiny (Milk producer)

There was also a perception from farmers that the concept of animal welfare was considerably different between the **city** and **country** and that ‘city folk’ did not think that farmers cared about their animals and were focused on the dollar. There was a strong sense that many people outside the industry were out of touch with the importance of these issues to farmers and the need for farmers to provide sound animal welfare as part of their usual business.

If people are not exposed to farmers and farming life, they may tend to side with PETA and so there needs to be a more independent view to let people know that this is a big issue for us (Milk producer)

There was also a sense among farmers that there is an ‘**old school**’ **type** farmer who may not consider the issue of animal welfare to be as important to the industry/business as some of the younger farmers. This may have some impact on the way in which communication themes and messages are received by different farmers in the industry. For example, some messages will not sit well with more pragmatic, old-school farmers, such as the **five freedoms** (refer to comments in Table 1).

There is a generational aspect – if you talked to my father he would say “we don’t need any of that!” (Milk producer)

I don’t think that they think that they are being cruel – the older farmers have just not adapted to change as fast as younger farmers (Poultry producer)

While almost all farmers considered the issue important, many had not truly thought about these issues in any great depth until being asked to discuss the topic. Most had a general presumption that the issue of animal welfare was **naturally** important to their business and livelihood. Inherent in this view is the overriding sense that farmers are very **close** to the issue of animal welfare and this will impact on any communications strategy aimed at this audience – there was evidence of **scepticism** and **mistrust of information sources** ‘outside the industry’, indicating that communications not based on experience with the ‘farming life’ will be met with cynicism and generally not absorbed.

Depends where I read it...if I read it in a farming journal I am more likely to have a positive attitude and have respect for it. If I read it in the Herald Sun I would assume that it has come from a journalist who has not been exposed to the farm life and maybe got the information second hand or chosen the minority group who have not been looking after their stock (Sheep farmer)

I go in there with more of an open mind if it is mentioned on Landline, than when mentioned on a Current Affair – more contact with animals, more knowledge (Milk producer)

Farmers were also suspicious of **government activity** and many felt that farmers and industry groups themselves have a stronger role to play in terms of animal welfare because they know more about their own business. Very few know what the Government is doing, and most questioned what the AAWS might actually mean for them – added regulations and the RSPCA being more involved in their business were commonly cited as possibilities.

In testing messages with this target audience there was strong feedback that the messages farmers preferred were **simple** and **to the point**. They also generally had a **direct reference** to their business and the effect of animal welfare on their livelihood. The tone of any messages will need to be **supportive** and remove itself from any association with red tape and compliance.

Themes and messages that farmers preferred could be divided into two formats:

- **Things that they wanted to tell the community about farmers:** These messages centre on imparting the message to consumers that farmers **do** consider animal welfare an issue of considerable importance and that practices adopted by Australian farmers are of a high standard.
- **Messages to other farmers and the wider business community:** Most farmers felt that messages also need to be sold to the wider business industry (i.e. those relying on farmers, such as shearers, pesticide producers and meat workers, not just farmers themselves) to reinforce the importance of animal welfare practices to the Australian industry.

The following table provides a summary of the messages which were **most salient** with farmers, either for communication to the wider public about the industry or for communicating within the industry.

Table 1: Farmers' comments about messages

Statement	Comment
Companion animals are important for your family's health & wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important message to get across to the wider community • Not directly related to their business but still carries important information • Replace 'companion animals' with pets – confusion over boundaries between animals for work and pets
Farmers care about the welfare of their animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most salient message for farmers, although perceived as commonsense <i>Farmers always care about their animals. If you're going to send a stressed cow to market you're not going to get any money for it</i> • Good message for the community – an outwardly directed message rather than an inward one as above • Add the term 'Real farmers' to support the image of Australian farmers doing the right thing
Animal welfare is everyone's business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed reaction by farmers, but seen as a very important message • Relevant and important for some – reinforces the importance of animal welfare, and that everyone has a role to play – regardless of their level of interaction with animals. • Cause of concern for some – seen as encouraging people to 'jump my fence and take photos'.
Animal welfare is up to me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some farmers the most important message of all • Places a responsibility on the individual – they're my animals, they're my responsibility • Some afraid of sole responsibility being placed on the farmer – cuts out Industry Associations, Government etc.
Five freedoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed reaction • Some felt it was the best message to get out to the general community: strong, factual, pragmatic • Some 'old-school' type farmers saw this message as ridiculous: <i>Discomfort is not an animal word – they don't know anything about this. They don't seem to know anything about pain, injury or disease. They don't feel fear. They don't seem to know what pain is, I don't think they feel it. It's more about fright than pain</i> (Cattle farmer) • Other farmers felt that it sounded too biased: <i>The problem is when you put those words together it immediately sounds all 'animal liberationist', extremist. People assume a line like this is put out by the animal welfare lot</i> (Poultry farmer)

<p>Animal welfare makes good business sense</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants responded well to this statement, preferring the use of 'business' to 'agribusiness' • Succinct and to the point • An important message to push out into the industry itself, to farmers and industry workers, as opposed to the general community
<p>Sound animal welfare practices can improve food productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the top messages • Considered important because it reinforces the financial need for welfare, which many farmers felt was the key hook to get a farmer's attention. <i>There is no doubt about this. If you look after your stock, their welfare, they'll produce more of whatever you want, like wool. (Pig farmer)</i> • 'Food' – doesn't appeal to wool farmers or producers of animals for non-consumptive purposes. Remove 'food' to widen scope of the message
<p>Promoting world-class animal welfare standards can improve the image of Australia's animal-based products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'World-class' is appealing – aligns with farmers' desire to communicate the high level of their practices to 'city folk' • 'Promotion' seen as important to move into new markets, such as China, although insulting to others given Australia's high quality produce.

Particular note was made of the following terms/references in relation to communications for this audience:

- **Welfare** – caused some concern, in some cases the term **care** was preferred.
- **Obligations** – seen as telling farmers that they have more things to do, e.g. more regulations to comply with, particularly when paired with 'Government'.
- **Government** references – were generally not considered to be important. Very few knew what the Government was doing, and use of this word generally turned farmers off. Some felt the government is invisible or ineffective, and farmers personally do more for themselves because they know more about their business. Farmers were suspicious of what the AAWS might actually mean for them.
- **Intrinsic** – only one farmer understood this and did not like the message.
- **Sentient** – farmers were generally unaware of this term.

The research supports the need for a communications strategy among this audience, however a *specific supporting strategy* is required. Farmers are particularly suspicious of information from outside the industry and therefore any strategy will need to appear in context: the channel for information is particularly important for this audience. Messages will need to take into account the audience at which they are intended (i.e. the wider community about farming practices or the farming community itself).

5.2. School-aged children

Children appeared to have a very high awareness of animal welfare, largely based on exposure to the issue through other opportunities (e.g. school projects, zoo trips, Discovery channel) and their own personal experience with animals.

The term '**welfare**' was often immediately associated with wellbeing, being happy, and being safe and secure. However when coupled with 'animal' the term '**animal welfare**' was equated with animal **cruelty** and animal rights, but there were also strong associations with whaling, preserving habitats, and protecting endangered species. Many of the children seemed to have a keen sense of the environment, citing examples such as logging, the Kyoto Protocol, global warming, GM foods, overfishing, and extinct and endangered species, when discussing issues regarding animal welfare.

The findings suggest key differences between the children in rural and metropolitan areas. Regional and rural children appeared to be more **pragmatic** about animal welfare through their interaction with animals whilst growing up (e.g. exposure to farm life, pony clubs). Metropolitan children were more **idealistic** about animal welfare, often equating the term with not eating meat, despite not being vegetarian themselves. For one child in the research, the livestock animal group would not exist in a world with 'good' animal welfare:

Animals would be free to do whatever they wanted; they wouldn't be grown to be killed. I wouldn't like to be mass produced to be killed. That's not life! (Male, 13 years)

There was a high awareness of animal welfare organisations (e.g. RSPCA, WWF) through school visits and projects, but also a sense that these projects were often added to the curriculum based on the personal interest of teaching staff. Children of different ages cited a variety of information channels where they had received information on animal welfare issues, including school visits from animal welfare organisations and young women's magazine articles on cosmetics testing on animals (e.g. Cosmopolitan, Dolly).

The research clearly points to a need for balanced information in the school curriculum, and tying messages in with environmental issues is suggested for a stronger 'hook'. Both children and adults in the research supported a school-based communication strategy.

5.3. Indigenous audiences

Indigenous audiences appeared to have little awareness of the issues of animal welfare, and experience with animals largely determined their understanding of what animal welfare encompasses – mainly farming or domestic animals. Although the term 'animal welfare' was generally felt to be easy to understand and appropriate, the interpretation of what the term actually meant, to whom it applied, and how it was used by other sectors varied across sites and between participants.

Participants in the research were drawn from two distinct groups within the Indigenous community, and included the general community, and people involved with aspects of agriculture, fisheries, livestock or farming.

For general community participants, the term 'animal welfare' was closely associated with the care of animals and animal rights, and participants focused on companion animals and larger mammals in the main. Producers and industry-related respondents, in parallel with mainstream farmers, separated their activities from those of the general public; the 'welfare' of animals under production or care was discussed as a normal practice, and good care of animals was viewed as commonsense.

In a general sense, Indigenous audiences have a different connection to the land and animals, and while it was acknowledged that all animals should be treated well, native animals, and those in their natural environment, are seen to have priority.

Audiences responded well to messages that were short and positive, and that related to personal or community responsibility. Complex terminology or jargon was generally rejected, in particular words such as *sentient*, *intrinsic*, *agribusiness*, or *standards* and *strategy*.

Audiences in general did not see the issue of animal welfare as one that is important in the scheme of other issues; it is neither of great interest nor importance, so communications will need to focus (initially) on specific animal groupings, especially companion animals and native wildlife, that generate more sympathy, so that empathy, discussion and community awareness can develop.

A *separate* communications approach is required for Indigenous audiences. Communications that focus on Indigenous cultural affinity to, and responsibility for, the land and waterways and the animals within such environments are important, as is the acknowledgment that communities in specific locations have specific issues around traditional hunting and fishing activities. Messages that are linked to Indigenous values will be necessary to bring audiences 'across the line'.

5.4. NESB community audiences

Among NESB audiences the issue of animal welfare is **not of primary concern**. As with the general community this was not seen to be an issue of priority compared with other issues. Most felt that animals are well protected by laws in Australia, much more so than in their countries of origin.

The term 'animal welfare' appeared to mean little to many of the participants. In the context of animals, the term 'welfare' is rarely used in their own language – particularly for Greek and Chinese participants. The term also has implications for accuracy and 'true to meaning' translations of 'welfare' into other languages which proved to be a complex exercise. Care is required in the use of this term – some

discussions indicated that the word 'welfare' has some negative connotations. Arabic participants in particular suggested the use of animal **protection**, animal **safety** or animal **dignity** as a better approach.

The concept of animal welfare was limited in general to direct human contact with animals, with little consideration of the broader impact of humans on animals. The term was taken to mean the extent to which humans should look after and care for animals, often for the benefit of humans rather than in the context of animals having rights of their own.

There appeared to be differences between participants who had recently arrived and longer term residents, with attitudes having changed since coming to Australia. Longer term residents in Australia tended to have a better understanding of animal welfare and greater levels of empathy towards animals than more recent arrivals. In particular, the Mandarin group commented that their views had changed dramatically since living in Australia and keeping animals of their own (see detailed report).

While most NESB audiences had few concerns other than the treatment of companion animals, some audiences had concerns for livestock as this related to the quality of meat they will eat. Many Chinese, for example, were concerned about the use of growth hormones in meat production, more for the impact on human health than for the sake of the animals. Amongst many Chinese the attitude was that animals have been given to humans to eat and have no other value or rights.

It is not bad to kill animals sometimes. They are given to us to eat. In nature, animals eat other animals so the circle of nature goes on (Cantonese participant)

They should be healthy because I eat them! (Cantonese participant)

All NESB audiences responded well to the messages that were **short, simple** and **easily understood**. They also liked messages that prompted personal and community responsibility for the welfare of animals, although this was very companion-animal focused. Messages that meant most to the groups were centred on: treating animals humanely, healthy animals, and collective responsibility.

The research supports a communication strategy that runs in parallel with a strategy for the wider community, particularly one that builds in the views and perceptions of NESB audiences. Care is required in the translation of terms associated with animal 'welfare', and a commitment to user-friendly and plain English terminology in written materials is vital. Translations into identified community languages would need to be thoroughly tested with NESB audiences.

6. Communicating about animal welfare & the AAWS

6.1. Emerging communication themes and language

In order to assist the next steps towards communication development, a number of potential communication themes and approaches were tested in the research. Prior to the fieldwork a range of statements were developed by staff from the Department and senior researchers from TNSSR. Throughout the research, participants were presented with these statements, and asked to comment on their suitability in terms of **raising awareness of animal welfare in Australia**.

The statements were grouped into different themes, including:

- Social benefits – this theme centred on the lifestyle benefits of companion animal ownership
- Rights and responsibilities – this theme centred on the rights of animals and responsibilities of the community in relation to animal welfare
- Promotion of Government and industry activities – this theme was concerned with the relationship between animal welfare and business
- Quality – this theme was primarily focused on the relationship between animal welfare and food quality/productivity
- Why is animal welfare important? – this theme centred on messages related to the need for an animal welfare strategy.

In addition, several messages were also tested in the quantitative study to provide further evidence of findings from the qualitative phase. In total, eight of the key messages used in the groups and interviews were tested in the online survey.

Overall, participants responded to messages that were clear and simple, without too much 'government speak'. Elements of each theme spoke to some segments of the population but the themes which resonated most were those related to:

- Collective responsibility
- Social benefits of animals.

Each group was shown the sets of messages using a rotation system. Results are presented in Table 2 overleaf. See Section 5.1 for discussion of farmers' views.

6.2. Comments about the messages

The following table presents key findings on the themes and messages tested in groups.

Table 2: Group comments about messages

Theme:	Statements	Findings
B. Social benefits	A1 Companion animals are good for your family's health and wellbeing A2 Animal companionship has health and mental health benefits A3 Animals can provide opportunities to meet people and form friendships A4 Pets provide a non-threatening way of socialising with people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many found these messages to be positive, warm and appealing, addressing the importance of having animals in our lives. However the issue was not seen to be one of major significance. • Health and wellbeing – seen as positive • Family – could be exclusive to some • Some confusion re companion animals – replace with 'pets'? • 'Mental health benefits' rejected as 'Government speak' • 'Non-threatening' – confusing, animals can't always be trusted
Recommend: Pets, 'health and wellbeing' popular with general community		

<p>B. Rights and responsibilities</p>	<p>B1 I am responsible for the welfare of the animals in my care B2 If I am responsible for an animal's welfare, I am responsible for checking how to care for the animal properly B3 All Australians are responsible for the care and welfare of our animals B4 Animals have rights to the five freedoms - 1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst, 2. Freedom from Discomfort, 3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease, 4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour, 5. Freedom from Fear and Distress B5 Animals must be treated humanely B6 Animal welfare is up to me B7 Animal welfare is everyone's business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences seen between the responsibility for animals in the care of an owner, and other animals. • Preference for collective terms such as 'we', 'us' rather than 'me' – seen as overwhelming • Animals in my care – easy for people without pets to remove themselves from the responsibility for any animals in Australia. • 'Our nation, our animals' – some identified with the collective attitude/ position • Five freedoms – mixed reaction. Preferred by most as a key message, but a few saw this as having a 'heavy stick' approach. • Humanely – voted as top 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference in online survey by most respondents (70%) • Everyone's business – most attracted to the community feel of this message. Also supported in the online survey – 60% nominated this 1st, 2nd or 3rd.
<p>Recommend: Collective responsibility most salient – us, we, our, everyone</p>		
<p>C. Promotion of Government and industry activities</p>	<p>C1 Animal welfare is important to agribusiness C2 Animal welfare makes good business sense C3 Farmers care about the welfare of their animals C4 The Government is doing something about animal welfare C5 Australia's animal welfare strategy is based on national & international standards C6 Government is helping industry to meet its animal welfare obligations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General community sceptical and suspicious of government and industry messages • Farmers care – disbelief, seen as mixture of truth and error: <i>there are farmers out there that don't care about the welfare of their animals!</i> • Government involvement often met with, 'what are they doing?' • International standards – question over whether these are high enough to aim for
<p>Recommend: Messages relating to business and Government activities should be avoided in general community communications</p>		

<p>D. Quality</p>	<p>D1 Animal welfare is important for food quality D2 Sound animal welfare practices can improve food productivity D3 Healthy animals are good for business D4 Promoting world-class animal welfare standards can improve the image of Australia's animal-based products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a popular theme • Community generally not willing to make connection between animal welfare & impact on food quality – supported by online survey. • Preference to buy food based on good animal welfare often for better tasting food than animal's sake • Healthy animals – simplicity of message had appeal • Promotion, world-class – seen as unnecessary in light of Australia's high standards
<p>Recommend: Not a popular theme for most in general community. Works for minority making informed choices about their food.</p>		
<p>E. Why is animal welfare important?</p>	<p>E1 Animals have intrinsic value E2 Australians understand that the welfare of animals is protected and promoted E3 Humane treatment of all sentient animals is important E4 AAWS is a shared vision E5 Integrated and planned approach to animal welfare E6 Animal welfare should be based on sound scientific evidence E7 We are making sustainable improvements in animal welfare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unappealing approach, minimal personal appeal. • Intrinsic, sentient – confusing to most • Mixed response to 'shared vision' - vague and bureaucratic, but a reminder for some that there is more than one group behind the strategy • 'Integrated and planned' – rejected by most as government speak • Sustainable – slow to change not real, radical change
<p>Recommend: Not a popular theme. Avoid confusing terms and government speak – minimal personal appeal for community members.</p>		

6.3. Dictionary of effective terms and phrases

In order to assist the Government to take steps towards communication development, a number of potential communication themes and terms have been identified from the research. Bringing the needs of different audiences together, some key principles for developing communication of animal welfare can be established. Overall, these rely on the use of positive, supportive language that is simple and clear. Avoidance of language that is too bureaucratic or vague is paramount.

Following on from the feedback on particular messages presented in the previous section, this information has been brought together into a list of words and phrases that are suitable for use, and therefore recommended, and phrases that are not suitable.

Effective Language

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collective terms – us, we, everyone, our, together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health & wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responsibility – personal and collective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Animal care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Animal treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Humane/ly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Australian

Ineffective Language

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intrinsic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sentient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Integrated, planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Companion animals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Government activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food quality

Guidelines are provided on potential communication themes below, however further research is required to test words and themes with a more representative sample of the general public, to develop them further into messages for pre-testing.

Animal ‘welfare’ – while the term ‘welfare’ is useful because of its salience with audiences (attention grabbing), the research revealed that the term is often interpreted narrowly and negatively. Other terms such as animal ‘care’ or ‘treatment’ were seen as more appropriate for this purpose. In order that the term animal welfare is understood in the context of the AAWS, a hierarchy of supporting messages/language will be required.

Humane/humanely – this term appears to be salient with audiences, although further testing is required. There was difference between the meaning of this statement between the general community and farmers. Many of the participants felt that the ‘humane’ treatment of an animal would not include its slaughter for food, whereas farmers were generally united in their understanding that treating an animals humanely referred to ensuring an animal was treated well in life and in slaughter (e.g. providing a calm environment, and avoiding stress before slaughter).

In the online survey the message ‘animals must be treated **humanely**’ was rated most highly as the most important thing people would need to know to promote better animal welfare in Australia. Close to 3 in 4 respondents (70%) nominated this statement as their first, second or third preference.

Individual terms (me, I) – these terms engage people but some most were overwhelmed by the responsibility that it implies for one person. While collective terms are preferred and are therefore recommended (us, we, our), individual terms are empowering for some individuals highlighting the feeling that ‘I can make a difference’, and providing personal relevance.

Business – overall, this term was preferred by farmers over the general community. Generally the term lacks personal relevance for the general community (although ‘everyone’s business’ was generally liked).

6.4. Communication channels

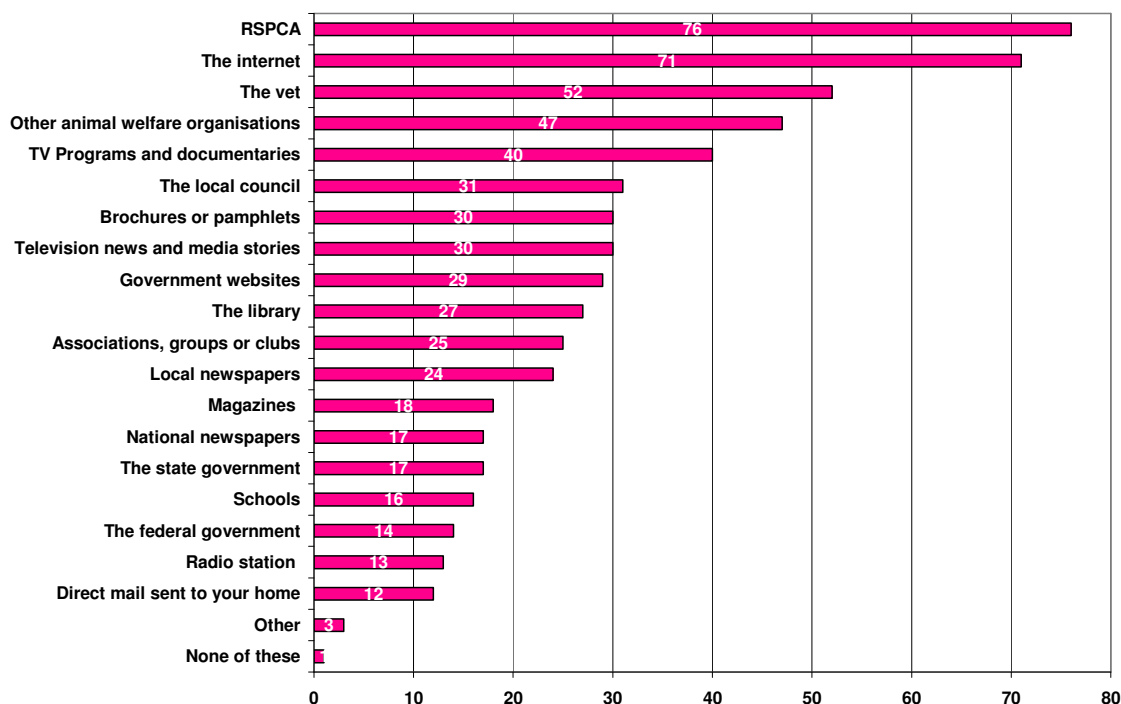
As discussed previously, the research revealed that while interest in the topic was high, information seeking was generally not high. Most participants in the research were not actively seeking information in animal welfare issues, however, when stimulated by a television program or news story, additional information would often be sourced from the internet. The importance of the internet was further supported by quantitative survey data (see Figure 4).

Current awareness of animal welfare issues was predominantly from the media. There was some recognition of the potential bias in information and/or lack of depth of coverage of an issue via this medium. When asked about their preferred avenues for sourcing information on animal welfare issues a much wider range of sources were cited as shown in the figure.

The three most preferred sources of information were:

- RSPCA (76%)
- The internet (71%)
- The vet (52%)

Relative to other sources of information, the Australian Government (the federal government) was not frequently reported as a preferred source (14%). This may reflect the comments obtained via qualitative research that the current role of the Australian Government with regard to animal welfare is not clear and therefore the Government is not currently viewed as a prominent, top of mind source. It is important to note that while only 14% reported the Federal Government as a preferred source, over one in four (29%) reported that they preferred information from government websites. The qualitative discussions revealed that the Government is generally seen as a more credible, trustworthy and balanced source of information relative to the media thus providing further endorsement for establishing Government information products and services such as websites.

Figure 4: Most preferred sources for information on animal welfare (%)


The low reporting of schools as a preferred information source (16%) also calls for some comment. It is important to note the survey of the general population was one of **adults** (i.e. majority of whom are not at school). Despite this, 16% listed schools as one of their preferred sources of information, supporting comments made by some parents in focus groups that they typically learnt about current issues from their children's exposure to such topics and school / community activities. The qualitative research provided a very strong endorsement for the use of schools as a channel for exposing **children** to animals (via school based experiences or excursions) and for learning about animal welfare issues via school projects or curriculum resources.

6.5. The Way Forward: Communication strategy development

Preliminary objectives of an overarching communications strategy for the AAWS are³:

- To increase community awareness and understanding of the importance of sound animal welfare practices; and
- To increase awareness of individual roles and responsibilities in relation to animal welfare.

In achieving these objectives communications will need to reach a variety of audiences with varying levels of awareness and engagement with the issues as evidenced by the research. The research provides guidance for the construction of an effective communications strategy on a number of tiers. Depending on the immediate and long term goals of the AAWS, communications may seek, for

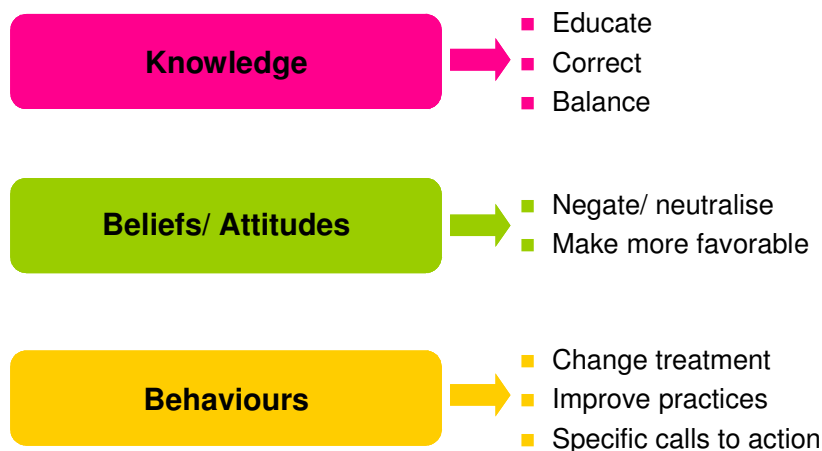
³ DAFF research brief

example, to provide knowledge to educate the general public on animal welfare issues to correct misinformation. Given the level of interest and openness to information found in the research, a strategy with impact would engage the population and is likely to have some influence on attitudes and information seeking behaviour.

Achievement of attitude and behaviour change for specific groups, rather than for the entire general public may be more easily achieved through higher involvement communications (i.e. messages and channels). While messages of ‘collective responsibility’, for example, may resonate with all audiences and be engaging for general awareness raising activities, alternative messages and specific channels may be required to create greater personal relevance, i.e. to speak directly to individuals for whom attitude and behaviour change is desired. A hierarchy of messages and/or separate strategies may be required for particular audiences, for example, for farmers, pet owners, and Indigenous communities.

The figure below depicts some potential communication objectives which can be informed by the current research. Further discussion or workshops of research results with the Department and specific working groups may be useful for further advancing the development of specific communications activities to meet particular objectives. In some instances, for example, developing communications for Indigenous groups, further research may be required.

Figure 5: Potential communication objectives



The research suggests that a **multifaceted strategy** constructed using an **umbrella** position and message supported by specific activities and messages for key sub groups and contexts will have greatest impact.

Elements of communication strategy structure and implementation supported by the research include:

- An umbrella strategy positioning the strategy as part of the Government's role in providing balanced information and using a general message of collective responsibility is recommended. Generic communication materials (brochures, magnets etc) could be used in many settings.
- Specific activities and materials should be developed for farmers.
- A separate strategy for Indigenous communities is recommended – see separate detailed report.
- Positioning the Government as a place to get balanced information, and developing a website which is easily located in online search engines – a website which provides supporting information including links to other groups or organisations will be important. As such the site may become 'the reliable gateway' in a similar manner to other government websites in other portfolios. More specific research and/or testing of the website are recommended to refine look and feel, language, content and usability.
- Support and/or 'piggy back' on community, industry or recognised organisations' work, e.g. undertaking communications tied with community groups, people and places such as vets, the RSPCA and industry groups is recommended.
- A longer term strategy supported by the research is the development of school-based resources for education of children on animal welfare issues.

It is not necessary to promote the AAWS specifically however the general public is interested in **what** the Government is doing. Communication should include sufficient details of activities and specify the **Government's role**. There is a risk in communicating the Strategy now when there is not sufficient detail decided (the current Strategy document outlines general notions but not specific activities as these are not bedded down yet). Government communications must be clear about activities being undertaken to ensure the wider community does not interpret this as 'government speak' which is not supported by any real activities.

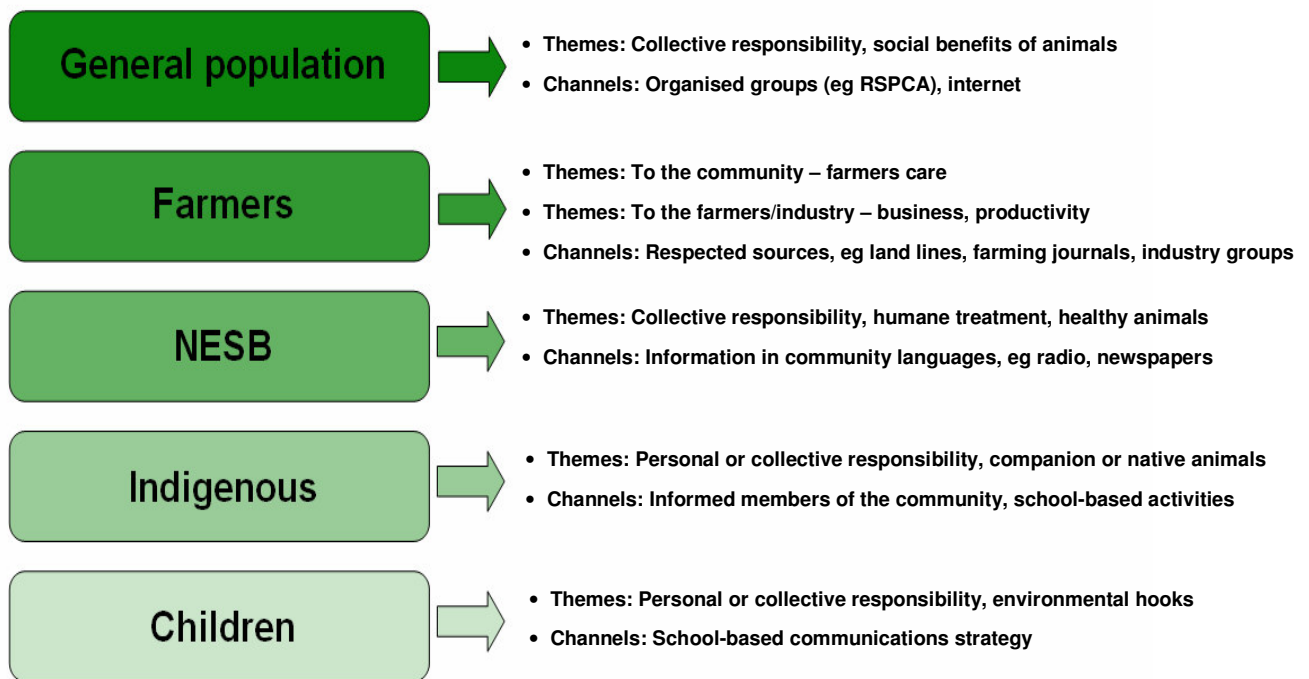
The recommended **channels** for a communications strategy are informed by the findings which indicate that recognised groups, such as the RSPCA, and the internet are preferred sources of information. Tying in communications with the work of **recognised groups** will be an effective method of reaching people already sympathetic to the notion of animal welfare (e.g. pet owners). In addition, the qualitative discussions revealed that the Government is generally seen as a more credible, trustworthy and balanced source of information relative to the media which provides strong endorsement for establishing Government information products and services such as **websites**.

A communications strategy will be best placed to start with **priority areas for action**. The research suggests that commencing with groups of key concern or those most amenable (e.g. pet owners), to gain momentum, will be important. Key hooks/topics for engagement appear to be those based on the environment, and this was relevant for all audiences. **Environmental and conservation** issues were

raised in most discussions with strong associations between environmental conservations and the protection of native animals, i.e. degradation of the environment negatively impacts animal welfare.

Overall, the recommended themes and messages for the general community are those based on collective responsibility and the social benefits of animals, however these varied slightly for other target audiences. The figure below provides a summary of the most appropriate communication approaches (themes and channels) that should be considered for each.

Figure 6: Summary of communication approaches by target audience



Appendix A

Group Discussion Guide

Community Perceptions of Animal Welfare

Discussion guide

This guide is intended as an outline only. There will be considerable scope within the discussion for exploring issues as they arise. Questions are indicative only of subject matter to be covered and are not word for word descriptions of the moderator's questions. Interviews will be tailored to the individual experiences of the persons interviewed.

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINS)

- Introduce self, company and project
- Thank for attendance
- Discuss their role in the process (part of a number of interviews; understanding of community perceptions on animal welfare, etc)
- Taping / confidentiality (despite taping)
- Don't all talk at once / no side-discussions for groups and paired affinity
- Mobile phones off
- Like to get everyone to say something / respect others' opinions / no right or wrong answers
- Housekeeping (toilets / help self to drinks and food – no breaks)

2. BACKGROUND (5 mins)

- At the start of these discussion groups we usually have a QUICK / BRIEF introduction from everyone, so we know a bit more about you ...
- Quick round robin: first name and if you were an animal which animal would you be and why?

3. AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND PERCEPTION (20 mins)

In this section, we want to explore general perceptions of the concepts of 'animal welfare', awareness/salience of the topic and how this is interpreted by different audiences/the parameters which are placed by participants on this concept. We also want to identify the significant contributors to information sources – the information champions.

[SHOW BOARD WITH 'ANIMAL WELFARE' CAPTION]

- What we want to do first is have a look at this board; can you tell me **what these words mean** to you?
- What animals are you thinking about? What does welfare mean (explore for each animal if required)
- What is positive about the words/what is not so positive?
- What do you **know about** animal welfare in Australia?
- Is it something that you **think about/worry about**?
- Why do you think about it/what worries you?
- Is there **enough being done about animal welfare** in Australia? What should be done? Why?
- How would you **find out about animal welfare** if you needed to?
 - What organisations or people provide information about animal welfare?
 - What sorts of things do these people/organisations do?
 - Are these good things/bad things?
- **Whose responsibility** do you think it is to look after animal welfare? (PROBE: govt, industry, farmers, organisations, individuals)

[IF GOVERNMENT MENTIONED ABOVE AS ONE OF THE ORGANISATIONS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE PROBE HERE]

- Has anyone (else) heard anything about what the **Australian government or State/Territory governments** are doing about animal welfare? How much are they doing – is it a little or a lot?
- What have you heard? (PROBE: for awareness of the **AAWS** specifically)
- Where did you hear about these initiatives?

Definition of AAWS:

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is a **plan** that has been coordinated by the Australian government in **partnership** with S&T governments, industries, animal welfare groups, and the community. These parties have agreed on this document as the '**roadmap**' to move forward in terms of what should happen with animal welfare in Australia.

This strategy is an **evolving** process, and implementation will involve consultation, education, training, and research. For example:

- Implementing appropriate education and training as part of quality assurance programs that satisfy Australian standards. Facilitating the inclusion of animal welfare studies in the school curricula.
- Publishing the existence and content of existing animal welfare legislation, codes of practice, etc
- Continuing and improving processes of consultation with the general community on nationally important welfare issues.

4. ANIMAL WELFARE GROUPINGS (40 mins)

[ANIMAL INTERACTION TYPES - PICTURES]

In this section we want to explore the concept of animal welfare in more detail and go further to test differences in perceptions and/or issues with the six key groupings of animals (see Attachment 1). More specifically, we are looking at identifying which groups are more salient and how issues, interactions and information requirements may differ for different interaction types. It may be necessary to place emphasis on some groupings for some key

FOR EACH ANIMAL GROUPING, HOLD UP/PIN UP OR SPREAD OUT PICTURES AND BOARDS

[PLEASE ROTATE THESE GROUPS, SHOW ALL]

Let's talk about animal welfare in a bit more detail.

- Take a look at these groups of pictures
- What do you think are the key animal welfare issues in the [TYPE] area?
- Why is that an issue? (probe for each issue mentioned)
- What would you **like to know** about animal welfare issues in the [TYPE] area?

[FOR ALL AREAS TOGETHER]

- Is it **different for different kinds of animals**? In **different circumstances**? PROBE: Ways in which animals should be treated, information needs, key issues?
- Why is it different? - Why is it not different?

5. COMMUNICATIONS: KEY MESSAGES, LANGUAGE AND CHANNELS (40 MINS)

In this section we want to explore the key themes, messages and language which participants associate with animal welfare. Essentially, we want to explore the themes and language which may be used – we want to shift the focus to comments about overall themes (which ones resonate with specific audiences) and then to which words work, which don't and which could be replaced with alternatives.

GOVT INFORMATION: Animal welfare and AAWS

- If we wanted to raise awareness of **animal welfare** in Australia what kinds of things do you think it would be important to say?
- What would you **like to hear about**, in terms of what the **Australian government in partnership with industry and community/animal welfare groups** is doing about animal welfare?

[NEED BOARDS WITH MESSAGES]

I am now going to show you a series of comments and messages on boards about animal welfare that may be used when discussing some of the issues that we have talked about today.

For each of the boards, I want you to tell me what the statement means to you, how you feel about the statement, what you like/don't like and what you think that it means you have to do.

[PLEASE REFER TO MATRIX FOR THE AREAS TO USE IN EACH GROUP/IDI. PLEASE ROTATE]

A1 cards: Social benefits

A2 cards: Rights and responsibilities

A3 cards: Promotion of Government and Industry activities

A4 cards: Quality

A5 cards: Why is animal welfare important?

[SHOW MESSAGE BOARDS ONE BY ONE]

- What does this **mean**?
- How does it make you **feel**?
- What do you like/don't you **like**?
- What do you think it means **you have to do**?

[FOR ALL MESSAGES]

- Which ones do you think **work the best**?
- Which ones don't work at all?
- Would you combine any/why?
- What words do you like/don't like?

- What else might work better?
- Do some of these **work for some of the animal groupings** we talked about before and some work for others? – Why?

6. COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

- And how would you expect to hear about these issues?
- What's the best way to raise awareness?
- If you were in charge of the govt money to be spent on raising awareness, what's the best way?
- SHOW BOOKLET, BROCHURE , ARTICLES, MAGNETS
- What do you think about these? What other things might work?
- PROMPT FOR PR CHANNELS FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS, EG IN SCHOOLS

Thank and close

Appendix B
Online Survey Questionnaire

[IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE]

A1. Following is a list of issues people have said the government needs to act on. Could you please rank these in order of importance to you, 10 being most important issues and 1 being the least important issue?

SHOW ALL- ROTATE

	Please rank from 1-10
Rising prices/inflation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Terrorism	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Education	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Health	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Tax reform	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Animal welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
The environment	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Family relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
International affairs and trade	<input type="checkbox"/> 10

[ATTITUDE TO ANIMAL WELFARE IN AUSTRALIA (AS A PROBLEM/NOT A PROBLEM)]

A2. Thinking about the issue of animal welfare, out of ten, one being 'very poor' and ten being 'very good', how would you rate Australia's performance?

	Very poor										Very good
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Rating of animal welfare in Australia	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	

[UNDERSTANDING OF CONCEPT/WHAT ANIMAL WELFARE MEANS TO ME...]

A3. Which one of the following descriptions best captures what good animal welfare means to you? Please rank from most to least preferred, 1 being most.

LIST AND ROTATE

	Please rank from 1-8
Humane treatment of animals	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Caring for our pets	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
Farmers using best practice	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
Preventing animal cruelty	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄
Conserving native species	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
Protecting the rights of animals	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆
Balancing the needs of animals and people	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇
Promoting good food quality	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈

[NEED FOR INFORMATION/AWARENESS]

A4. Thinking about the information that is available on animal welfare in Australia, would you say there is...(Select one)

More than enough information	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Just enough information	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
Not enough information	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
Nowhere near enough information	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄

[MESSAGES]

A5. If we were to promote better animal welfare in Australia what would be the most important thing people would need to know?

Please rank in order of most important, 1 being most important

LIST AND ROTATE

	Please rank from 1-8
Animals must be treated humanely	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Animal welfare is everyone's business	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
Companion animals are good for family health and wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
Animal welfare is important for food quality	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄
Animals have intrinsic value	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
Farmers care about the welfare of their animals	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆
Animal welfare is up to me	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇
What the government is doing about animal welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈

[COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS]

A6. If you were looking for information on animal welfare which sources would you prefer to use?

SHOW ALL– ROTATE

	Please tick all that apply
The internet	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Television news and media stories	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Radio station	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
RSPCA	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Other animal welfare organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The vet	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
The state government	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
The federal government	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
National newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Local newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Direct mail sent to your home	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
TV Programs and documentaries	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
The local council	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
The library	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
Government websites	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
Brochures or pamphlets	<input type="checkbox"/> 17
Associations, groups or clubs	<input type="checkbox"/> 18
Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 20
None of these	<input type="checkbox"/> 21

Appendix C
TNS Online Panel

The representativeness of the TNS Panel

The proportion of adults (and children) accessing the internet in Australia grows apace. In terms of the total adult population, over 70% (according to the latest TNS CATI Omnibus study) now access the internet regularly. As such, the population accessing the internet was increasingly representative of the overall population. Currently, the TNS panel has over 350,000 active members.

From a purely statistical point of view, the TNS Online Panel is an accurate representation of the Australian population. More specifically, the size of the TNS Online Panel allows us to select large samples that are representative of the Australian population in terms of age, gender and location (or some other specific demographic subset). **Essentially, the size of the TNS Online Panel underpins its ability to be representative of the Australian community.** Samples can either be proportionally selected in line with ABS population figures (and as such, be representative of the population being studied) on key demographics, or data can be post-weighted to be representative on these demographics. As noted in the methodology section of this report, quantitative data for this research was post weighted to be representative of the Australian population.

While statistical validity and representativeness is essential, a valid Online Panel needs to ensure a diversity of attitudes and motivations, not just a statistical comparability. Our recruitment strategy ensures that we recruit panelists from as wide a background as possible, not just those who are more internet savvy. Any recruitment strategy needs to ensure that we continue to reach members of the population who may not be regular users of the internet or internet savvy per se – therefore increasing the spectrum of the Online Panel. For the TNS Online Panel, panelists are recruited via:

- online banners
- opt-in email invitations;
- online opt in referrals from partners
- rewards for recruiting friends via word of mouth
- from our existing telephone and face-to-face business via direct invitation
- press advertisements
- television advertisements
- television infomercials (e.g. “Bright Ideas”).

In addition to statistical and attitudinal validity, the TNS Online Panel is supported by evidence to show that the panel produces the same results as those gained from other recruitment methodologies. Underpinning the quality and representativeness of the TNS Online Panel, validation tests are continually conducted to ensure that the results are representative of the population. Validation tests are undertaken using parallel studies, utilising the TNS Online Panel and other sampling frames. The results indicate that there is **little variation in findings utilising the TNS Online Panel and other methods of surveying** – underscoring the validity of the Online Panel as a reliable and accurate sample frame.

For further details on the TNS Online Panel, please contact Barbara Barker at TNS Social Research on 02 6295 2900.