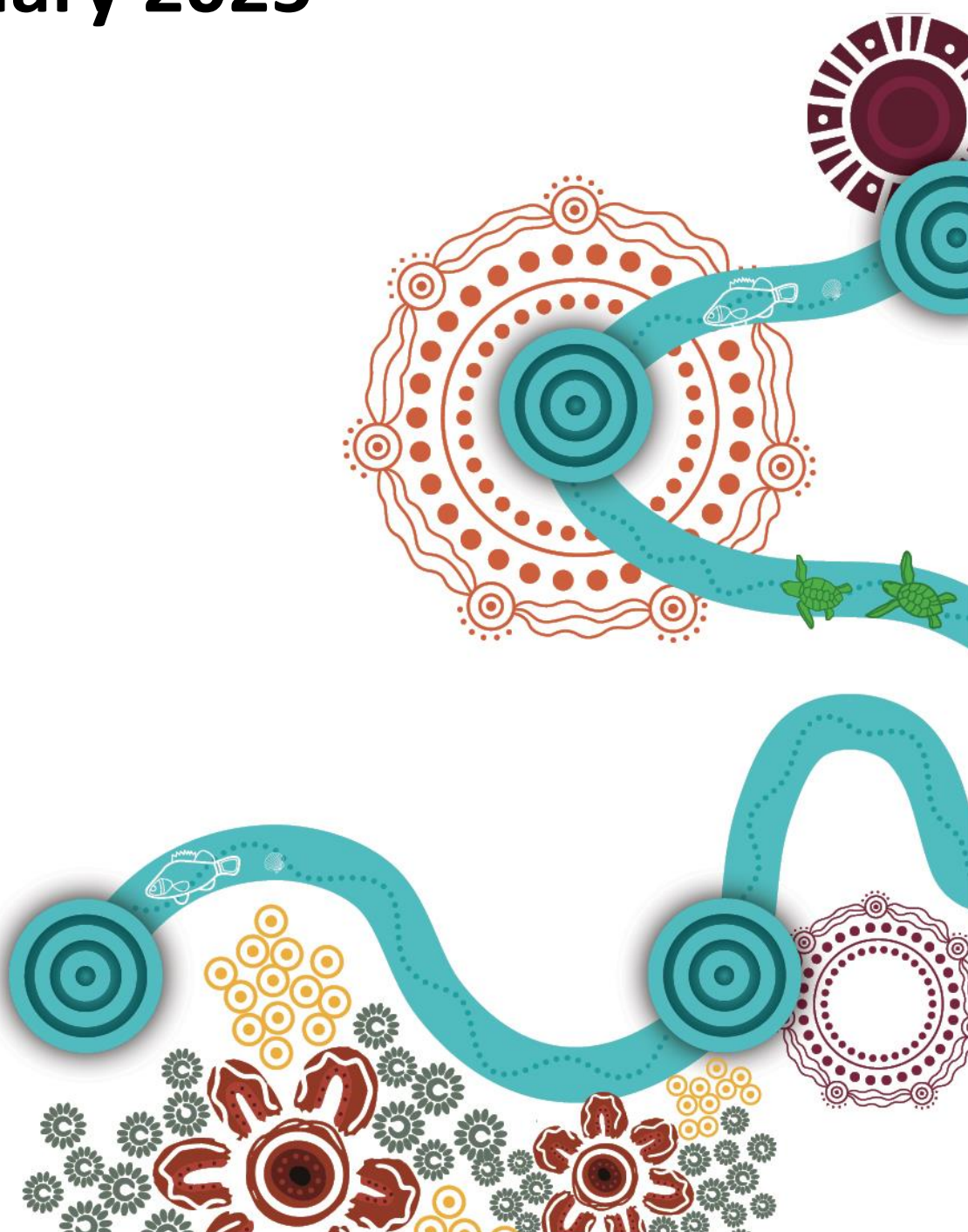




Australian Government

Australian Animal Welfare Strategy: consultation summary 2025

October 2025



Australian Animal Welfare Strategy 2025 Consultation Summary

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This publication is available at agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/welfare/aaws.

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Acknowledgements

The authors thank Have Your Say respondents, focus groups and other meeting participants for their input.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

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Introduction

Background

The Australian Government is strengthening a national approach to animal welfare by investing \$5 million over 4 years (2023-2027) to renew the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). The previous strategy lapsed in 2014.

The development of the renewed AAWS is being jointly led by the Australian, and state and territory governments, built on a principles-based framework and informed by engagement and feedback received during consultation. A renewed AAWS will provide a framework for a national approach to animal welfare and bring key stakeholders together on animal welfare issues of national significance.

The renewed AAWS will be released in chapters, each dedicated to one of 6 animal groups, with the strategy expected to be finalised in 2027.

The animal group chapters include:

- Livestock and production
 - animals in production systems, including livestock such as terrestrial mammals, poultry and crocodiles.
- Aquatic animals
 - aquatic animals in production (commercial fishing, aquaculture)
 - aquatic animals used in recreation (recreational fishing, the ornamental/aquarium industry)
 - aquatic animals in the wild, including marine fauna and marine animal management.
- Animals in the wild (native, introduced and feral animals)
 - native, introduced and feral animals
 - feral animals hunted and harvested in the wild
 - native wildlife rescues
 - native wildlife parks
 - native animal management (including animals harvested in their own environment)
 - the conservation and scientific study of native animals in captivity.
- Companion animals
 - all animals which are kept as pets, including but not limited to dogs, cats, rabbits, fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, ferrets and rodents
 - breeding and behavioural training of companion animals
 - other animals typically used in production systems kept on hobby farms or as pets such as poultry, horses, donkeys and mules.
- Animals used in research and teaching
 - all animals used in research and teaching.

- Animals used for work, sport & recreation
 - animals used for work (such as service animals and support animals of any species, and muster dogs)
 - animals used in sport (such as horse racing, greyhound racing and equestrian events)
 - animals used in recreation (such as circuses, magicians, rodeos, zoos, hunting, and dog events).

Following endorsement by all Australian, state and territory Agriculture Ministers, Australia's first *National Statement on Animal Welfare* (national statement) was published in December 2024 – a key step in progressing the renewal of the AAWS. This was informed by a first round of consultation undertaken between March and July 2024, with further details about the consultation process and outcomes summarised in the August 2024 Australian Animal Welfare Strategy: consultation summary report.

The national statement continues to underpin the AAWS development with the strategy's vision, priority areas and other key considerations already agreed by all ministers and reflected in the national statement.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the second round of consultation designed to inform the renewal of the AAWS. The report reflects findings from consultations conducted in 2025 by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) in consultation with state and territory departments, including a stakeholder roundtable, a public Have Your Say survey, workshops and stakeholder meetings.

The insights captured in this report reflect the views shared by stakeholders and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian and state and territory governments.

Consultation process

The department commenced a second round of consultation from March 2025. These consultations used a variety of methods to engage diverse groups of different sizes and sector-interests, to gain insights and support development of components of the strategy.

Stakeholders from across the animal welfare system provided input, including government, animal industries, animal handlers, non-government representative organisations, veterinarians, research bodies, First Nations organisations and members of the public.

This round of consultation represents one step in an extensive and continuing stakeholder engagement process, and its outcomes will be considered alongside other valuable input received throughout the strategy's development.

The consultation process through to 2027 will be consistent with the [APS Principles for Partnership and Engagement](#). Feedback in 2025 has been carefully considered and has guided adjustments to the approach to consultation and development of the AAWS to better align with stakeholder expectations and sectoral needs. The importance of grounding each chapter in science and evidence, while also recognising varying levels of progress across sectors, was apparent.

Consultation methodology is available in [Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#), categorised by consultation type.

First Nations engagement [May–July 2025]

The department is committed to meaningful engagement with First Nations people and communities in renewing the AAWS. A program of community consultation was undertaken May-July 2025 to support animal group chapter development. Eight workshops were undertaken, including 3 on-Country in Katherine, Cooktown and the Torres Strait, with representatives from over 40 First Nations stakeholder groups and organisations. Other consultation activities including presentations and meetings were also conducted to seek feedback and input to the AAWS.

As part of our commitment to meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples and representative organisations, the AAWS consultation process is adhering to the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Therefore, formal consent and endorsement is, and will continue to be, sought for any feedback received through this engagement - especially as it relates to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Once endorsed and finalised, a consultation summary will be published to transparently reflect the outcomes of this consultation period.

Note on terminology in the report

Terminology used in each stage of consultation represents the terms used at the time and does not necessarily reflect the final terms that will be used in the strategy and chapters. This is due to the iterative nature of the AAWS consultation process and feedback used to inform the suitability of the terms being used.

What we heard

The department sought feedback from a range of stakeholders through various consultation mechanisms. This included seeking views on specific questions about the importance of priority actions identified through looking at the previous AAWS, and their relevance to a renewed AAWS. Stakeholders have also provided feedback about the process, content or other elements they consider important in renewing the AAWS, including about what the animal group chapters should contain.

There is strong commitment from all stakeholders to continuously improve animal welfare and build on good work already underway. Throughout the consultation process, there was general stakeholder agreement about the importance of most of the actions identified in the previous AAWS. Stakeholders also noted the benefits of building upon the successful outputs of the previous AAWS and of building on existing activities that are working well. However, there was strong feedback that including ‘practical actions’ within an animal group chapter in the absence of a more comprehensive assessment of existing industry work underway, an understanding of industry experience, an understanding of the relevant science related to an action, and a clearer understanding of how the actions might be interpreted for implementation, would not be widely supported. Further, the delivery of improvements requires the identification of existing resources and structures, an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders including the community, and a clear understanding of gaps so that improvements are sustainable.

At the system level, there was general agreement about the suitability of a suite of actions that were tested which had been mapped to the priority areas identified in the national statement (leadership and coordination, standards and implementation, reporting and compliance, research and development, education and communication, international engagement). However, there was feedback about terminology. Many stakeholders reflected that the language and terminology used in the previous AAWS, which included goals and objectives, was more appropriate.

A range of other key themes have emerged and are explored below. These will inform the drafting of chapters for testing through further stakeholder engagement. The overall strategy’s development will continue to be informed by expanded engagement with other animal group chapter stakeholders.

Purpose, scope and stakeholder responsibilities

Stakeholders have sought further clarity about purpose, scope and stakeholder responsibilities. Across the community there are different levels of ambition about what stakeholders want the AAWS to achieve. There is broad recognition that consumers and trading partners continue to show interest in Australia’s management of animal welfare. While the purpose of the strategy includes establishing a clear national-level articulation for Australia’s management of animal welfare, aligned to its vision, there are separate viewpoints on how ambitious the strategy should be. State and territory governments are primarily responsible for animal welfare regulation in Australia, so with a federated system it is valuable to document our national approach to managing animal welfare with clear identification of areas for cooperation and opportunities for improvement. Consumers and trading partners continue to express interest in Australia’s management of animal welfare. The

AAWS provides an opportunity to document our practices, standards, systems and frameworks to build consumer trust in the way animals are treated throughout the supply chain and raise community awareness about good industry practices and assurance systems.

Stakeholders continue to identify the AAWS as a mechanism to repair and grow trust and transparency among stakeholders. With stakeholder polarisation identified as a challenge in the first consultation summary, a stakeholder roundtable during this tranche of consultation provided a forum to commence a dialogue aimed at fostering relationships.

Consultations reflected that the chapters provide an opportunity to capture an evidence-based snapshot of each sector (including each chapter's scope), describe some of the good work already underway, describe stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and identify relevant opportunities and potential next steps. While extensive feedback was received on potential 'actions' to be included at the chapter level (primarily through the Have Your Say and chapter-based workshops), without a more comprehensive deep-dive into current activity, legacy activities from the lapsed AAWS and implementation impacts, feedback on potential chapter-based actions might instead be reflected as objectives at a system level, mapped against goals and priority areas.

Sentience and defining good animal welfare

Consistently, over 63% of survey respondents across chapter groups rated "Defining what good animal welfare looks like" as 'Very Important'. Although there were diverse opinions on what constitutes good animal welfare, there was broad support for the AAWS and any animal welfare improvements to be informed by the Five Domains Model, which provides a structured way to assess an animal's experiences by considering nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and the mental state that arises from these. Sentience, the ability to experience feelings, was identified as important by many stakeholders to be used to guide, along with science and evidence, the definition of good animal welfare. One Health and One Welfare approaches were also outlined as key items to integrate into the AAWS due to the interconnectedness between animals, humans and the environment and the impact they have on each other.

Contemporary science and evidence

An area of common ground identified again in this tranche of engagement was the importance of the AAWS being grounded in science and evidence. Stakeholders acknowledged that the vision of the strategy captures the role of science and evidence. They also noted that researchers, academics and Research and Development Corporations all play a role in providing scientific evidence in the animal welfare sector. Through the Have Your Say consultation, over 51% of survey respondents across chapter groups rated "Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication" as 'Very Important'. This indicates that further alignment of efforts across research areas is key and can result in more efficient use of resources and broader application of findings. With science evolving, an ongoing assessment of its current state relating to animal welfare outcomes is important. Feedback also included the need to reduce duplications and streamline investments into research and development as much as possible.

Animal chapter differences and building on the lapsed AAWS

Many stakeholders consulted in the process to renew the AAWS have experience working to support the previous AAWS, which was well into its implementation phase when it lapsed. During this current tranche of consultation, feedback reflected that working groups associated with different animal groups under the previous AAWS had progressed at different stages. In some cases, significant activities and work had progressed, some of which remains in place today. This was particularly apparent in consultations for the aquatics chapter where it was outlined that the sector continued to use outputs from the previous Aquatic Animal Welfare Working Group and had performed further research around their uptake and utility. A range of other examples were cited, with strong feedback that an examination of that work was needed to ensure that success could be built upon, the lessons learned capitalised, and duplication of effort avoided. The relative complexity of each chapter was also a point of feedback, which reflected the importance of being clear about scope. Significant feedback received was directed to species, topics or specific areas of improvement required in an animal husbandry practice. While this level of detail is not within the scope of a national strategy, the information has been captured and collected to inform ongoing policy development and stakeholder engagement.

Community sentiment and dialogue

Stakeholders overwhelmingly accept that people care about animals, and that community expectations about animal welfare practices are important. Ongoing and transparent dialogue with the community should play a role in the development of the strategy, as well as the management of animal welfare across all animal sectors. It was acknowledged that the opportunity to provide two public Have Your Say processes to date has been valuable, and that First Nations engagement was an important element of the consultation strategy. Stakeholders recognise that community sentiment on a range of issues, including animal welfare, is evolving. It was also recognised that consumer education on animal welfare practices that are backed by science and evidence fosters trust.

Coordinated standards and guidelines

We also heard that an improved approach to development of national standards and guidelines, continues to be an area of opportunity (77.8% of roundtable attendees voted 'Very Important', Table A3, Action 1). Resourcing by governments was acknowledged as a barrier and the implementation of standards and guidelines was identified as important for clarity and consistency. However, there were two additional considerations raised about this point: practical improvements to welfare outcomes should not be delayed for the sake of harmonisation, as well as a view that jurisdictional flexibility is needed to account for sector-specific differences or the specific operational environments of each jurisdiction.

Emerging challenges and opportunities

Workshops particularly provided a range of challenges and opportunities that may be captured in the strategy, and individual chapters. For example, feedback highlighted climate change as an emerging challenge facing animal welfare. Stakeholders also identified the adoption of new technologies and artificial intelligence as both a growing challenge and a promising opportunity. It was outlined that

whilst these tools have the potential to enhance animal welfare, their implementation should be carefully managed and closely monitored.

Implementation status

At various points along the AAWS consultation process, stakeholders have asked about its implementation status and questioned the role of a strategy in the absence of certainty about next steps. A finalised strategy provides a tangible outcome in which further decisions can be made by governments. The progressive development of animal group chapters provides an opportunity for potential improvements to be identified early, and recognises that the role and responsibility for animal welfare sits with a multitude of stakeholders.

Responding to feedback and next steps

The department received broad-ranging and constructive feedback throughout the second tranche of consultation, which has directly shaped and refined the engagement approach. Drafting of the first two animal group chapters is well advanced, and consultation drafts will be shared with stakeholders through a more direct consultation process. With a joint-leadership approach by all Australian governments, governance groups are also being engaged.

Throughout the consultation process, stakeholders have said that it is important to understand the current operating environment at a system and animal group chapter level. This ‘environmental scanning’ allows a common understanding of the landscape, opportunities and challenges. In response the department has been preparing a series of environmental scans that capture a high-level snapshot of the policy, regulatory and legal, sociological, economic, environmental, technological, and future trends impacts on animal welfare in Australia. These are desk-top based documents accompanied by referenced sources and will be used to continually inform the AAWS development.

The department is also incorporating lessons learnt from consultation with the initial two chapter groups as we prepare to begin consultation on the remaining four chapters. The department’s consultation process will continue in line with the APS Principles for Partnership and Engagement. Finalisation of the AAWS is expected in 2027 with consultation ongoing through the development process.

Appendix A: Roundtable

The department held a stakeholder roundtable on 29 April 2025 and invited attendees with connections to the livestock and production and aquatic animals chapters (the first two AAWS chapters under development), as well as state and territory government officials and representation from the AAWS Strategy Advisory Group. The purpose of the roundtable was to foster conversations with a wide range of stakeholders about the AAWS and to provide feedback on potential system-level actions that might be captured in the strategy. These actions were mapped to the six priority streams of the renewed AAWS, as contained in the [National Statement on Animal Welfare](#). They are at an animal welfare-system level and therefore not specific to any one animal group chapter.

The roundtable was supported by a departmental assessment against the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), and was scheduled prior to the 2025 Federal Election being called. Invitees were advised prior to the event that Commonwealth officials would be participating in line with the Commonwealth Guidance on Caretaker Conventions. The roundtable was not a decision-making forum.

Consultation Methodology

The roundtable was held in Canberra through a hybrid model with participants predominately attending in-person. Participants were asked to consider 23 system-level actions from the previous AAWS and assign a rating in terms of relevance for a renewed AAWS. Participants were briefed that given these activities were taken directly from the previous AAWS, some activities may no longer be relevant, or may only be partially relevant with varying levels of practicality, and to keep that in mind during the roundtable exercise.

For in-person participants this was undertaken through a 'gallery walk', with participants moving around the room attaching a sticker against their preferred response option for each work stream as well as the option to attach written comments. Online participants undertook a similar activity using an online tool to record their responses and to record comments against the actions. The ratings and comments from online and in-person participants have been combined in this report.

Response Options

The following response options were provided:

- Very important
- Important
- Slightly important
- Neutral or unsure
- Not required

Work streams

Leadership and coordination

- Action 1. Establish a shared understanding of respective roles and responsibilities across all relevant Australian, state, territory and local government agencies and non-government organisations.
- Action 2. Seek effective input from relevant committees and government bodies with community inputs and other stakeholders across the spectrum of use of animals in Australia.
- Action 3. Promote the adoption of a harmonised approach to the development and application of clear, contemporary, adequate and consistent animal welfare legislation and codes of practice across all state, territory and local government jurisdictions, for appropriate and agreed outcomes.

Standards and implementation

- Action 1. Facilitate the timely development, and revision of codes of practice, standards and guidelines and legislation for the welfare of animals where scientific, social and industry developments justify changes being made to existing practices.

Research and development

- Action 1. Identify possible research and development needs and encourage greater investment in research areas by industry and government through existing funding mechanisms.
- Action 2. Explore options for funding and establish national animal welfare research priorities.
- Action 3. Establish a process whereby welfare research is continually monitored and, where applicable, sustainable standards can be updated.

Reporting and compliance

- Action 1. Facilitate the maintenance of effective animal welfare units in each jurisdiction, recognising inter-agency interests, to assist and coordinate the delivery of animal welfare advice, policy development and support services.
- Action 2. Undertake a review of the existing animal welfare infrastructure, policies and programs in place in Australia.
- Action 3. Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC – now Agriculture Ministers' Meeting) will assume lead responsibility for the monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress under the Strategy and will coordinate the development of an AAWS Implementation Plan in consultation with key stakeholders. This Plan will:
 - Incorporate specific action plans and nominated lead agencies
 - Identify any additional resources and funding required to deliver the Plan
 - Provide a basis for national coordination of the Strategy and reporting on implementation progress.
- Action 4. Maintain a nationally representative committee of key stakeholders on NCCAW (National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare – secretariat in the Animal Welfare Branch)

of DAFF) to advise the Australian Government on developments under the Strategy to be authorised by Primary Industries Ministerial Council (now Agriculture Ministers' Meeting).

- Action 5. Facilitate the development, collection and collation of national statistics on animal welfare standards as a basis to benchmark Australia's animal welfare outcomes.

Education and communication

- Action 1. Encourage the use of effective consultative and communication mechanisms to engage all animal use industries, including the livestock industries, the aquaculture and fishing industries, companion animal carers and the companion animal industry, recreational animal industries, the veterinary profession, researchers, community groups, animal welfare organisations, governments and the community in developing animal welfare policies, standards and education.
- Action 2. Promote the development and use of humane and effective methods to control pest animals in Australia.
- Action 3. Promote consultation and the dissemination of information on animal care and encourage the adoption of best practice standards in all situations where there is potential for human to animal interaction.
- Action 4. Promote and facilitate the inclusion of animal welfare studies in the curricula of educational institutions.
- Action 5. Develop and promote national competency-based training and other educational programs for the improvement of skills of people using animals, where existing training programs are shown to be deficient.
- Action 6. Where necessary, develop, promote and deliver appropriate education and training as part of quality assurance programs for animal care, production, use and management that satisfy relevant Australian standards.
- Action 7. Publicise the existence and content of existing animal welfare legislation, model codes of practice, position statements, standards and guidelines utilising appropriate media.
- Action 8. Create national internet sources for national, state/territory and local animal welfare information and establish a process of national consultation with the general community on nationally important welfare issues.
- Action 9. Disseminate relevant information to appropriate organisations throughout Australia.

International engagement

- Action 1. Expand Australia's efforts to inform international bodies of our current standards for animal welfare through the development of readily available explanatory material outlining the animal welfare arrangements and achievements in Australia.
- Action 2. To contribute to the benchmarking of international animal welfare outcomes by assisting in the development of international standards through the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Overview of roundtable respondents

There were 52 attendees at the hybrid roundtable event. Demographic information for respondents is presented in Table A1.

Sample data

Table A1 Roundtable data

Stakeholder category	Number of attendees
Agricultural industry organisation	14
Animal welfare organisation	3
Aquatic industry organisation	8
Commonwealth Government	6
Peak body/other industry organisation	4
Research and academia	1
Rural Research and Development Corporation	6
State and Territory Government	9
Other	1

Qualitative data

The qualitative data section outlines a summary of additional attendee feedback heard at the roundtable event.

Attendees called for the adoption of consistency in animal care and husbandry practices, noting context and geographical differences, and that they must be timely, practical and realistic. There were also calls for the consideration of non-regulatory and regulatory tools in regard to the development and enforcement of standards and guidelines.

We heard feedback for objective measures of 'welfare' to underpin research and development initiatives in the livestock and aquatics sectors, as well as strong support for science and evidence to be at the forefront of all work to be undertaken to progress good animal welfare outcomes. There were also calls to establish national livestock and aquatic animal research priorities to avoid duplication, fragmentation or misalignment with current needs on the ground.

There was a strong desire for equitable and accessible access to education material for stock and animal handlers, and new or best practice animal care and husbandry methods. Additionally, feedback on building international understanding of Australia's unique environment (climatic, geographic, ecosystems) and animal care practices was expressed.

Quantitative data by work stream

This section presents findings from the quantitative data collected in the roundtable event, featuring livestock and production and aquatic animal stakeholder groups.

Table A2 Leadership and coordination roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Establish a shared understanding of respective roles across Australian, state, territory and local governments and NGOs.	78.8%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.6%
Action 2. Seek input from committees, government bodies and community about the spectrum of animal use.	44.2%	26.9%	7.7%	3.8%	0.0%	17.3%
Action 3. Promote adoption of harmonised approach to animal welfare legislation across state, territory and local government jurisdictions.	69.2%	13.5%	0.0%	9.6%	0.0%	7.7%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table A3 Standards and implementation roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Facilitate the timely development and revision of codes of practice.	77.8%	20.4%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table A4 Research and development roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Identify possible research and development needs and encourage investment through existing funding mechanisms.	34.6%	42.3%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	17.3%
Action 2. Explore options of funding and establish national animal welfare research priorities.	23.1%	46.2%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%
Action 3. Establish a process where welfare research is continually monitored and sustainable standards can be updated.	15.4%	38.5%	23.1%	5.8%	0.0%	17.3%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table A5 Reporting and compliance roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Facilitate the maintenance of effective animal welfare units in each jurisdiction.	46.2%	32.7%	5.8%	1.9%	0.0%	13.5%
Action 2. Undertake a review of the existing animal welfare infrastructure, policies and programs in Australia.	7.7%	34.6%	7.7%	17.3%	15.4%	17.3%

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Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 3. AMM coordinate development of AAWS implementation plan in consultation with key stakeholders.	46.2%	21.2%	1.9%	5.8%	0.0%	25.0%
Action 4. Maintain a nationally representative committee of key stakeholders on NCCAW.	71.2%	5.8%	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%	19.2%
Action 5. Facilitate the development, collection and collation of national statistics on animal welfare standards to benchmark animal welfare outcomes.	13.5%	44.2%	5.8%	19.2%	0.0%	17.3%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table A6 Education and communication roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Encourage the use of effective consultative and communication mechanisms to engage all animal use industries in developing animal welfare policies, standards and education.	88.5%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	1.9%	3.8%
Action 2. Promote the development and use of humane and effective methods to control pest animals in Australia.	32.7%	32.7%	9.6%	0.0%	1.9%	23.1%
Action 3. Promote consultation and the dissemination of information on animal care and encourage the adoption of best practice standards.	30.8%	40.4%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Action 4. Promote and facilitate the inclusion of animal welfare studies in the curricula of educational institutions.	17.3%	26.9%	15.4%	17.3%	1.9%	21.2%
Action 5. Develop and promote national competency-based training and other educational programs.	30.8%	32.7%	1.9%	5.8%	1.9%	26.9%
Action 6. Where necessary, develop, promote and deliver appropriate education and training as part of quality assurance programs for animal care.	13.5%	34.6%	11.5%	17.3%	1.9%	21.2%
Action 7. Publicise the existence and content of existing animal welfare legislation	25.0%	36.5%	1.9%	1.9%	5.8%	28.8%
Action 8. Create national internet sources for national, state/territory and local animal welfare information	7.7%	26.9%	17.3%	25.0%	5.8%	17.3%
Action 9. Disseminate relevant information to appropriate organisations throughout Australia.	9.6%	21.2%	15.4%	34.6%	0.0%	19.2%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table A7 International engagement roundtable data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not required	No response
Action 1. Expand Australia's efforts to inform international bodies of our current standards for animal welfare.	17.3%	36.5%	21.2%	9.6%	0.0%	15.4%
Action 2. To contribute to the benchmarking of international animal welfare outcomes.	28.8%	21.2%	32.7%	7.7%	3.8%	5.8%

Appendix B: Have Your Say

The department conducted a public survey through its Have Your Say (HYS) web platform, which was open for input from 17 March to 14 April 2025.

Following the publication of the previous AAWS in 2005, working groups were established to examine existing animal welfare arrangements and identify priorities for future action. In line with the Australian Government's commitment to build on the achievements of the previous strategy, the department undertook a review of these priority actions and conducted a survey to seek feedback on whether the actions identified under the previous AAWS remain important for a renewed, modern and future-focused AAWS.

Input to this second round HYS process sought input on:

- how important the action is for inclusion in the animal group chapters of the renewed strategy, or
- whether the action is no longer relevant to the current animal welfare landscape.

The department received over 500 responses to the survey. Survey results have been analysed and captured in this consultation summary. Individual results will not be published.

Consultation Methodology

The HYS consisted of 6 sets of non-mandatory multiple-choice questions, grouped by animal group chapter about actions related to the previous AAWS. The survey asked participants for their feedback on these actions and also provided the opportunity to provide additional input through free text fields.

Response options

The following response options were provided:

- Very important
- Important
- Slightly important
- Neutral or unsure
- Not relevant

Where survey participants selected 'not relevant', they were provided a non-mandatory free text field and asked to provide any reasons for the selection.

Priority actions

Cross-chapter actions

The first 7 actions survey participants were asked to rate were the same for all animal group chapters:

- Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories, to avoid confusion and achieve consistent outcomes. For example, legislation, standards and codes of practice.
- Action 2. Identifying core skills and capabilities for workers and students in relevant fields and creating or enhancing education, training or awareness programs to achieve these skills.
- Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and developing a clear approach to achieving and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.
- Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.
- Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication across all animal groups.
- Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures, including standards and guidelines, codes and other mechanisms such as sustainability frameworks and extension activities.
- Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders connected to the animal group sector and supporting or developing effective ways to share information and collaborate.

Chapter-specific actions

Each animal group chapter also included between one and four additional actions specific to its animal group to rate.

For the Livestock and production chapter, the additional actions were:

- Continuing to integrate animal welfare into existing livestock and production industry quality assurance programs.
- Coordination of current and future livestock and production research and development programs.

For the aquatic animals chapter, the additional actions were:

- Developing minimum fish welfare standards across all aquatic sectors. Improving adoption of welfare standards across aquatic sectors and species.
- Improving industry awareness and ownership of animal welfare arrangements.

For the Animals in the wild chapter, the additional actions were:

- Developing practical welfare codes of practice/standards for vertebrate pest control, control of over abundant native species, rehabilitation, reintroduction, translocations of animals in the wild and the imperative of habitat quality.
- Resourcing for research and development and supporting ongoing expertise within the research and development community.

For the companion animals chapter, the additional actions were:

- Improve communications and education about the role of local governments in companion animal welfare.

- The opportunity for whole of government collaboration with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support the health and wellbeing of their companion animals and the health, wellbeing and safety of communities.
- Reviewing codes of practice for companion animals to make sure that animal welfare is adequately covered.
- Broad scale education of owners of companion animals on the welfare of animals.

For the Animals used for work, sport and recreation chapter, the additional action was:

- Identify the full scope of animal uses within each sector and develop standards covering animal welfare for each sector.

For the Animals used in research and teaching chapter, the additional actions were:

- Identifying ongoing funding options for the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes review.
- Developing a clear process for measuring animal welfare improvements for animals used in research and teaching to enable comparison of statistics and data over time.

Overview of survey respondents

The survey received 576 responses through the departments HYS platform.

Demographic information for respondents is presented in Table B1. This information is based on responses to the question: “Which of the following best describes your situation”. Participants selected from a predefined list of options developed by the department and were able to choose more than one option.

While the HYS consultation was designed to gather feedback through a survey format, with opportunities for written comments as part of the survey response, some stakeholders also chose to make written submissions to the department. Submissions varied in content. Some respondents focused on answering the survey questions, others also shared views on broader issues relevant to animal welfare and the process for developing the AAWS.

The department reviewed feedback received through the HYS survey and the written submissions. Responses directly addressing the survey questions have been incorporated into this consultation summary. Broader views shared through submissions have been considered as part of the wider consultation process and are not necessarily included in this appendix.

Sample data

Table B1 HYS survey sample data

Stakeholder category	Number of responses
Agricultural industry organisation	32
Animal welfare organisation	36
Companion and assistance animal organisation	26
Conservation organisation	11
Exporter/export community	3
Farmer	45
Member of the public	343
Racing organisation	5
Research and academia	37
Rural Research and Development Corporation	4
State or Territory Government	5
Veterinarian	29
Wildlife organisation	28
Zoo	6
Other	71

Qualitative data

The qualitative data section outlines feedback received via the survey's free text fields. This input reflects a range of understandings and experiences of animal welfare, including professional expertise and personal views. Responses that included comments beyond the scope of the AAWS have not been included in this consultation summary.

A manual review of the qualitative data was undertaken, during which responses were examined and summarised into key themes to identify common patterns and insights. These themes included the six work streams (priority areas of work) outlined in the [National Statement on Animal Welfare](#), as well as additional themes that emerged through the analysis.

National statement work streams

Leadership and coordination

We heard that across all animal groups and sectors, a strong animal welfare governance framework should be in place, supported by measurable outcomes and public education.

We heard a harmonised national approach was important for clarity and consistency, noting practical improvements to welfare outcomes should not be delayed for the sake of harmonisation. It was acknowledged however, that jurisdictional flexibility is needed to account for sector-specific, climatic and geographical differences.

There were calls for harmonised legislation across states and territories to address inconsistencies in companion animal welfare and enforcement.

Standards and implementation

There was support for the existing Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines as a baseline. However, some survey participants expressed concern that government benchmarks may be too low. Additionally, there was support for establishing national minimum welfare standards for a broader range of animal groups.

Feedback identified ongoing resourcing would be required to support the ongoing development and periodic revision of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines, in conjunction with animal welfare system stakeholders.

Reporting and compliance

Support exists for transparent monitoring and public reporting of animal injuries and deaths across all animal use sectors, though there were concerns about potential misinterpretation without public education.

There were mixed views on the level of regulation, with some participants calling for more regulation, and others for less, citing existing high standards and concerns on the impact of additional regulation on time, resourcing and viability.

There was a desire to reduce regulatory ambiguity by better supporting legislative interpretation. Survey participants highlighted overlapping regulations, combined with unclear and complex animal welfare compliance and reporting requirements, presented challenges for producers.

Research and development

Participants identified the importance of recognising existing industry research and avoiding duplication.

There was interest in:

- non-invasive monitoring, automated assessments and technology-driven enrichment
- research and development to focus on humane approaches to feral animal management, and
- fast-tracking research into alternatives to animal models.

Education and communication

Participants expressed a desire to improve information sharing among stakeholders, educate the public, combat misinformation and promote transparency in animal welfare practices. This also included highlighting the importance of designing public awareness and education strategies that respectfully engage with and reflect diverse cultural perspectives and practices, including First Nations communities.

International engagement

There was acknowledgement that strengthening Australia's animal welfare standards is important to maintain social licence/public trust and international credibility in our animal use industries.

Additional themes

Contextual considerations

Feedback highlighted the need for responsive actions to address the intersection of climate change and animal welfare and emphasised the need to integrate a One Health approach throughout the AAWS. There were comments that flexibility is needed to account for sector-specific, climatic and geographical differences.

Science and evidence-based foundations

There was an emphasis on grounding the AAWS in unbiased, contemporary science and evidence-based data, as well as incorporating industry experience.

Trusted relationships

Survey participants emphasised the importance of recognising stakeholders' existing efforts and contributions toward improving animal welfare outcomes. There was also recognition that many actions have progressed during and since the previous AAWS.

Capability development

Survey participants called for better resources and guidelines for licensed wildlife carers involved in rescue, rehabilitation and release.

Other

There were calls for a National Independent Office of Animal Welfare, along with increased penalties for animal cruelty.

Species-specific concerns raised included:

- pain management in husbandry practices
- provision of shade for livestock
- use of intensive confinement systems in agriculture
- conditions in aquaculture farming
- use of shark nets
- culling of kangaroos and brumbies
- use of 1080 poison baiting
- access to subsidised cat and dog desexing programs
- greater regulatory oversight of companion and hobby animal breeding.

Quantitative data by animal group chapter

Table B2 Livestock and production survey data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	67.0%	18.6%	2.3%	1.7%	2.6%	7.8%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	58.9%	24.0%	4.2%	2.1%	2.3%	8.7%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	73.4%	14.2%	1.6%	1.0%	1.4%	8.3%
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	65.1%	17.0%	5.2%	2.4%	2.4%	7.8%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	57.3%	21.9%	7.8%	2.3%	1.7%	9.0%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	63.7%	17.4%	7.3%	1.7%	1.6%	8.3%
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	55.9%	23.6%	8.5%	1.7%	1.6%	8.7%
Chapter-specific actions						
Continuing to integrate animal welfare into existing livestock and production industry quality assurance programs.	68.2%	14.4%	5.2%	1.9%	1.6%	8.7%
Coordination of current and future livestock and production research and development programs.	51.7%	21.2%	10.8%	5.0%	2.6%	8.7%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table B3 Aquatic animals survey data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	59.9%	14.2%	2.3%	1.6%	2.4%	19.6%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	52.6%	19.1%	4.0%	2.3%	2.4%	19.6%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	63.2%	11.1%	3.1%	1.2%	2.3%	19.1%

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Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	60.8%	11.6%	4.3%	1.6%	2.3%	19.4%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	51.2%	16.8%	6.6%	2.8%	2.4%	20.1%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	57.5%	13.0%	5.7%	2.4%	2.1%	19.3%
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	51.2%	18.2%	6.4%	1.9%	2.1%	20.1%
Chapter-specific actions						
Developing minimum fish welfare standards across all aquatic sectors. Improving adoption of welfare standards across aquatic sectors and species.	63.0%	10.2%	3.0%	2.3%	2.3%	19.3%
Improving industry awareness and ownership of animal welfare arrangements.	58.9%	13.4%	4.0%	1.6%	2.6%	19.6%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table B4 Animals in the wild survey data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	69.8%	12.5%	2.6%	1.2%	1.2%	12.7%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	60.6%	18.1%	5.0%	1.6%	1.6%	13.2%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	67.5%	13.7%	3.8%	1.7%	0.9%	12.3%
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	63.5%	14.2%	4.7%	2.4%	1.4%	13.7%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	59.0%	17.2%	7.1%	2.3%	1.4%	13.0%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	64.4%	14.2%	5.4%	2.4%	0.9%	12.7%

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Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	58.9%	19.3%	5.6%	2.4%	1.0%	12.8%
Chapter-specific actions						
Developing practical welfare codes of practice/standards for vertebrate pest control, control of over abundant native species, rehabilitation, reintroduction, translocations of animals in the wild and the imperative of habitat quality	70.7%	10.8%	2.1%	1.6%	1.6%	13.4%
Resourcing for research and development and supporting ongoing expertise within the research and development community.	63.0%	13.4%	6.8%	2.3%	1.7%	12.8%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table B5 Companion animals survey data

Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	68.4%	13.0%	3.1%	0.9%	1.6%	13.0%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	57.8%	18.8%	6.3%	1.4%	1.9%	13.9%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	68.1%	13.2%	3.6%	0.5%	1.2%	13.4%
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	63.5%	13.9%	5.7%	2.4%	1.2%	13.2%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	57.1%	16.8%	7.5%	2.4%	1.9%	14.2%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	64.4%	13.0%	6.9%	1.4%	1.2%	13.0%
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	58.5%	17.2%	8.0%	1.6%	1.4%	13.4%
Chapter-specific actions						
Improve communications and education about the role of local governments in companion animal welfare.	61.3%	14.8%	6.8%	1.6%	1.9%	13.7%

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Action	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
The opportunity for whole of government collaboration with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support the health and wellbeing of their companion animals and the health, wellbeing and safety of communities.	59.5%	13.9%	8.3%	3.1%	1.7%	13.4%
Reviewing codes of practice for companion animals to make sure that animal welfare is adequately covered.	66.3%	13.5%	4.7%	1.4%	1.2%	12.8%
Broad scale education of owners of companion animals on the welfare of animals.	69.1%	12.2%	3.3%	1.2%	1.4%	12.8%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table B6 Animals used for work sport and recreation survey data

Action	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	70.5%	13.7%	2.3%	0.7%	2.3%	10.6%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	63.2%	17.5%	5.2%	1.2%	2.3%	10.6%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	69.3%	14.9%	3.0%	0.7%	1.7%	10.4%
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	66.5%	14.4%	5.2%	1.9%	1.9%	10.1%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	58.5%	18.1%	7.6%	2.1%	2.3%	11.5%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	64.9%	16.3%	5.0%	1.7%	1.7%	10.2%
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	60.9%	16.3%	8.0%	2.3%	1.6%	10.9%
Chapter-specific actions						
Identify the full scope of animal uses within each sector and develop standards covering animal welfare for each sector.	68.4%	13.0%	4.3%	1.7%	2.8%	9.7%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Table B7 Animals used in research and teaching survey data

Action	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Neutral or unsure	Not relevant	No response
Cross-chapter actions						
Action 1. Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories.	70.1%	8.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.7%	16.3%
Action 2. Identifying core skills, capabilities and education, training or awareness programs.	64.6%	12.8%	3.0%	1.7%	2.1%	15.8%
Action 3. Defining what good animal welfare looks like and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.	69.3%	10.1%	2.1%	1.4%	1.7%	15.5%
Action 4. Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.	66.3%	10.2%	4.2%	1.6%	2.1%	15.6%
Action 5. Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication.	62.2%	11.8%	5.9%	2.6%	1.7%	15.8%
Action 6. Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures.	62.2%	12.5%	5.2%	2.4%	1.7%	16.0%
Action 7. Identifying all stakeholders and developing ways to share information and collaborate.	59.0%	15.6%	4.9%	2.8%	2.1%	15.6%
Chapter-specific actions						
Identifying ongoing funding options for the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes review.	59.9%	12.8%	4.3%	4.7%	2.6%	15.6%
Developing a clear process for measuring animal welfare improvements for animals used in research and teaching to enable comparison of statistics and data over time.	67.2%	10.4%	3.5%	1.6%	2.1%	15.3%

Due to rounding, total responses for each action may not sum exactly to 100%.

Appendix C: Workshops

In May and June 2025, the first chapter development workshops were held online with stakeholders connected to the aquatic animals and livestock and production chapters, including people involved in the original AAWS. The objective of these workshops was to use a co-design approach to chapter development and further test the practical actions from the previous strategy for the renewed AAWS. These practical actions included the same cross-sectoral and chapter-specific actions that formed the HYS public consultation survey. The workshops also discussed sectoral opportunities and general feedback on the strategy and chapter development. Feedback received at and following the workshops from a diverse mix of stakeholders sought a change of approach by the department in the way we consulted and developed draft chapters. The department adjusted its consultation processes in response to this feedback, including postponing the planned second chapter development workshops.

Consultation Methodology

The two workshops were held online where participants were asked to engage in conversation about the output of the aquatic animals and livestock and production roundtable and share their observations. Participants were also asked to share their one most important idea to progress the chapter as well as any opportunities for additional actions.

The workshops enabled stakeholders to provide feedback on the chapter-specific practical actions and will inform the development of the chapters.

Overview of workshop attendees

There were 19 organisations represented at the aquatic animals workshop event. Demographic information for respondents is presented in Table C1.

There were 30 organisations represented at the livestock and production workshop event. Demographic information for respondents is presented in Table C2.

Sample data

Table C1 Aquatic animals workshop sample data

Subcategory	Number of organisations
Animal welfare organisation	4
Commonwealth government	2
Industry peak body/other industry organisation	7
State and Territory Government	3
Other	3

Table C2 Livestock and production animals workshop sample data

Stakeholder category	Number of organisations
Animal welfare organisation	7
Industry peak body/other industry organisation	10
Research and academia	2
Rural Research and Development Corporation	4
State and Territory Government	5
Other	2

Qualitative data

The qualitative data section outlines a summary of the feedback heard at the aquatic animals and livestock and production workshops.

Workshop attendees highlighted that many of the actions identified in the previous strategy remain relevant to the modern context. They also noted that much progress has been made to date on a range of these actions and the renewed AAWS should build on these existing foundations. Some participants reflected that while the actions remain relevant, there were opportunities for consolidation and clarification due to overlap and duplication of intent with many actions. Further, there were calls for a reduction in the number of actions to make priorities clearer to determine where progress is needed most.

Additionally, attendees expressed the desire for trend tracking in animal welfare science, community attitudes, industry innovation, and regulatory improvements. Many participants expressed a desire to see decision making underpinned by science, evidence, community expectations and industry realities. The use of the Five Domains model of welfare to guide the AAWS was strongly supported, as well as emphasis for a One Health approach to be integrated into all aspects of the chapter.

Specifically, livestock and production attendees called for enhanced community understanding about livestock production systems.

Data Limitations

There are some considerations to note when interpreting the survey data:

- Since all HYS survey questions were optional, response numbers vary across questions for each chapter. For example, one participant may have answered questions 1.a, 1.c and 1.e, while skipping others, whereas another participant may have responded to all questions for the chapter. To reflect the differences in response numbers, a 'No response' column has been included in the tables to indicate when participants did not answer a specific question.
- Although HYS survey instructions advised participants to select 'skip' for chapters not relevant to their interests, responses received suggest this option may not have been consistently used. As a result, 'not relevant' responses may reflect a participant's view the action is not relevant to their area of interest, rather than the action's relevance to the renewal of the AAWS. While this may have introduced a minor skew to the 'not relevant' totals, its overall impact on the findings is considered negligible because of the relatively low 'not relevant' totals compared to the high 'very important' totals.
 - This skew was not present in the roundtable data as the actions were at the animal-system level and not specific to an animal area like some of the chapter actions.
- The roundtable data is not representative of the full spectrum of the animal groups as it only pertains to aquatic animals and livestock and production animal stakeholders.
- There was a discrepancy in the roundtable data with a single action, Standards and implementation (Table A3) Action 1, 'Facilitate the timely development, and revision of codes of practice, standards and guidelines and legislation for the welfare of animals where scientific, social and industry developments justify changes being made to existing practices', producing a total of 54 responses against 52 attendees. Due to the nature of the consultation method, which allowed participants to respond to questions in an organic manner; the discrepancy in response data has been labelled as a human error. Its overall impact on the findings is considered negligible because of the relatively high response rate to 'Very Important' totals in this practical action.