



**Social Research to Support
the Australian Animal
Welfare Strategy:
A Synthesis Report**

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Background

The Animal Welfare Unit (AWU) in the Australian Governments' Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) is responsible for national policy development and coordination and program administration on animal welfare issues. The AWU has led the development of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy since (date). (Table 1).

In May 2004, the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) was endorsed by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC). The AAWS provides a strategic national framework to achieve the vision that:

The welfare of all animals in Australia is promoted and protected by the development and adoption of sound animal welfare standards and practices.

To achieve this vision, PIMC requested that an Implementation Plan be developed in consultation with key stakeholders. In September 2005, the AAWS National Strategic Planning Workshop provided a national forum where key stakeholders discussed and endorsed the draft National Implementation Plan for the AAWS. At the Workshop working groups were formed for each of the AAWS Animal Sectors to develop actions plans that would take the National Implementation Plan forward. That Plan was endorsed by PMIC in May, 2006.

During the course of developing the AAWS, the AWU and its key stakeholders recognized the complexity of the stakeholder environment. The AAWS is broad in scale and scope: it covers all uses of sentient animals in Australia, therefore successful implementation requires that all users of these animals are reached and potentially influenced.

In order to gain a better understanding of the AAWS stakeholder environment, AWU required greater information about stakeholders' views, interests and capacities regarding the AAWS goals and implementation, with a particular emphasis on effective communication approaches. The AWU also recognized that it was necessary to build a greater understanding of the general public's attitudes towards animal welfare in Australia. Consequently, the AWU commissioned several substantial research projects to enable them to fill some of these information gaps (see Figure 1), which included the following:

- Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Stakeholder Analysis – Phases 1-3 (BRS 2005)
- Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Stakeholder Analysis – Phase 4 (BRS & ENVision 2006)
- Attitudes Towards Animal Welfare – A Research Report (TNS Social Research 2006)
- A Communications Stocktake of AAWS Stakeholders (Solutions Marketing 2006)

The following report provides a summary of the key objectives, approaches and findings of those research projects. This information is followed by a synthesis of the findings and identification of key issues and implications for the development of a Communication Strategy for the AAWS and for the ongoing implementation of the AAWS.

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Table 1. Key initiatives for the AAWS implementation.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2004					PIMC endorses the AAWS							
2005									AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phases 1-3 (BRS)			
2006									AAWS Implementation Workshop			
										AAWS 2 nd National Workshop		

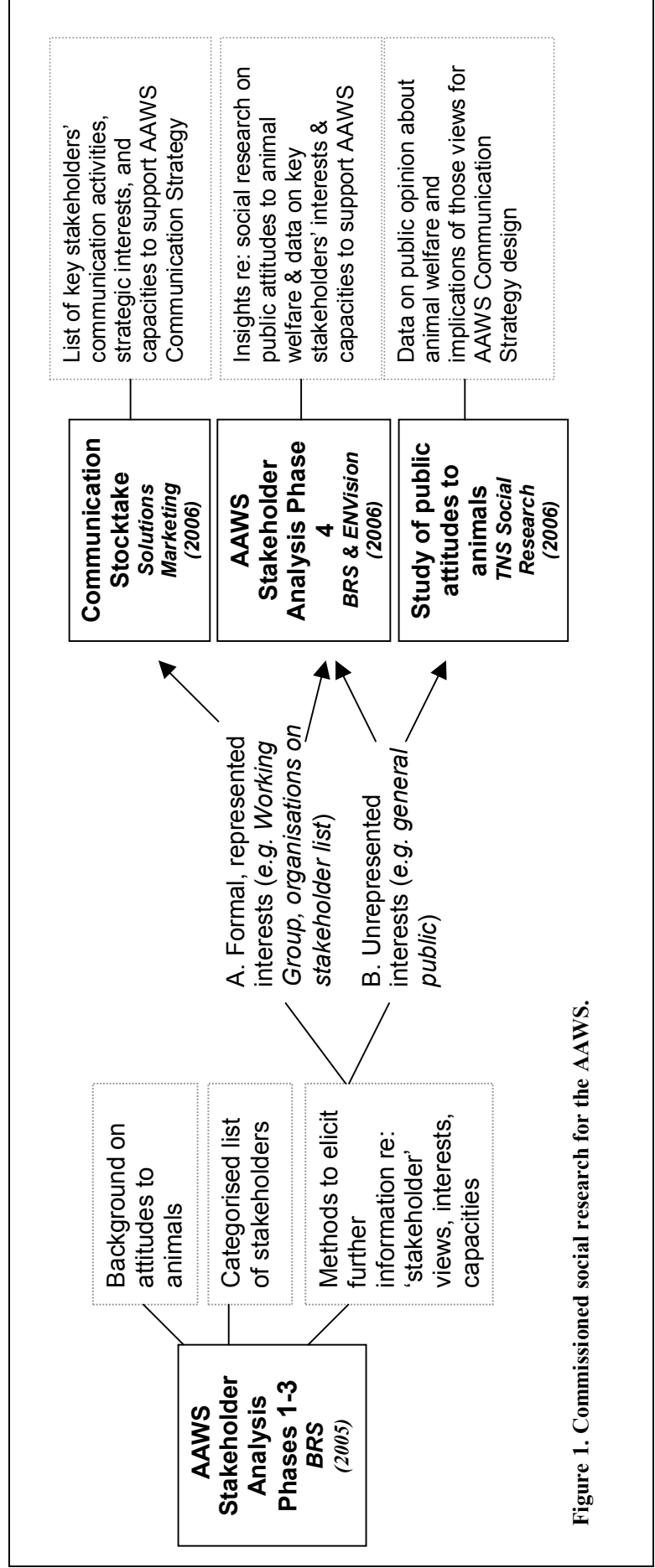


Figure 1. Commissioned social research for the AAWS.

AAWS Stakeholder Analysis– Bureau of Rural Sciences & ENVision

After the AAWS was endorsed by the PIMC in May 2004, the AWU sought the advice of The Social Sciences Programme of the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS). The AWU and the BRS identified a need to better understand the AAWS stakeholder environment as part of their preparations to implement the Strategy. A stakeholder analysis would help the AWU better target its resources by clarifying the relevant stakeholders and identifying their interests and capacities. This step was critical to ensuring efficient and equitable implementation of the Strategy and ultimately the long term success of its policies and interventions.

Research objectives & design

The Stakeholder Analysis project was structured in several phases to enable AWU and the BRS to revise the project as the need arose. Given the diverse audience for the AAWS, the project design was informed by a broad and inclusive definition of ‘stakeholder’:

‘Stakeholder’ = any individual or groups of people, organised or unorganised, who share an interest (financial, moral, legal, personal, community-based, direct or indirect) in a particular issue

A key goal for stakeholder analysis is to gain a better understanding of those interests, and the level of analysis is carried out with varying degrees of breadth and depth.

AAWS Stakeholder Analysis – Phase 1-3

The key objectives of Phase 1-3 were to:

- Identify and understand the range of relevant stakeholders that need to be engaged for the effective implementation of the AAWS;
- Identify different methods to determine stakeholders’ views (including the general public), capacities and information needs relating to the AAWS;
- This in turn would provide information to help the AWU develop communication and engagement strategies.

Phases 1-3 included a brief research review to provide background on the field of human-animal relationships and identify its relevance for understanding complex stakeholder environments such as animal welfare. The project also included a listing and description of key national and state/territory organisations and formulation of a broad typology that could be used to identify other stakeholders and help establish an AAWS stakeholder database.

AAWS Stakeholder Analysis – Phase 4

In addition to listing and categorizing stakeholders, more information was needed on stakeholders’ potential involvement in implementing the AAWS and in particular, managing and prioritising their involvement in the AAWS Communication Strategy. Phase 4 continued the analysis started in Phases 1-3, and included two components. The first component was a stakeholder survey, which purposively sampled fifty national stakeholder organisations from the lists formulated in Phase 1-3. The survey used an email and telephone questionnaire to elicit information about stakeholders’:

- Interests in particular animal sectors and animal welfare issues;
- Awareness of and current involvement in the AAWS; and
- Main communications methods/channels, and their organisations’ preferred methods/channels.

The second component was a research review of international and Australian social surveys of public attitudes to animal welfare. This information would provide a better understanding the general public’s attitudes to animal welfare and positions on key animal welfare issues, and also help inform the design of the market research project undertaken by TNS Social Research.

Key findings – AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phase 1-3

Research review

The research review in Phase 1-3 highlights the importance of understanding diverse perspectives on animal welfare when formulating and implementing national strategies, such as the AAWS. Achieving sound animal welfare practices is a key challenge, because different social sectors, organisations, the stakeholders affiliated with these sectors or organisations, and the wider community, have differing values, attitudes and belief systems about animals and animal welfare. Studies from social sciences and humanities have improved understanding of different types and degrees of (moral) consideration people give to non human nature in general, and animals in particular.

Sometimes these views are organized according to a spectrum of values. At one end is the view that human interests are central and paramount, so people are entitled to use animals for any purpose deemed ‘legitimate’. At the other end of the spectrum humans are seen as one of many species that are part of- not above - nature. So animals are considered to have value in their own right, and therefore their interests should be weighed against human interests when particular uses are being considered. In between these ends of the spectrum are a range of positions. Other researchers have developed typology of attitudes to animals. Kellert (1993) found that out of nine different kinds of attitudes, some of the more common ones in Western society were *humanistic* (strong affection for individual animals), *moralistic* (concern about right and wrong ways to treat animals), *utilitarian* (animals’ practical value to humans most important), and *negativistic* (avoiding animals due to dislike or fear). Generally it is widely accepted that in many western nations, there has been a shift towards more compassionate, protective and empathetic attitudes towards animals.

Nonetheless, ‘animal welfare’ will always be subject to varying interpretations, and what constitutes ‘good’ animal welfare practices may be both controversial and contested. It is important to recognize how these diverse perspectives inform a range of stakeholders’ interests in and responses to animal welfare and support for initiatives such as the AAWS. Recognising and valuing diversity can help stakeholders move beyond their differences to find shared interests.

Identifying AAWS Stakeholders

The second component of the Stakeholder Analysis – Phase 1-3 created categories to help understand the different types of AAWS stakeholder groups (see Figure 2). These categories partly reflect broader societal structures applicable to identifying stakeholders in many different contexts. These broad groups were subdivided into more specific areas of interest. They are also multi-layered and were subdivided into more specific interest areas. During the time available to conduct the project, most emphasis was placed on listing national stakeholder organisations. Over 400 AAWS stakeholder organisations were identified:

Government: 62	Education/research/training: 68
Advisory bodies: 32	Indigenous communities: 12
Industry/business: 102	NGOs/Community interest groups: 95
Veterinary/animal health: 32	

This is a comprehensive list of stakeholders, but does not necessarily include every organisation that might be considered as an AAWS stakeholder (e.g. those with an interest in animal welfare). The stakeholder categories provide a tool to help expand and revise this list.

Broad Stakeholder Groups and Subgroups

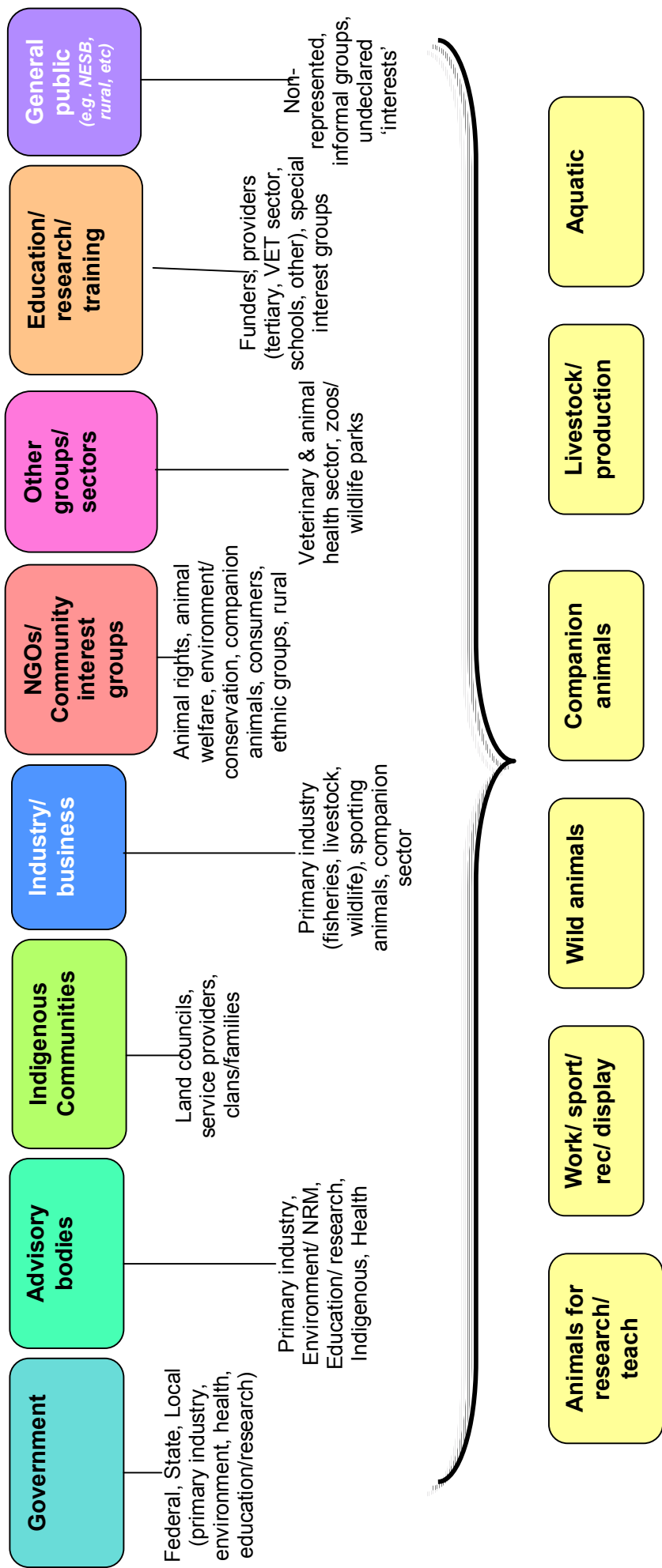


Figure 2: Categories for Australian Animal Welfare Strategy stakeholders

Key findings – AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phase 4

Stakeholder survey

The results of the Phase 4 stakeholder survey found high interest in and support for the AAWS and its initiatives (e.g. the AAWS Communication Strategy, developing consistent guidelines/standards) (Box 1). Most of the respondents were stakeholders who were engaged with the Strategy's implementation, compared to stakeholders who were less familiar with the Strategy. Most respondents valued an informed public dialogue on animal welfare and were interested in future involvement in the implementation of the AAWS.

Box 1. Key findings of Stakeholder Analysis Survey: Phase 4 (BRS & ENVision 2006)

- Forty of the 50 targeted stakeholder organisations responded to the survey. The majority of respondents was members of the AAWS Animal Sector Working Group members and/or were from the Industry/Business sector.
- Approximately half of the respondents felt they had moderate to high degrees of influence in national and state/regional scale animal welfare issues.
- From a list of eleven issues, respondents consistently rated four particular animal welfare issues as most important: developing consistent national standards and guidelines (89%); preventing animal cruelty (89%); facilitating the animal welfare debate in Australia (82%); and understanding the general public's beliefs and attitudes towards animal welfare (79%).
- A majority of the respondents (88%) were aware of the AAWS, but not all of them were very familiar with it (23% moderately familiar; 17% unfamiliar).
- Most respondents (74%) indicated their interest in being involved in the AAWS' future implementation, and saw a role in doing so through assisting in disseminating information and/or continuing to serve as an Animal Sector Working Group member.
- In addition to using a range of conventional communication channels (e.g. newsletters/magazines, websites, email); respondents identified direct (formal and informal) contact with constituents as a key means to disseminating the AAWS.
- Preferred methods of receiving information were formal networks, email, and informal networks. Preferred methods for disseminating information were email, formal and informal networks, and print media.

Research review

The first component of Phase 4 was a review of international and national surveys of public attitudes to animals and animal welfare, with most of this research undertaken in Europe. This review found that:

- **OVERSEAS:** There are considerable differences in rural and urban residents' perceptions of animal welfare;
- Key factors inform people's perceptions of animal welfare, including gender, culture, religion, and their socio-economic status.
- Using animals was often supported where people: perceived no alternatives to it; had low knowledge about animal use procedures; disliked animals; and/or saw the benefits of animal use outweighing its costs.
- **AUSTRALIA:** There has been a high level of interest in wildlife by Australians, and a concomitant concern about protecting wildlife habitats.
- **OVERSEAS:** Public concerns about livestock animals' welfare are often focused on those animals' living conditions and ability to express natural (social) behaviours. Conversely, farmers' animal welfare concerns have tended to focus on livestock animals' physical condition.
- Consumers associate organic products as being more animal welfare-friendly; perceive welfare-friendly products to be healthier and safer; do not always demonstrate a willingness to pay for such products; believe in their rights to make informed food choices, but often engage in 'voluntary ignorance' to abrogate responsibility for animal welfare.
- **AUSTRALIA:** Public concerns about livestock animals in Australia are growing: both farmers and consumers use particular coping strategies ('functional ignorance' about and 'collective non-responsibility' for animal welfare) in the hopes of encouraging greater government responsibility for animal welfare.
- **AUSTRALIA:** Particular values and beliefs influence attitudes to animals, including the view that humans are at the top of the 'animal hierarchy' and that it is acceptable to prioritise the welfare of

some species over others (e.g. it is more acceptable to cull – or harvest - exotic ‘pest’ species than native wildlife).

Recommendations – AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phases 1-3 and Phase 4

Based on the findings of Phases 1-3, the BRS noted the need to appreciate the diversity of views on what animal welfare means to people and to continually identify how those perspectives inform stakeholder interests, positions and relationships in the complex environment of animal welfare (see Box 2). The BRS noted the need to work through mechanisms such as a communication strategy for the AAWS, which would benefit from overarching structures and messages, as well as more targeted approaches for key audiences (e.g. general public and formal groups).

For Phase 4 (see Box 3), the BRS & ENVision identified the need for filling the social research gap on how the general public views animals and animal welfare issues, and that this information could be used to help monitor the success of the AAWS and its communication strategy. The BRS & ENVision also recommended that AWU consider ways to build its understanding of a wider range of stakeholder organisations’ interests and capacities and encourage their engagement with the AAWS.

Box 2. AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phase 1-3 Recommendations

- Encourage awareness, understanding and acknowledgement of different values and interests that determine people’s divergent animal welfare positions and practices. In so doing, stakeholders are freer to explore what people value and find a common ground.
- Continue to add to and update the stakeholder list, as there are likely to be many more organisations that can be considered ‘stakeholders’ than what were included, and organisations regularly experience change.
- Utilise the stakeholder categories suggested to identify ‘missing’ organisations and improve the inclusivity of the stakeholder lists.
- Continue with a more detailed analysis of stakeholder interests, positions, levels of influence and communication needs/networks (e.g. Phase 4).
- Consider a range of factors relevant to the AAWS Communications Strategy: clarifying its key goals and objectives ; consider broad umbrella messages and well as sub-structures for accommodating different animal sector issues and the interests of two major audiences (*formal, represented* – organisations already on the stakeholder list and *unaligned, unrepresented* – general public); prioritise key animal welfare issues to be addressed; and ensure Working Groups have the capacity, opportunity and support to contribute to design of the Communication Strategy.

Box 3. AAWS Stakeholder Analysis Phase 4 Recommendations

- Redress research gaps on Australian public attitudes to animals and animal welfare by undertaking rigorous and nationally representative surveys, which could be used to monitor changeable public opinion and provide valuable baseline data to help measure the success of AAWS Communication Strategy.
- Take advantage of full range of communication methods, particularly those favoured by stakeholders (e.g. email, internet, etc), but also give consideration to using direct contact in formal and information networks for facilitating familiarity and engagement with the AAWS and its content (e.g. regional workshops and fora).
- Continue to investigate stakeholders’ interests in and capacity to support AAWS implementation. The Phase 4 survey used a small, purposive sample to generate valuable information, but more extensive sampling would help AWU to better understand less involved stakeholders (e.g. majority of Phase 4 survey respondents were members from the AAWS Working Groups and/or had a key interest in livestock sector issues).
- Additional surveying could include topics included in first survey, as well as identified gaps (e.g. how stakeholders prioritise particular animal welfare issues, specific ways stakeholders support and promote the AAWS, achieving greater consistency between stakeholder activities and AAWS Communication Strategy activities, consider resources to support stakeholders’ assistance).

Attitudes Towards Animal Welfare – TNS Social Research

Research objectives and design

The key goal of the market research project was to help increase understanding of community views on animal welfare and identify effective means (messages and channels) to engage the attention of the general public, hopefully raising their awareness of the importance of animal welfare. The AWU and TNS identified the need for further information on the general public's:

- Awareness of animal welfare;
- Interest and propensity to engage in the topic;
- Sources of information on animal welfare;
- Key 'levers' or 'hooks' that would attract their attention; and
- Issues and approaches that deserve caution.

The market research project was made up of two main components: a series of qualitative focus groups and interviews and a short, quantitative survey of panelists recruited from the general public. The primary target audiences for the focus groups and interviews are shown below.

General community – 10 groups
School aged children – 9 paired affinity interviews
Farmers & primary producers – 16 interviews
NESB – 4 focus groups and 2 mini-groups
Indigenous – 6 mini groups

The quantitative survey was aimed at the general public (n = 1000). TNS used their Onlinebus Survey; a regular survey which draws respondents from a panel of 350,000 members of the general public who have access to the Internet. The survey included six questions that were designed to elicit information on respondents' opinions about:

- The importance of animal welfare relative to major societal issues (e.g. health, inflation);
- Australia's general performance in relation to animal welfare;
- Particular meanings of animal welfare;
- The adequacy of levels of available information on animal welfare;
- The most important animal welfare messages to communicate; and
- Their preferred sources of information on animal welfare.

Key findings

Generally, the market research found a high interest in animal welfare, and focus group participants and survey respondents tended to associate 'animal welfare' with animal mistreatment and cruelty (Box 4). The media is a popular, but not necessarily preferred source of information for the research participants. Participants tended to have general awareness of 'animal welfare' and did not perceive animal welfare as a major national problem. And while they assumed animal welfare laws were in place, focus group participants were less sure about and/or somewhat skeptical about the 'government's' role.

Focus group participants discussed topics relating to the different animals of the AAWS animal sectors (see Box 5). Most discussions revolved around animals that participants were most familiar with in the companion and livestock sectors. The highest profile issues to be discussed included the treatment of livestock animals (e.g. live sheep trade, battery hens). Focus group participants (consciously and unconsciously) rationalized what was acceptable treatment of animals in a variety of ways: denial of problems, some animals less deserving of concern, and some reasons for mistreatment more valid than others.

Box 4. Summary of focus group and survey findings: awareness and knowledge of animal welfare & the role of government (TNS Social Research)

- **Focus group participants** had relatively high interest in the general topic of animal welfare, with some issues attracting more attention than others.
- **Focus group participants** frequently associated the term ‘animal welfare’ with preventing mistreatment of or cruelty to animals.
- International environmental and wildlife conservation arose frequently in the **focus group** discussions about animal welfare. The most prominent Australian animal welfare issues appeared to be cruelty to pets, livestock (treatment and transport), and farming practices (chicken, pigs, intensive farming). And many **focus group participants** had relatively little general awareness of the issues associated with high profile public campaigns such as RSPCA’s ‘No Kittens for Christmas’ campaign or Japanese whaling.
- Approximately half of the **survey respondents** selected ‘preventing animal cruelty’ and ‘humane treatment of animals’ as their preferred meanings for ‘animal welfare’.
- Many **focus group participants** had fairly general understanding of animal welfare issues and tended to obtain their information from personal experience, the media or animal welfare groups.
- Some **focus group participants** assumed there was Australian legislation to protect animals (e.g. for animals used in research and teaching), and there were some doubts about the extent of animal welfare problems in Australia.
- 42% of **survey respondents** rated Australia’s animal welfare performance as good or very good; and one third rated animal welfare as 10th in importance (out of a total of 10 major issues requiring governments’ attention, such as health, inflation, and family).

Sources of information

- Most **focus group participants** identified the mass media as a key information source about animal welfare, with some feeling skeptical about the credibility of that information given a media tendency to sensationalise controversial issues. Most focus group participants had not actively sought information about animal welfare, unless their interest was sparked, when they would tend to seek that information from animal welfare groups.
- The RSPCA (76%), the internet (71%) and vets (52%) were preferred sources of information about animal welfare for a majority of **survey respondents**.
- 47% of **survey respondents** thought there was *enough* or *more than enough information* available to the public on animal welfare, while 52% thought there was *not enough information*.

Governments and animal welfare

- A common expectation among **focus group participants** was that governments play a role in providing ‘balanced’ information on animal welfare and in providing rules and regulations on the treatment of animals.
- Some **focus group participants** were unsure what the government’s position was regarding animal welfare issues. Others suspected that governments were ‘anti-animal welfare’ given activists’ arrests and/or perceived lack of definitive action from governments in response to animal welfare issues. There was generally low awareness of specific government activities relating to animal welfare (e.g. the AAWS).
- When asked about Australia’s performance in animal welfare, 20% of **survey respondents** rated it as ‘poor’/‘very poor’, 37% as ‘moderate’, and 42% as ‘good’/‘very good’.

Box 5. Focus group participants' perceptions of animals in the AAWS sectors (TNS Social Research)

- **Companion animals:** Many **focus group participants** had a strong affinity with and relatively low levels of concern about welfare issues pertaining to these animals. Most found it easier to relate to the term 'pets' than 'companion animals'.
- **Livestock & production:** Across the different **focus groups**, there was most concern about these animals, particularly sheep and those from the intensive livestock sector (chickens, beef cattle). Participants tended to focus on particular kinds of treatment (battery hens, feeding of hormones, animals in animal feeds, mulesing, live transport), and there was strong interest in accessing information about why certain practices were necessary. Highest concern among participants was for animals subject to slaughter. The 'hottest' issues for focus group participants tended to be the live sheep trade and battery hens.
- **Research & teaching:** Participants generally assumed that these animals were well cared for. They also tended to consider using these animals as an unfortunate necessity, and participants usually did not think about outcomes for animals but focused on need for 'essential' research. Discussions were focused on the differences between 'unavoidable cruelty' (testing cancer medicines on animals) versus 'avoidable cruelty' (cosmetics testing).
- **Animals used for work, recreation, entertainment & display:** There was low understanding of topics discussed about negative practices (e.g. doping, euthanasia instead of retirement), profits taking priority over animal welfare, and general exploitation of animals.
- **Wild animals:** Pest animals were commonly discussed as being a key issue for these farmers, with concern for welfare issues around disposing of them tempered by financial costs they imposed; other participants were concerned about threats to ecosystems from introduced pests and other processes (pollution, development).
- **Aquatic animals:** Most conversations revolved around whaling and other harvesting practices perceived to harm marine mammals (e.g. dolphin safe tuna). Participants tended not to consider fish welfare, but did discuss pollution of waterways.

Box 6 lists data on the responses of target audiences in the focus groups (farmers, school children, Indigenous people, NESB). Farmers/primary producers' support for animal welfare was influenced by their concerns about running efficient and viable businesses: you could not run a business if you do not have healthy animals. Some of these farmers were also wary of audiences they saw as not having a good understanding of the challenges of farming: the media, city dwellers, and governments. And they felt a need to 'educate' these groups, as well as other industries. Similar to adult research participants, school children were exposed to animal welfare issues through a range of popular sources. There appeared to be some differences between rural and city children's' attitudes to animal welfare. Indigenous participants had varied views, strong affiliations with native animals, and were somewhat skeptical of the motivations of groups perceived as having vested interests in animal welfare.

Box 6. Views of target audiences (TNS Social Research)

Views of farmer & primary producer participants (in interviews)

- All the interviewees considered animal welfare important, because they valued the principles personally and recognized the business advantages it afforded them (e.g. healthy animals = good business). Their focus tended to be on production animals, working animals and feral animals and pests.
- For these interviewees animal care (husbandry, transport issues, health) underpinned their understanding of 'animal welfare'.
- Some interviewees believed that older farmers could be less interested in animal welfare than younger farmers.
- Most interviewees were concerned about the treatment of animal welfare issues in the mass media. They also expressed some mistrust of 'outsiders', who were often seen to lack sufficient understanding of and empathy for farmers' situations. 'Outsiders' could be city residents, governments and politicians. More favourable views were reserved for those who knew more about farming.
- Farmer interviewees identified two types of message to be delivered: things to tell the community about farmers (e.g. they care and they adopt high standards) and messages to deliver to other farmers and industries (e.g. reinforce the importance of adopting good animal welfare practices).

Views of school children participants (in paired interviews)

- Most of the children were familiar with the general topic of animal welfare, and obtained their information from a range of sources (e.g. school projects and trips, TV, media, personal experience).
- These children associated the term 'animal welfare' with animal well-being (safe, happy, secure animals), animal cruelty and animal rights, and wildlife conservation (whaling, habitat and endangered species conservation).
- Some differences in views were perceived among children from rural and metropolitan areas (e.g. rural children having greater exposure to farm life, some city children equating vegetarianism with animal welfare).
- Most of the children were aware of high profile animal welfare and conservation organisations like the RSPCA and World Wide Fund for Nature.

Views of Indigenous ('general' + primary producers) participants (in mini groups)

- The interpretation of 'animal welfare' varied among participants. Some associated it with animal care and animal rights, and were more focused on issues for companion animals and large mammals. Indigenous primary producers in the groups considered 'animal welfare' to be commonsense and part of normal practices.
- Generally these participants felt a strong affinity for native animals.
- There was some skepticism among participants about the sincerity of governments' and farmers' motivations relating to animal welfare, given what was perceived to be their vested interests.

Views of NESB participants (in focus groups and mini groups)

- NESB focus group participants seemed less concerned about animal welfare than other participants, because they often perceived that animals were more protected in Australia than in their home countries.
- These participants did not relate easily to the term 'animal welfare', for Greek and Chinese participants there was no equivalent in their languages. The term also held some negative connotations for participants. And those who were longer-term Australian residents had greater understanding of and interest in animal welfare than participants who had recently arrived in Australia.
- NESB participants typically supported animal welfare for the advantages it afforded humans (versus animals' intrinsic value). They also focused mostly on welfare for companion animals, and for looking after livestock (e.g. not wanting to eat hormones in meat).

Recommendations

TNS recommended that two key objectives for the AAWS Communication Strategy could be to increase:

- Community awareness and understanding of the importance of sound animal welfare practices; and
- Community awareness of their roles and responsibilities for animal welfare.

TNS recommended general messages for the Communication Strategy be based on notions of collective responsibility for animal welfare and the social benefits of animals. TNS suggested structuring the Communication Strategy around particular themes and approaches (see Table 2), which would need to target particular groups within the general public who will have different levels of awareness of and interest in animal welfare issues (see Table 3). Prioritising which groups to target in communications were also

recommended (e.g. begin with groups of key concern and/or groups most amenable to animal welfare ideas). TNS also provided a list of effective terms and phrases to be used in communication materials and made several general recommendations for the structure and implementation of the AAWS Communication Strategy, including:

- Use of an umbrella campaign to position the AAWS as part of the government’s role in providing balanced information and delivering the general message of collective responsibility;
- Development of an AAWS website that functions as a ‘reliable gateway’ and is easily located on search engines and provides clear information and links to other related sites;
- Support for and partnerships with stakeholder organisations’ communication activities; and
- Development of school-based resources.

Table 2. Recommended approaches for identified animal welfare themes.

Themes	Recommended approach
Social benefits of animals	Emphasise pets, ‘health & well being’.
Responsibility for animal welfare	Collective responsibility most salient – us, we, our, everyone.
Promotion of government and industry activities	To be avoided in general community communications; if used avoid jargon and be specific about activities.
Food products and relationship to quality of animal welfare practices	Effective only for those making informed choices re: their food.
Importance of animal welfare	Need to avoid jargon.

Table 3. Communication themes and channels for particular target groups

Target groups	Themes/Channels
General public	Challenge existing assumptions (e.g. knowing how to care for pets) to counter complacency and better facilitate behaviour change <u>Themes</u> : collective responsibility, social benefits of animals <u>Channels</u> : organized groups (RSPCA), internet
Farmers/primary producers	Use sub-strategy with particular messages for this group <u>Themes</u> : to the community – farmers care & to farmers/industry – business/productivity advantages <u>Channels</u> : Sources respected by farmers (e.g. farm journals)
School children	Need for balanced information in school curriculum, and tying messages in with environmental issues as a ‘hook’ for school based communication campaign <u>Themes</u> : Personal or collective responsibility, environmental hooks <u>Channels</u> : School-based communications campaign
Indigenous	Separate strategy for this group focusing on Indigenous cultural affinity with and responsibilities for land, water, animals; also acknowledging issues with traditional hunting and fishing; need to link messages to Indigenous values <u>Themes</u> : Personal or collective responsibility, companion or native animals <u>Channels</u> : Informed members of the community, school-based activities
NESB	Separate strategy for this group; care in translation of ‘animal welfare’ terms; use user-friendly and plain English terminology in written materials; test communication materials with NESB audiences <u>Themes</u> : Collective responsibility, humane treatment, healthy animals <u>Channels</u> : Provide information in community languages

Stocktake of Animal Welfare Communications Activities – Solutions Marketing & Research

Research objectives and design

The key goal of the Communication Stocktake was to provide a snapshot of the communication activities undertaken by a selection of AAWS stakeholder organisations. The project undertook a stocktake of jurisdictional, industry and community group activities, in order to assist with the development of the AAWS Communication Strategy.

The Communication Stocktake provided data and information about:

- ongoing and one off communication activities that have been undertaken in the past three years (or will be undertaken) in relation to animal welfare;
- communications campaign objectives, target audiences, communication channels, key messages, market research, evaluation and use of publications/materials/websites; and
- stakeholders' views on strategic communication issues.

The Communication Stocktake surveyed a total of 63 stakeholder organisations. These organisations were selected from a list of 84 stakeholder organisations supplied to Solutions Marketing & Research by the AWU. Fifty-four interviews took place over the phone, and nine interviews were conducted face-to-face or over the telephone with a variety of respondents from stakeholder organisations in the AAWS Animal Sectors (see Table 4).

Table 4. Stakeholder organisations interviewed for the stocktake (Source: Solutions Marketing 2006).

Segment	Telephone Survey	Personal Interviews	Total Stakeholders
Government	13	1	14
Research and Training	11		11
Farmers Federations	2		2
Livestock Industry	10	5	15
Sport, Recreation or Display	5		5
Aquatics	2		2
Companion Animals	3		3
Community Groups	8	3	11
TOTAL	54	9	63

All the stakeholders were surveyed about their communication activities undertaken in the last three years; their main communication methods, channels, and target audiences; and any market research for and evaluation of communication activities; and their perceived success of communication activities. Personal interviews were conducted with nine stakeholders (see Table 2) and interviewees were asked about:

- their degree of support for the AAWS;
- their views on the design, implementation of the AAWS Communication Strategy (including key messages);
- issues associated with animal welfare terminology;
- public awareness and perceptions of animal welfare issues;
- stakeholder audiences and relationships with constituent bodies; and
- the need for coordination of animal welfare communications activities.

Key Findings

Stakeholder survey findings

The Communications Stocktake found (see Table 5) that respondents used a wide range of communication methods and channels, with similarities, overlaps and gaps detected between organisations' approaches: target audiences, message content, and communication channels. Stakeholders also reported on a range of target audiences for their communications activities, including the general public and more specific constituent audiences with the emphasis varying for stakeholders from the different animal sectors (e.g.

research/training respondents – 17% of activities target general public, community group respondents – 57% of activities target general public).

Table 5. Key findings from quantitative survey (Source: Solutions Marketing 2006)

Respondents' support for the AAWS		Respondents' AAWS communication activities	
Support for AAWS and Stocktake	100%	Conducted communication activities	100%
Desire to be included in development and implementation of Comms Strategy	100%	Number of activities identified (from 54 organisations)	125
Respondents' top 6 target audiences:		Respondents' top 6 communication channels and methods	
General Public	36%	Websites	83%
Vets, Research Orgs & Academics	30%	Public lectures, talks, seminars	58%
Industry	30%	Education & Training	50%
Producers	25%	Press	44%
Government (incl. politicians)	18%	Brochures	43%
Animal Welfare Groups	13%	Media Releases	43%
Respondents' communication campaign details		Respondents' communication research and evaluation activities	
Commenced pre 2000 (24% D/K)	36%	Market Research before (nil 57%)	30%
Commenced post 2003	28%	Formal Evaluation	36%
Campaigns Ongoing	88%	Success (Can't Say 17%)	83%
		Future communications planned	54%

Respondents noted the majority of their activities as on-going and likely to increase as the AAWS Communication Strategy was implemented. Approximately a third of respondents undertook market research prior to underpin their communication activities, while a majority (58%) did not and use less formal techniques to target their activities. A majority (66%) of activities had been informally evaluated and rated as 'successful' or 'very successful'. A key objective of most of the stakeholders was increasing awareness and knowledge of animal welfare issues among the general public.

Stakeholder interview findings

The interviews conducted with nine stakeholder organisations also found high levels of support for the AAWS and an interest in being involved in the design and implementation of the AAWS Communication Strategy. These interviewees expressed their interest in approaches and tools which would achieve greater clarity and consistency about what was being communicated and improved cooperation and coordination among stakeholders' communication activities relating to the AAWS (see Box 7).

Box 7. Communications Stocktake interview findings (Solutions Marketing)

- Interviewees perceived a need for more effective use of existing communication channels and greater collaboration among animal welfare stakeholders, given previous cooperative efforts. Interviewees recommended a centrally coordinated, top down communications approach.
- The AAWS Communication Strategy was seen by interviewees as providing a clear direction, top-line messages, authorized content and various types of assistance for stakeholder organisations to conduct their own AAWS communications. The AAWS Communication Strategy could facilitate more cooperative, consistent and coordinated approach to communicating messages about animal welfare issues.
- There was a preference for DAFF and the Working Groups to coordinate communication activities through an 'umbrella strategy', including guidelines for integrating top-line AAWS messages into existing communications, how to 'pick and pack' authorized AAWS content for discretionary use and how to collaborate with others.
- Interviewees expressed support for greater collaboration and rapid implementation of a consistent communication approach, and for Working Groups to develop a system to facilitate information exchange, campaign coordination and resource availability – enabling stakeholders to access, use and communicate AAWS information in more integrated and consistent manner.
- Interviewees supported using websites, but there were some concerns about disparity of messages and achieving consistency in publishing AAWS information online.
- Interviewees discussed provision of a 'stakeholder only' intranet as a means to better share information and coordinate stakeholders' AAWS activities, including usage guidelines, access to AAWS resources and templates for routine reporting that enable multiple stakeholders to interface.
- Interviewees suggested the need for a strategy for publishing AAWS communication on public websites so

target audiences and general public can easily locate, navigate and investigate animal welfare information from variety of entry points (search engines, stakeholder websites, and web links).

- There was a suggestion for separate central repositories for stakeholders to access authorized AAWS resources (on a secure site) and various audiences can access AAWS information (public site) to maintain information integrity, consistency and timeliness. Stakeholders want to easily source authorized content for publishing on their own websites, or linking directly to AAWS public site. DAFF was seen as an appropriate custodian, but would need to be non-prescriptive in providing guidelines and resources.
- There was a perceived need for the AAWS Communication Strategy to emphasise information for and education of general public, particularly school children, NESB, Indigenous audiences.
- Some interviewees' organisations were already implementing AAWS communication activities, while others were interested in obtaining some guidance, specific content and assistance. There was a strong demand among interviewees for funding to assist implementation likely from all sectors.

Recommendations

Solutions Marketing made a series of recommendations based on their interview and survey findings (see Box 8). Essentially these included suggestions for increased coordination of stakeholder communication activities; designing and implementing a range of mechanisms to streamline reporting and assist with coordination of communication activities; and clarifying the AAWS Communication Strategy direction and messages to achieve greater consistency among stakeholders' communication activities.

Box 8. Communication Stocktake Recommendations

- Working Group members continuing to play a role in developing and implementing the AAWS Communication Strategy as well as seek opportunities for closer stakeholder cooperation.
- Some mapping of stakeholder relationships, channels, and target audiences to leverage commonalities and fill gaps via cooperation and sharing of resources.
- Development of an 'umbrella' AAWS Communication Strategy, which provides a clear communication direction and key AAWS messages, as well as authorized content for stakeholders to use in their own campaigns.
- Development of a central system which provides guidelines, formats and templates for use by Working Group members for information exchange, summary reporting of AAWS communications and coordination of their own organisations activities.
- Development of a stakeholder-only intranet repository for common and authorized AAWS resources, plus a strategy for on-line information sharing, including web-page templates for consistency and ease of updating of content, links and other stakeholders' websites.
- Development of a dedicated AAWS website and protocols for publishing AAWS information on public sites, including guidelines for uploading from intranet or secure environments to public websites, linking between different sites, and presenting animal welfare information that visitors can readily locate.
- Elevate public awareness and education as central objectives of the AAWS Communication Strategy and facilitate DAFF and Ministerial support to assist in promoting AAWS issues.
- Develop funding and support strategy to assist stakeholders contribute to implementing AAWS Communication activities.
- Use the "Summary of AAWS Stakeholder Communication Activities" as a foundation to develop systems for mapping, monitoring, coordinating, administering and reporting on AAWS communication activities.

Synthesis and Implications

The broad mandate of the AAWS to reach all users of sentient animals in Australia necessitated a better understanding of the interests and capacities of a range of different stakeholders, including the general public. The four social research projects commissioned by the AWU generated valuable information about the AAWS stakeholder environment. There are important synergies among these projects, which have implications for the implementation of both the AAWS and the AAWS Communication Strategy.

Project synergies

Key findings

There were some overlaps among the stakeholders targeted by the commissioned research projects, as illustrated by Figure 3. In order to better understand the AAWS stakeholder environment, it is helpful to distinguish between stakeholders who are organized into formal groups and those who are not (e.g. the general public). Collectively, the commissioned research obtained the most information about key stakeholder organisations and to a lesser degree the general public.

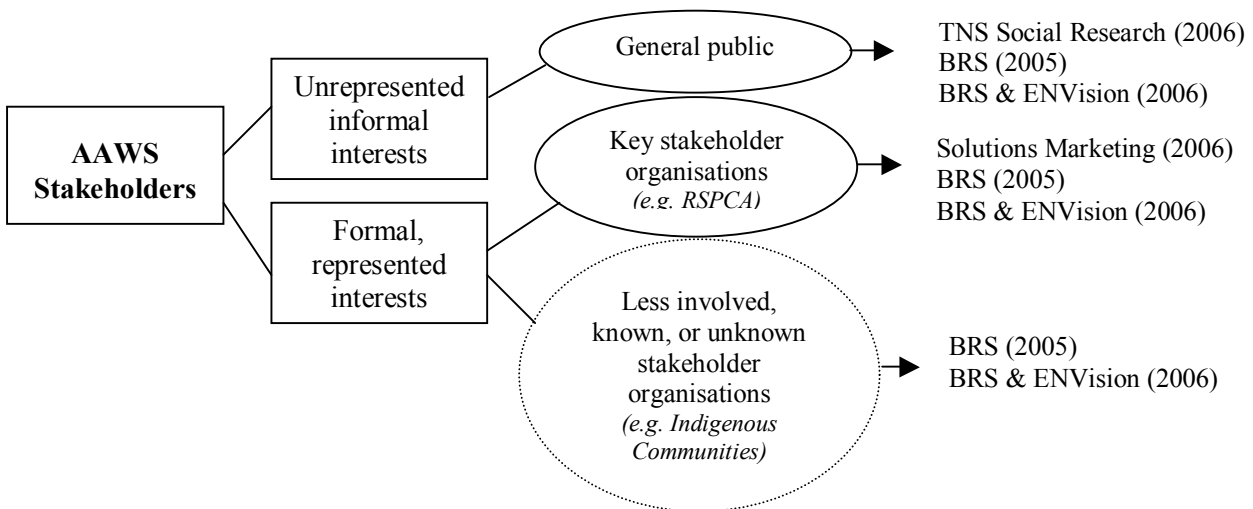


Figure 3. Stakeholders targeted by the AAWS social research.

In addition, the commissioned research projects relied on methods and tools that had important similarities and differences to each other (Table 6). All the projects used qualitative and quantitative approaches. The type of sampling procedures (probabilistic or purposeful sampling, sample sizes) influenced how widely the projects' findings can be generalized to particular types of stakeholders.

Table 6. Research approaches employed in the AAWS social research projects.

Project	Research tools	Sampling procedures
AAWS Stakeholder Analysis: Phase 1-3 (BRS 2005)	Research review Stakeholder analysis	Broad Purposeful sampling: list of 400
AAWS Stakeholder Analysis: Phase 4 (BRS & ENVision 2006)	Research review Email/telephone questionnaire (15 items)	Europe/Australian surveys on public attitudes to animal welfare Purposeful sampling 50 key (& other) stakeholders
Attitudes to Animal Welfare (TNS Social Research 2006)	Focus groups & interviews On-line questionnaire (6 items)	Purposeful sampling: 22 groups, 25 interviews General public Probabilistic: 1,000 General public
Communication Stocktake (Solutions Marketing 2006)	Face-to-face interviews Telephone questionnaire (7 items)	Purposeful sampling: 9 key stakeholders Purposeful sampling: 54 key stakeholders

Stakeholder organisations

Table 7 lists the key findings from the two research projects which targeted stakeholder organisations. Generally, both projects detected support for and interest in the AAWS and its Communication Strategy, and identified stakeholders' ideas on appropriate design and delivery of the Communication Strategy. A consistent theme arising from the interviews and surveys of stakeholder organisations was an interest in approaches that could achieve greater consistency and coordination of activities for disseminating the AAWS.

Table 7. Key findings on stakeholder organisations from the commissioned research

Key findings	AAWS Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support among respondents for AAWS, and AAWS Communication Strategy • Strong respondent interest in consistent animal welfare standards and communication approaches • Strong respondent interest in being involved in development of consistent animal welfare standards and communication approaches • Strong interest among respondents in improving public dialogues re: animal welfare 	BRS & ENVision (2006) Solutions Marketing (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived need among respondents to clarify goals and objectives, structure and delivery mechanisms, responsibilities for the AAWS Communication Strategy 	BRS & ENVision (2006) Solutions Marketing (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent interest in exploring and developing greater consistency of stakeholders' communications approaches/activities 	BRS & ENVision (2006) Solutions Marketing (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents interested in financial support and other forms of assistance (e.g. communications guidelines) for them to play a meaningful role in assisting with implementation of AAWS and its communication strategy 	BRS & ENVision (2006) Solutions Marketing (2006)

The findings from the AAWS Stakeholder Analysis (Phase 4) and the Communication Stocktake differed in terms of stakeholders' preferred means of communicating. Phase 4 data suggested that in addition to various forms of electronic media (Internet, email), respondents highly valued direct contact (through formal and informal networks) for receiving and disseminating AAWS information and encouraging engagement with the AAWS. The Communication Stocktake results suggested that the Internet and email were used most frequently by stakeholders to communicate with their constituents.

General public

Table 8 lists the key shared, complimentary findings about the general public's beliefs and attitudes towards animal welfare from the commissioned research projects. This work highlights the importance of recognizing that the various positions people take on animal welfare issues will be informed by their values, beliefs and experiences. Those factors will also be central to how people relate to animals and to both the degree and way they engage with animal welfare and animal welfare issues. People will also have varied degrees of interest and capacity to influence animal welfare dialogues. The Stakeholder Analysis Project (Phase 4) found more research on public attitudes to animals was available from Europe than in Australia, and noted more coverage of particular animals from the AAWS sectors (e.g. livestock, companion animals) than others.

Table 8. Key findings on public beliefs and attitudes towards animal welfare from the commissioned research.

Key findings	AAWS projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will hold different and shared views about how much and what kind of consideration we give to non-human nature (animals) and those perspectives can be grouped into different scales and typologies. • Cultural differences can influence attitudes, and are important to consider. 	BRS (2005) BRS & ENVision (2006) TNS Social Research (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different values and attitudes underlie public conflicts and controversy over animal welfare. 	BRS (2005) BRS & ENVision (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are likely to be differences in rural and urban residents' attitudes to animal welfare, and between farmers and the general public. 	BRS & ENVision (2006) TNS Social Research (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be both public awareness of high profile animal welfare issues, as well as some skepticism about the motivations of those participating in public dialogues perceived as having 'vested' interests (e.g. media, governments, animal rights groups, and farmers). 	TNS Social Research (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General interest in animal welfare, although some people and groups will be more interested than others. • Nonetheless, target audiences (general public, farmers) sometimes engage in 'voluntary ignorance' about animal welfare, and may assume that other parties or authorities (e.g. government, researchers) will ensure 'the right things' are being done. 	BRS (2005) BRS & ENVision (2006) TNS Social Research (2006)
<p>More research available about attitudes to animals in particular AAWS sectors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock: Growing public concern focused on animals' living conditions & social behaviours, while farmers consider animals' physical condition; and • Companion animals: lower levels of concern among focus groups participants about these animals. 	BRS & ENVision (2006) TNS Social Research (2006)

Recommendations for policy makers & key stakeholders

Each of the commissioned research projects provided recommendations for policy makers and key stakeholders about how to progress the dissemination and communication of the AAWS (Table 9). All the projects have recommended that the AAWS Communication Strategy have a clearly stated purpose, from which more specific consideration of its design and implementation would flow. The project undertaken by TNS Social Research (2006) suggested particular objectives, themes, messages and language be used for the AAWS Communication Strategy. And the Communications Stocktake (Solutions Marketing 2006) identified particular mechanisms to improve stakeholders' reporting responsibilities for the implementation of the AAWS, as well as for improving coordination of their communication activities. The Stakeholder Analysis Project (Phase 1-3, 4) (BRS 2005; BRS & ENVision 2006) also identified mechanisms, such as a central website and stakeholder database, to support implementation of the AAWS and its Communication Strategy.

Given its broad brief to improve the understanding of the AAWS stakeholder environment and its findings that this environment is highly diverse and complex, the AAWS Stakeholder Analysis (Phases 1-3, 4) offered an additional recommendation, which differed from the other projects. The AAWS Stakeholder Analysis advocated for continuing to deepen understanding of the views and situations of a range of parties interested in animal welfare in general and the AAWS in particular (BRS 2005; BRS & ENVision 2006).

Table 9. Key recommendations for policy makers and key stakeholders from the AAWS commissioned research

Purpose	Key recommendations	AAWS project
AAWS implementation & AAWS Communication Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and value the diversity of societal perspectives on animal welfare. • Regularly monitor those perspectives. • Deepen understanding of how those perspectives inform the interests and behaviours of the general public, key stakeholder organisations, and other stakeholder organisations. 	BRS & ENVision (2006)
AAWS Communication Strategy	Ensure the design of the AAWS Communication Strategy for the AAWS includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear goals and objectives. • an overarching structure and messages; as well as • targeted and prioritized approaches for different key audiences. 	BRS & ENVision (2006) Solutions Marketing (2006) TNS Social Research (2006)
	Key objectives for the AAWS Communication Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community awareness and understanding of importance of sound animal welfare practices. • Increase public awareness of their roles & responsibilities for animal welfare. 	TNS Social Research (2006)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General messages for the AAWS Communication Strategy: collective responsibility for animal welfare & social benefits of animals. • Use of particular approaches for different animal welfare themes. • Use of particular terms and phrases. 	TNS Social Research (2006)
AAWS Implementation AAWS Communication Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek increased coordination and consistency of stakeholder organisations' communication activities. • Design and implement mechanisms to streamline reporting by key stakeholder organisations and assist with coordination of key and other stakeholder organisations' communication activities (e.g. central website, stakeholder databases, etc). 	Solutions Marketing (2006) TNS Social Research (2006) BRS & ENVision (2006)

Implications for policy makers and key stakeholders

The AAWS & the AAWS Communication Strategy: roles, responsibilities, goals

There are strong preferences among key stakeholders for a national approach to the AAWS Communication Strategy. Such an approach was recently endorsed by the AAWS Advisory Committee. This approach will see the Australian Government (through the Animal Welfare Unit, PIAPH and other key advisory bodies) play a leadership and coordination role.

It will be important to clearly communicate what such a role entails, in order to meet some of the varied expectations of stakeholder organisations and the public. *The survey findings from the stakeholder research show that some organisations have strong expectations of receiving financial and other forms of support in order to contribute to implementing the AAWS and the AAWS Communication Strategy.* In addition, the research on public attitudes to animal welfare suggest that segments of the public may be unaware or skeptical of governments' actions, or expect that governments are attending to a range of animal welfare matters that might be outside governments' formal responsibilities and/or capacities. Segments of the general public do not distinguish between the animal welfare responsibilities of different levels of government. Hence, it will be valuable to continually clarify these matters with various target audiences.

The suggested objectives of the AAWS Communication Strategy are to raise awareness of animal welfare and the notion of collective responsibility for it (TNS Social Research 2006). To date, these objectives are primarily targeting the general public. In light of the "voluntary ignorance" found, it may be worth considering to what extent the purpose of the AAWS Communication Strategy is to target only the general public as part (albeit a very large segment) of the broader AAWS stakeholder environment (see Figure 3). There may also be value in including strategies for consulting and engaging stakeholder organisations with varying degrees of familiarity and involvement with the AAWS to date.

Clarifying ambiguities & valuing diversity

Within the National Implementation Plan for the AAWS and in the recently commissioned social research, there are a range of ideas about what is needed to communicate the value of animal welfare and the AAWS. These include ensuring the dissemination of ‘*balanced*’ information, and achieving greater ‘*consistency*’ in communication messages and approaches and animal welfare practices. It is well established that a range of values and perspectives underpin different positions on and approaches to animal welfare and animal welfare issues. Consequently, there will be a diversity of opinions about what actually constitutes ‘*balanced*’ information and what it means in practice to have ‘*consistent*’ communication messages and approaches and animal welfare practices. There may be a need to consider further the degree of clarity and agreement around these terms. It may be useful to ask: What constitutes ‘*not balanced*’ information and ‘*inconsistent*’ communication practices? Is there sufficient clarity about the points of disagreement? And who is involved in defining these terms and issues?

An underlying challenge to these matters is how much conformity we strive for in animal welfare and communication goals and practices, particularly in the context of such diverse values. There is a need to consider what constitutes sufficient understanding and acknowledgement of difference. And are there approaches, tools, and techniques to improve our capacity to achieve more common ground in animal welfare dialogues. There are likely to be substantial practical benefits for the AAWS Implementation Plan of finding ways to be more inclusive in engaging the diverse range of animal welfare interests. For example, two key AAWS objectives are to ensure:

- The community is involved in developing standards, partly by targeting groups not included in other processes; and
- New knowledge gained is broadly communicated in part by assessing how well current processes meet this objective.

The greater our understanding is of diverse animal welfare interests, the greater our capacity will be to include them in policy processes and information dissemination networks.

Facilitating a constructive animal welfare debate

The commissioned research suggests some concern among stakeholder organisations about how different participants engage in public dialogues on animal welfare. Stakeholder organisations rated ‘*facilitating the animal welfare debate*’ as an important animal welfare issue. Some skepticism was detected among focus groups participants about the credibility of governments, animal rights advocacy groups, and farmers. Together these findings suggest the need to improve our understanding of what causes public conflict and controversy over issues such as animal welfare (e.g. live export trade), and how can more constructive ways of engaging in these dialogues be fostered.

Making best use of commissioned research & information

As noted, the research commissioned by the AWU has elicited valuable information about the interests and capacity of stakeholder organisations and the values and attitudes of the general public. It is important to capitalize on these data, so that they continue to inform animal welfare policy and programs at all levels of decision making. For example, the Stakeholder Analysis Project (BRS 2005; BRS & ENVision 2006) and the Communication Stocktake (Solutions Marketing 2006) both generated substantial information about who are AAWS stakeholders, some of their animal welfare interests and priorities, and the kinds of communication activities they undertake. This information could be combined into a central database that can be updated regularly, subject to available information and resources.

To date there have been calls for benchmarks to help track the success of the AAWS and its Communication Strategy. It would be most effective to do so by first formulating a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the AAWS and/or the AAWS Communication Strategy. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is about identifying and collecting information to determine whether initiatives such as the AAWS are producing desired results. M&E is most effective when it is used to:

- identify what works and how to continue doing that;
- improve actions where they are deemed to be less effective; and

- change the ineffective practices (Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council 2002).

M&E frameworks provide a set of principles that guide what will be monitored, evaluated and reported on, as well as specifying roles and responsibilities for meeting reporting (formal and informal) requirements. An example of a national scale framework is the *National Natural Resource Management Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*. This Framework is of particular relevance to the AAWS. NRM policy makers and stakeholders have been charged with meeting the challenge of defining, measuring, and monitoring not just short term and intermediary outcomes, but also the long term targets and outcomes. These are fundamental to the success of natural resource management policies and programs: namely, changing people's behaviour (and improving the condition of natural resources). Such changes take much longer than a typical policy cycle, often occurring over one or more generations. Hence there is a need to monitor and assess the success of policies and programs at different time scales.

Social research opportunities

The four research projects commissioned by the AWU elicited valuable information about the AAWS stakeholder environment, including stakeholder capacities to support the AAWS and general public attitudes to animal welfare. Given the particular focus and scope of those projects and the complexity of animal welfare issues and stakeholder environments, there are opportunities to extend both the reach of the studies, as well as to clarify and deepen the analysis of the findings. Some of these opportunities could be taken up by a range of stakeholders from the AAWS (social) research community.

Who to 'talk' to

Stakeholder organisations

The Stakeholder Analysis Project (BRS 2005; BRS & ENVision 2006) and the Communication Stocktake (Solutions Marketing 2006) generated useful information about the interests and activities of key stakeholders, many of whom have been formally involved in the AAWS implementation to date. That involvement has been instrumental to these stakeholders' familiarity and engagement with and support for the AAWS. There are also opportunities to use wider sampling procedures, which reach beyond this audience, to further explore the interests and capacities of lesser known stakeholder organisations. Such efforts are justified by the:

- Sheer size and diversity of the AAWS stakeholder environment;
- Effectiveness of directly and indirectly engaging stakeholders as a means (and an end in itself) of securing their input to and support for the AAWS; and the
- Practical value in having comprehensive information about how and to what degree stakeholders are able/willing to support the AAWS and AAWS Communication Strategy (e.g. stakeholder organisations' preferences, particular operating environments and constraints they face).

In particular, there are opportunities to further clarify the interests, needs and capacities of: Indigenous interests (advisory bodies, research community, communities, govt agencies); Local Government (national, regional associations, etc); Research funders (e.g. R&D Corporations); Education/Research special interest groups; Schools; Community groups (consumers, rural, ethnic, environmental/conservation); Tourism industry (eg. ecotourism); Veterinary practitioners; Industry – non primary industry groups; the less well-known primary industry sectors; and other stakeholders in the food chain (food processors, wholesalers and retailers).

General public

The commissioned research on public attitudes to animal welfare generated valuable insights from European and select Australian studies, exploratory qualitative research, and a short quantitative survey. There are opportunities to deepen our understanding of how well these insights apply to different parts of the Australian general public and AAWS stakeholder organisations. Such opportunities could be realized through surveys with more extensive sampling procedures that enable researchers to increase their capacity to generalize their findings to the respective populations they are intended to represent (e.g. Indigenous Communities, people with Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)).

What to 'talk' about?

With stakeholder organisations

In addition to increasing the breadth of the stakeholder analyses undertaken to date, there are opportunities to increase its depth by analyzing why stakeholder organisations view certain animal welfare issues as important and their positions on those issues, degrees of influence on those issues, and their interests and capacities to support the AAWS.

With the general public

The research undertaken by BRS and TNS Social Research provided useful building blocks for the foundation of greater understanding of Australian public opinion on animal welfare and animal welfare issues. The data from TNS six on-line survey questions could be used to build a more comprehensive survey for benchmarking community awareness and attitudes to animal welfare issues. Such a survey should be part of a broader M&E framework for evaluating the success of both the AAWS and the AAWS Communication Strategy.

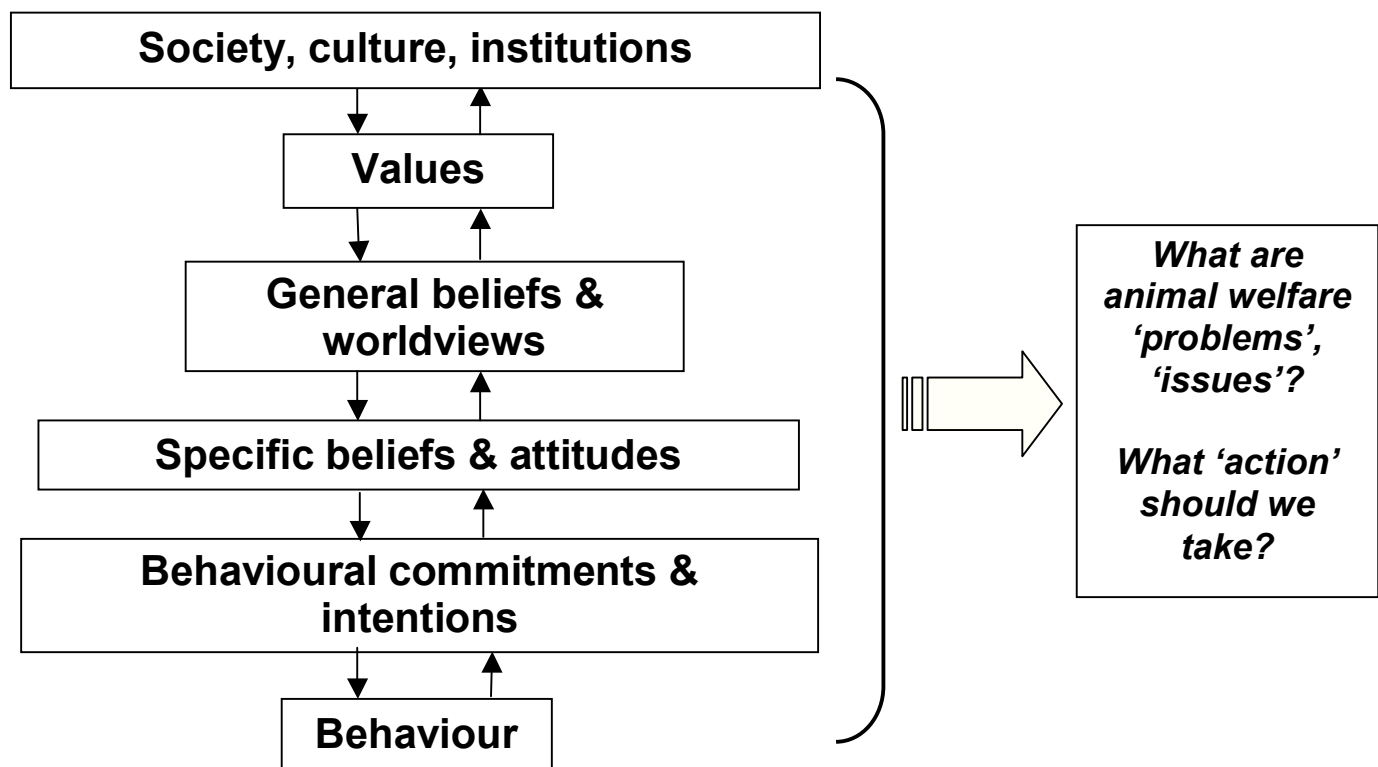
There are a range of topics which could be tested and generate more specific information, namely identifying *who* in the public thinks *what* about animal welfare. They include the following six topics:

1. There is a complex relationship between people's values, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions and how those factors both influence and are influenced by behaviour and the societal choices made about animal welfare (see Appendix). Any further social surveys should clarify what is being investigated and why.
2. People's views and actions on public policy issues like animal welfare are influenced by factors such as socio-demographic characteristics (race, religion, gender, levels of education), behaviour patterns and experiences and society. More specific information is required for how those factors' influence Australians' particular views and actions in relation to animal welfare.
3. Understanding how people define broad concepts underlying animal welfare, such as 'humane treatment', 'sentience', 'intrinsic value', as well as identifying the implications of those views for animal treatment;
4. Related to that point and given people's varied beliefs and positions about how much and what kind of consideration we give to animals when we use or not use them in particular ways, more detailed understanding is required of what people believe 'good' animal welfare means in practice (e.g. what constitutes 'good', 'moderate' or 'poor' animal welfare performance by Australia and/or by which authorities/actors?).
5. Identifying public perceptions of the usefulness and credibility of varied information sources on animal welfare.
6. Public values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in relation to some of the less well-known or understood animals in the AAWS animal sectors (e.g. aquatic animals, animals used in sport/work/recreation).

In addition to these topics, there are opportunities to explore strategies for addressing the strong public conflicts and controversy that is associated with high profile issues, such as the live export trade, mulesing, and battery hens.

Given the lack of research, which regularly tracks Australian public attitudes to animal welfare, there may be opportunities to partner with other organisations (e.g. government agencies) that regularly survey Australian public attitudes. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has undertaken regular surveys on public attitudes to a range of environmental topics. The ABS established a Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics (CEES) which seeks to complement and add value to existing statistical activity through an active partnership with key government agencies, including the States and Territories. The ABS produces a 'thematic' publication presenting information on contemporary environmental issues and areas of public and policy concern.

Appendix 1. People’s perspectives and behaviours are informed by a range of social factors, which influences how animal welfare is dealt with in society.



Adapted from Cary, Webb & Barr (2002)

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