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ANZCCART The First 25 Years

Geoff Dandie, Rory Hope, Robert Baker and Denis Daly

Introduction

Throughout the twenty five years that ACCART/ANZCCART has been in existence, there have been only four people employed as Executive Officer in Australia and only one in New Zealand. As the current CEO Geoff was able to meet with each of the three earlier Australian Executive Officers during the past few months to discuss the history of the organisation and gain a more complete perspective of the people and issues that have made ANZCCART the organisation it is today. During these meetings, the common passion and dedication shown by everyone involved with ANZCCART during these 25 years has been highlighted. Each of us has been inspired by the support offered to ANZCCART and fascinated to see how this passion has consistently driven both the achievements of ANZCCART and helped ensure the continued relevance of our goals and the organisation itself.

Twenty five years ago there was a real need for an organisation that was objective, honest and relevant to the

needs of all parties in the debate that was influencing the use of animals in research and teaching at that time. ACCART fulfilled that role from its inception and now in 2012, ANZCCART continues to play its part as “the honest broker” of information, best practice advice and supporter of the Code and Animal Ethics Committees across Australia and New Zealand and this role is now possibly even more important than it has ever been. One other unifying observation made by each of us independently was that a job at ANZCCART is never dull. There has always been something different happening every day and potentially the biggest challenge we have each faced, has been squeezing enough hours into the day to do what has to be done. This would almost certainly be an even bigger problem for Gill in the New Zealand Office.

The fact that ANZCCART has been able to achieve as much as it has during these first 25 years is a testament to the strength of the networks that have been built and maintained over the years as well as the dedication of all those who have volunteered their time and

expertise. Perhaps the greatest tribute to everyone who has contributed to ACCART and ANZCCART during our history, is the broad perception of ANZCCART as a dynamic organisation with a dozen or so employees. Very few people realise that the combined staffing of the Australian office and the New Zealand office is the equivalent of 1.9 full-time employees (1.7 in Australia and only 0.2 in New Zealand) - and this is as big as ANZCCART has ever been and bigger than ACCART ever was during the early years. This has meant that the generosity and dedication of both our volunteers and staff with the extra time they have given and the incalculable hours of unpaid overtime put in by everyone - particularly by part-timers like Denis, Rory and especially Gill over so many years, has been central to the survival and growth of ANZCCART.

As the level of staffing might suggest, throughout its existence ANZCCART has needed to operate on a tight budget but the fact that we have been able to operate at all has been due to the generosity of our major sponsor organisations. Since its inception ANZCCART has been fortunate to be supported by key organizations like CSIRO, Universities Australia (known as the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee at the time) and the Australian Research Council. We also enjoyed the support of the NHMRC in our earlier years and still occasionally receive financial assistance from them. Of course, when the Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ) accepted the invitation to join and ACCART became ANZCCART, they too became a major sponsor and they still contribute some funding today (in addition to their support of the New Zealand branch of ANZCCART). Without the generous support of these organisations, we could not exist and provide the services we do today, so we do owe our continued existence to their on-going support.

Another key part of the success of ANZCCART throughout its history has been our Council members. All the organisations that make up the ANZCCART Council provide more than just financial support which, while still very valuable to us, is perhaps secondary to the huge range and depth of expertise that they provide through ANZCCART to those who require advice or assistance each day.

The Formation of ACCART

The Australian Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ACCART) was established in May 1987 by a group of forward thinking academics, researchers, administrators and representatives of our key sponsor organisations. ACCART was set up in response to the growing concerns that were

emerging from within both the scientific community and the wider community about the use of animals in research and teaching. When it was formed, ACCART was originally based in Canberra with Denis Daley serving as our first Executive Officer and the offices of ACCART were hosted by the CSIRO. While some sceptics might have suggested that the role of organisations like CSIRO, NHMRC, Universities Australia and subsequently the ARC in the formation of ACCART was a reflection of “vested self interest”, the point was clearly made that it was more an attitude of “enlightened self interest” – consistent with the idea of recognising that there are issues that need to be addressed and then actively doing something to address those issues.

While Denis remained an employee of CSIRO, he was officially seconded to ACCART as our first (part-time) Executive Officer and intermingled his ACCART duties with his other CSIRO animal welfare tasks and also served as Executive officer for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee set up by the Government. In this latter role, Denis was also responsible for the preparation of Ministerial briefs relating to animal welfare matters, drafting responses to Ministerial questions on notice, drafting replies to letters to the Minister from the public, writing submissions to Senate Select Committees, etc., so he was someone with both influence and strong links with government. This helped to ensure that ACCART was in a position to know what was happening in the research and teaching animal welfare arena, influence policy makers and advise researchers at the same time.

During his six years at the helm, Denis worked with a number of people to establish ACCART and an important aspect of this was to help focus the skills and energy of the key people who were working to set the pace with animal welfare in this sector. It came as no surprise to hear him pay tribute to people like Margaret Rose, Alan Donald, Warwick Anderson, Chris Puplick, Frank Hambley, John Mularvey and Loane Skene among others who were very interested and active in the area.

During the early years of ACCART, there was a significant emphasis placed on ensuring that ACCART was achieving its goals and operating effectively. The first of these was conducted in 1990 by the recently retired Deputy Director-General of the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Royce Elliott. This meant a process of triennial review was implemented during the early years of ACCART, which resulted in two independent reviews being completed before the move from Canberra to Adelaide.

The move from Canberra to Adelaide

Five years after its formation, the decision was made to relocate ACCART. While Canberra had been an ideal place to form ACCART, the Board felt that the time was right to move out to a location that was more readily accessible to researchers – essentially achieving a situation where ACCART could operate almost like Departmental colleagues, operating alongside researchers whose daily work involved the use of animals. When the Board put the hosting of ACCART out to tender the offer received from the University of Adelaide was viewed favourably and came with the advantage of being in the same city as Dr Robert Baker, who had been identified as a strong contender to succeed Denis Daley. This combination of factors sealed the move from CSIRO's HQ in Canberra to the University of Adelaide's Waite Campus and resulted in Robert being appointed as ACCART's first full-time Executive Officer in February 1992.

During the ten years that he spent working at ANZCCART, Robert played a key role in the substantial growth of ACCART into ANZCCART and raised the profile of the organisation across the region. This was the period during which researchers throughout the region started to look to ANZCCART and the expanding list of Fact Sheets for guidance and ANZCCART News grew in stature and became a regular feature on University department tea room tables. It was also a period during which ANZCCART started to very rapidly develop a reputation internationally as well. The fact that information was now being produced out of both the Adelaide office of ANZCCART and from ANZCCART in New Zealand obviously helped to expedite this process and created the illusion of ANZCCART being a reasonably large organisation. Robert resigned to take up a position within the South Australian public service in February 2002.

The Transition from ACCART to ANZCCART

When Robert Baker joined ACCART, one of his first tasks was to visit NZ and meet with colleagues there to build on the work that had already been done to align ideals and standards relating to the use of animals in research and teaching between our two countries. David Bayvel (MAF) and David Mellor (Massey University) were very supportive, as was the RSNZ, who provided office space and part-time assistance by Gill Sutherland, who had recently joined the RSNZ and went on to become our first Executive Officer in New Zealand – a role she still fulfils today.

There was very strong support from colleagues in New Zealand from the outset and importantly, that support was expressed uniformly throughout the country.

Robert soon became a regular visitor and while a lot of this early work was central to the eventual formation of ANZCCART, it was fortunate that there was also a significant history on which he could build. In fact New Zealanders had noted establishment of ACCART as far back as 1987 and started to receive ACCART News. This led in 1989 to the RSNZ hosting an important conference on the Use of Animals in Science, with strong ACCART participation (including speakers such as Denis Daly and Margaret Rose) and one key outcome of this conference was a recommendation that an ACCART-type body be established in NZ. This coincided with people like David Mellor, Ross Moore (RSNZ) and David Bayvel starting to regularly attend ACCART meetings and led, in 1991, to MAFNZ writing formally to the RSNZ recommending they join ACCART. This resulted in an invitation being issued to the RSNZ in October 1992 that culminated in the establishment of ANZCCART from 1 January 1993 with Gill Sutherland being appointed as the first Executive Officer in New Zealand, a role in which she continues to serve with great dedication. So we changed our name and subsequently acquired a logo and motto and these have been consistently used ever since. By February 1994, ANZCCART had evolved to the point where it was registered as a not-for-profit, public company (limited by guarantee).

Today, the New Zealand branch of ANZCCART operates with a separate Board and their own key sponsors such as the RSNZ, Universities New Zealand and AgResearch and with support from other key organisations such as the Royal New Zealand SPCA and the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries. There is a very strong linkage between the Australian and New Zealand branches that recognises both the differences and the similarities that exist between the legislative frameworks in each Country.

The University of Adelaide

As mentioned earlier, one of the aims associated with the relocation of ACCART from Canberra, was to facilitate a closer working relationship with academic and research staff involved with the use of animals. Clearly a key advantage of this move was direct exposure to the daily workings and issues that are associated with animal work, thereby keeping what would otherwise be a fairly hypothetical organisation grounded. Initially this meant that ACCART was located within the Department of Animal Science at the University of Adelaide Waite Campus. We remained there until January 2001, when the Department moved from Waite to the University's Roseworthy Campus around 45 km north of Adelaide. At this time, ANZCCART moved into the Department of Environmental Biology on North Terrace.

By 2004, expansions within the Department of

Environmental Biology and the space pressures that followed meant that ANZCCART moved offices across to the Basement of the historic Mitchell Building at the heart of the University's North Terrace Campus. While this move meant that ANZCCART was no longer located within working proximity of a University Department, it did present other opportunities and we were co-located with the University's Animal Welfare Officer and fairly close to the Research Ethics Office – essentially making us part of a very effective working unit.

By mid 2006, the growth experienced by the University of Adelaide meant that they started to move many of their administrative departments into new premises in Grenfell Street and the Research Ethics Unit became part of the migration. This meant that by the start of the 2007 academic year, the need for additional office space on the main campus of the University meant that ANZCCART would also need to move again and so in March 2007 we relocated to the University of Adelaide's Thebarton Campus, where we are still based today.

During the 20 years that the University of Adelaide has hosted ANZCCART, we have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship that has grown and strengthened over time. It has also been a partnership for which we have been extremely grateful as the University has proven itself to be both a strong ally in the work we do to raise animal care standards and a strong supporter of ANZCCART.

Evolution of ANZCCART to the Electronic Age

When Robert Baker resigned in 2002, Dr Rory Hope (a recently retired Associate Professor from the University of Adelaide) was appointed to take his place. While he initially found the idea of replacing Robert a little daunting, he realised that the task he was facing was even more challenging than he had considered. The recent withdrawal of funding from the NHMRC that had resulted from their own restructure and the closure of the block grants scheme (through which ANZCCART had received funds), meant that huge changes were needed in the way ANZCCART operated if it was going to be able to survive. This was also a time when the RSNZ had to substantially reduce its contribution to ANZCCART in order to be able to adequately support the operations of ANZCCART in New Zealand and Ros Judson, the long serving Administrative Assistant who had worked with Robert Baker for many years had indicated her plans to retire. The first change made was to the conditions of his appointment, which had been reduced from full-time to only three days per week. The second challenge was to substantially reduce ANZCCART's operating

costs.

While the regular publication of ANZCCART News was (and remains) a cornerstone of our regular activities, the costs associated with printing and postage to nearly 1,000 recipients every quarter were huge, so the difficult decision was made to change from the traditional paper copy distribution to electronic distribution. The idea of publishing ANZCCART News on the website was both innovative and fraught with dangers. Suddenly, people had to actively seek out a copy of ANZCCART News to read as it no longer just appeared in their mail box or on the tea room table. The effects were also complex. It certainly brought about the required cost saving that helped to ensure our survival, but it did change many people's perception of ANZCCART News and did coincide with a reduction in the number of papers being submitted. During the transition period from paper to electronic distribution of ANZCCART News, Rory continued to print out and post some copies to long standing subscribers who were without access to a computer, but this too had to be phased out over time.

Towards the end of 2004, health issues meant that Rory was again forced into retirement and he notified the Board of his intention to retire during the first half of 2005.

Geoff Dandie was appointed CEO of ANZCCART on 1 June 2005 but the need to manage the transition from existing employment meant that his first two months in the job were both very part-time and unpaid. This process was really facilitated by the ANZCCART Administrative Assistant, Julie Nixon, whose highly developed computer skills proved invaluable and helped to establish these changes mentioned above and also reduce the administrative workload within the office itself. When Julie left ANZCCART in 2006, we were very fortunate to find Chris Wadey to replace her and like Julie, Chris brought a wealth of experience with the University's administrative procedures as well as web site maintenance and these skills continue to play an important role in the administration of ANZCCART Ltd.

Unlike Rory, Geoff has had the advantage of being employed full-time from the beginning of August 2005 and this helped to ensure that the long awaited upgrade of the ANZCCART website was completed that year and some increases in revenue covered the costs of a full-time CEO. This in turn meant that it was possible to take steps to restore the profile of ANZCCART. This helped revitalise the perception of ANZCCART as an active and influential organisation both nationally and internationally. Fortunately, most of the hard work required to underpin these changes

had already been done by earlier administrations as we were already blessed with an exceptional network of supporter and experts who were prepared to assist where possible and facilitate our important national and international linkages with other like-minded bodies across the world, including WSPA and OIE as well as a number of other equivalent national bodies throughout Asia, USA, UK and the EU.

Recognising the need to balance the needs of ANZCCART's clients against the profound limitations imposed by our regular income, the current Board of Directors has had the insight to recognise that the best way we can operate in areas of greater importance is through strategic partnerships with other like-minded organisations. This is a strategy we have continued to follow during recent years and one which will also hopefully continue to grow into the future. This has meant working in partnership on some of the more important projects such as the revision of the Euthanasia Guidelines and a number of Fact Sheets and is of course, still a very valuable and on-going collaboration.

As always, it is the future of ANZCCART which remains our top priority and is the area where we will need to devote most effort. Curiously, many of the key issues that surround us today are similar to those that led to the formation of ACCART 25 years ago. We are still working hard to help support The Code of Practice and doing whatever we can to assist with educational programmes for new investigators, AEC members and the general public. What has been particularly interesting to note during recent years is the increasing awareness of school-age children and their interest in the debate that will always be associated with the scientific use of animals.

The other area of increasing importance currently has been a result of an increase in the activity of single issue lobby groups who have a particular message to push into the media. This has meant there has been a commensurate need for ANZCCART to work at ensuring media outlets running these stories are aware of all the relevant facts so that no one is being unreasonably misrepresented. Essentially, this has meant that a key and consistent aspect of our charter "To foster informed and responsible discussion and debate within the scientific and wider community regarding the scientific use of animals" is just as relevant today and tomorrow as it was twenty five years ago. So looking forward, it seems fairly clear that there will need to be an organisation that continues to be objective, honest and relevant to the needs of all parties in the debate that will continue to influence the use of animals in research and teaching. Hopefully, ANZCCART will be able to fill this role for the next twenty five years and as long as it is necessary.

ANZCCART AEC Member of the Year Award for 2013

ANZCCART is calling for nominations for the 2013 AEC Member of the Year Award and welcomes nominations for outstanding AEC members who are currently serving on one or more AECs in Australia and New Zealand.

Part of the prize awarded each year is an all-expenses paid trip to the annual ANZCCART Conference for the winner.

Please refer to the ANZCCART website for full terms and conditions of award at:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/awards/>

Victoria Updates Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

Amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA Act) made by the *Primary Industries and Food Legislation Amendment (PIFLA) Act 2012* were passed by Parliament during November 2012 and implemented on Saturday 1 December 2012. New versions of the POCTA Act are available from www.legislation.vic.gov.au under 'Law today'.

Amendments relevant to the use of animals in research and teaching in Victoria are as follows:

- A person nominated to be the responsible person under a scientific procedures premises licence must now be a natural person;
- Offences for hindering or refusing admission of an authorised officer in relation to scientific procedures licence provisions in Part 3 of the POCTA Act; and
- A new defence provision for Codes of Practice has been introduced (section (s11) of the POCTA Act). It is intended to prescribe the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes under this provision early in the new year.

- The general cruelty offence for scientific premises in Part 3 of the POCTA Act will change.

Previous s36(1):

A person who knowingly or negligently does or omits to do any act with the result that unnecessary, unreasonable or unjustifiable pain or suffering is caused to any animal kept at a premises in respect of which a licence has been issued under this Part or used for the purpose of carrying out a scientific procedure, is guilty of an offence and is liable to a penalty of not more than, in the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or, in the case of a body corporate, 600 penalty units.

s36(1) from 1/12/12:

A person who does or omits to do any act with the result that unreasonable pain or suffering is caused to any animal kept at a premises in respect of which a licence has been issued under this Part or used for the purpose of carrying out a scientific procedure, is guilty of an offence and is liable to a penalty of not more than, in the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or, in the case of a body corporate, 600 penalty units.

Honorary Life Membership of ANZCCART

Honorary Life Membership of ANZCCART is considered to be our ultimate accolade and is awarded only to those who have made outstanding contributions to ANZCCART and animal welfare over a number of years.

While this was never considered to be an award that was given annually, we do call for and consider nominations each year.

In order to ensure that the process for nominating potential recipients of Honorary Life Membership of ANZCCART remains open and accountable, we would like to remind readers of ANZCCART News that they can send in a nomination for this award at any time. Nominations should be sent to the CEO of

ANZCCART, C/o The University of Adelaide, South Australia, 5005 or via email (ANZCCART@adelaide.edu.au) and they will be considered as a part of the next round. Written nominations should detail the nominee's contributions to both ANZCCART and to animal welfare more generally – particularly where those contributions are aligned with the wider goals of ANZCCART.

All nominations for this award will be first considered by the Board of ANZCCART and then any nominations endorsed by the Board will be put to the next Annual General Meeting of ANZCCART for approval. This process requires that we set an annual closing date for nominations on the 31st of January each year. This allows the Board to consider all nominations and ensure that any they wish to endorse can be circulated for consideration by the full Council of ANZCCART at the next Annual General Meeting

Please refer to the ANZCCART website for full terms and conditions of award at:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/awards/>

Recent Articles of Interest

Model organisms:

There's more to life than rats and flies

The choice of an experimental animal type to model a human condition is a vital component when it comes to interpreting and potentially applying the data obtained from the project. Researchers may at times find themselves trying to balance the benefits of working with a common or well established model system as opposed to one which may potentially be more biologically relevant. In the modern era of rapid genetic mapping and analyses, we should be able to now say that the most important determining factor should be the biological relevance rather than convenience, but is this always the case?

http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v491/n7422/full/491031a.html?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20121101

Hurricane Sandy's lesser-known victims: lab rats

Among the smaller but still important casualties of Hurricane Sandy were thousands of laboratory rodents, genetically altered for use in the study of heart disease, cancer and mental disorders like autism and schizophrenia, that drowned in basement rooms at a New York University research centre in Kips Bay.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/01/health/nyus-lab-rats-and-mice-die-in-flooding.html?_r=1&

Lab animals: Standardise the diet for zebrafish model

A call for consistency in the diet for Laboratory Zebra fish has come with a view to both good science and good welfare. The standardisation of diets for laboratory rodents in the 1970s minimised the contribution of unintended nutritional effects to experimental outcomes and made comparison between experiments more reliable (*Nature* 491, 31–33; 2012). Despite success as a model species, zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) are still fed assorted commercially available diets of largely unknown nutrient composition. It is time to develop a standard formula diet for zebrafish in the laboratory, applying the extensive knowledge of fish nutrition from aquaculture.

http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v491/n7424/full/491333a.html?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20121115

Sheep are helping scientists gain ground against Huntington's disease

When University of Cambridge neurobiologist Jenny Morton began working with sheep five years ago, she anticipated docile, dull creatures. Instead she discovered that sheep are complex and curious. Morton, who studies neurodegenerative diseases such as Huntington's, is helping evaluate sheep as new large animal models for human brain diseases.

http://www.nature.com/scientificamerican/journal/v307/n6/full/scientificamerican1212-17.html?WT.ec_id=SCIENTIFICAMERICAN-201212

iPSC Disease Modeling

Induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) technology has provided previously unanticipated possibilities to model human disease in the culture dish. Reprogramming somatic cells from patients into an embryonic stem cell-like state followed by differentiation into disease-relevant cell types can generate an unlimited source of human tissue carrying the genetic variations that caused or facilitated disease development. Yet, despite the excitement over this “disease-in-a-dish” approach, studying genetic disorders in patient-derived cells faces more challenges than studies using genetically well-defined model systems. Here we describe some of these limitations, and also present some solutions for ensuring that iPSC technology lives up to at least some of its promise.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/338/6111/1155>.

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**It is a publication for researchers and teachers;
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of organisations concerned with research,
teaching and funding; and parliamentarians
and members of the public with interests in
the conduct of animal-based research and
teaching and the welfare of animals used.**

**The opinions expressed in ANZCCART NEWS
are not necessarily those held by ANZCCART.**

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