

POLICY ON USE OF POST-OPERATIVE ANALGESIA
IN EXPERIMENTAL ANIMALS

This policy was endorsed by the AEC at its meeting on 17.12.98, following discussion of its Working Party report on the matter and prior circulation of the proposal to departments for information and comment:

- **Post-operative analgesia is to be provided to all animals which have undergone major surgery or other procedures likely to cause pain;**
- **Ethical approval cannot be expected unless use of analgesia forms part of a proposed protocol or, alternatively, sufficient justification is provided as to why analgesics should not be used;**
- **When making application for ethical approval the researcher will discuss the issue and provide details of the proposed analgesic agent, its duration, and the name of the person who will administer it.**

The following are requirements of the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (6th edition 1997), *extracted from Section 3 – Responsibilities of investigators and teachers:*

When the animal is to recover from the anaesthetic, surgical procedures must conform to accepted standards in human and veterinary practice. Analgesics and tranquillisers must be used when required and their use should parallel that in current medical and veterinary practice. (3.3.31)

The comfort of animals must be promoted throughout the post-operative period. Attention should be given to warmth, hygiene, fluid and food intake and control of infection. The use of analgesics and tranquillisers may be needed to minimise post-operative pain or distress. (3.3.32)

The choice and administration of anaesthetic, analgesic and tranquillising agents must be suitable for the species and appropriate for the purpose of the study. (3.3.28)

Subsequent to introduction of this policy a replacement 7th Edition (2004) of the [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#) is in force. This further emphasises the policy requirement. It includes a new part in Section 3.3.25 on Anaesthesia and Surgery.
