

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015 (the bill) was introduced into the Senate on 11 February 2015. On 12 February 2015, the Selection of Bills Committee referred the bill to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report by 13 May 2015.¹ On 12 May 2015, the Senate granted an extension of time for reporting until 29 May 2015. An Interim Report was tabled on 29 May.

The bill

1.2 The purpose of the bill is to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to:

- insert new offences in relation to failure to report a visual recording of malicious cruelty to domestic animals, and interference with the conduct of lawful animal enterprises; and
- make consequential amendments.²

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 Due to the timeframe and the very specific subject matter of the inquiry, the committee agreed not to advertise the inquiry in the national press. The committee did, however, write directly to a significant number of stakeholder groups, seeking their comments on the provisions of the bill.

1.4 The committee received 1671 written submissions (see Appendix 1). A large number of form letters were also received. A sample copy of each was published on the committee's website.

1.5 The committee held a public hearing on Friday, 15 May 2015, in Canberra. A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearing may be found at Appendix 2.

1.6 The references to the Hansard transcript made in this report are to the proof transcript and it is noted that page numbers may vary between the proof and the official transcript. The Hansard transcript of the hearing is available online at the committee's website.

Structure of the report

1.7 Chapter 2 of the report provides the background to bill, including the key provisions of the bill.

1.8 Chapter 3 describes the key issues raised during this inquiry, including the timeframe proposed by the bill in relation to the reporting of animal cruelty, the

1 Selection of Bills Committee, *Report No. 1 of 2015*, dated 12 February 2015.

2 Explanatory Memorandum, Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015, pp 1–2.

surrendering of visual recordings of animal cruelty, the damage caused by incursions on farms (including threats to biosecurity) and the imposition of new criminal penalties for specific offences.

1.9 The committee notes that additional comments or reports in relation to this inquiry may be tabled in the Senate at a future time. These may include dissenting comments.

Acknowledgement

1.10 The committee acknowledges the contribution of all those individuals and organisations who prepared written submissions and those who appeared as witnesses. Their efforts have assisted the committee considerably in the preparation of this report.