



Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Government of Western Australia

Our ref: 200513394

Ms Roxanne Leguen
Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee
SG.62
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Leguen

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee - Inquiry
into the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005**

I refer to a letter dated 6 October 2005 from the Chair of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee to the Premier of Western Australia seeking submissions for the Committee's inquiry into the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005.

Attached is a submission from Western Australia.

If you have any queries regarding this submission, please contact Holly Simpson, Project Officer in the Office of Federal Affairs, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (telephone: (08) 9222 9636, e-mail: hsimpson@dpc.wa.gov.au).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I look forward to hearing of the results of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Petrice Judge
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AFFAIRS**

30 November 2005

att.

**SENATE RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT LEGISLATION
COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE BILL 2005**

**Comments from Western Australia
November 2005**

GENERAL COMMENTS

Animal welfare is a major issue in Western Australia and has been for several years. The *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (the Act) was introduced in Western Australia to reflect changes in community attitudes. The Act was developed after significant consultation with stakeholders and provides substantial penalties for people who are cruel to animals.

The *National Animal Welfare Bill 2005* (the Bill) is designed to cover many of the issues that are adequately covered by legislation in Western Australia and would therefore create unnecessary duplication and cost. There also appears to have been inadequate consultation with stakeholders in the drafting of the Bill.

A more appropriate way forward for managing animal welfare in Australia may be a cooperative and inclusive approach such as that used in the development of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). The AAWS has been supported by all governments and stakeholders and has been endorsed by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council. A significant feature in gaining stakeholder support for the AAWS has been a science-based approach to the development of animal welfare standards and review of existing codes of practice.

One of the consequences of inadequate consultation is the inconsistency between what the Bill proposes and what has already been agreed to with stakeholders. In particular, section 80 of the Bill, 'Mulesing of Sheep,' provides a blanket ban on mulesing; however, the industry has already agreed to phase out mulesing by 2010, which appears to be a preferable approach to the issue.

It is also noted that the penalties proposed for offences under the Bill are less than those currently in place under the Act and, in particular, the Bill does not provide for harsher penalties for bodies corporate.