

**Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee Department of the
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia**

Submission on National Animal Welfare Bill 2005

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Bill. I am pleased that members of the Senate have brought this Bill forward and hope that it results in some positive outcomes for people and animals alike. While I think the Bill could be strengthened in some areas (eg stiffer penalties and a broader scope), even at this level the effect would be very positive. In supporting the Bill I would like to make a few comments.

1. The current animal welfare legislation in Australia is a confusing set of laws and regulations across different states and territories. A national approach would be very helpful in standardising laws. It would also send a clear message to the Australian public that animal welfare is taken seriously and it would reflect the importance that the public places on animal issues.
2. There is little sharing of information and much needless duplication of research conducted on animals by researchers. There are so few legitimate grounds for experiments on animals, and when animals are subjected to painful and lethal experiments, which have already been carried out elsewhere, this is an inexcusable situation. The Bill's attempt to create a means by which information is shared to avoid unnecessary experimentation on animals is very important. Not only is it minimising pain and suffering, it is also good business sense.
3. The banning of mulesing and the cosmetic cropping of dogs' ears are laws that would be supported by most Australians when presented with the facts of these practices. There are other practices that should also be included and already have large community support. These include the banning of battery hen cages, the live sheep export trade, the confinement of livestock generally and duck hunting.
4. Enforcement needs to be bolstered. Currently there is little funding going to enforce existing legislation and also little emotional support by governments to those doing the enforcing. Any new legislation needs to be given adequate support with officers, equipment and so on.
5. Education needs to be given a higher priority. Given the increasing number of malicious attacks and abuse of animals, particularly by younger people, there need to be education campaigns to educate and remind people of their responsibilities to animals. It has been made abundantly clear that there is a strong correlation between those who harm animals and those who harm people. Placing the treatment of animals at its rightful place will encourage a more caring attitude in the community at large.

Most Australians have kept a pet at some time in their life and have gone to extraordinary lengths to provide proper care, love and treatment for them. At the same time, many more animals have been afforded the meanest of necessities and then completely exploited for monetary or intellectual gain. If the pet owners of Australia could see how the animals are 'looked after' in these industries they would, undoubtedly, change their behaviour to help end such inhumane practices, just as they do not tolerate cruelty to a companion animal now

when it comes to light. It is up to the Australian government to lead by example and to enact laws that support Australians' feelings. Passing this Bill would be a very good first step.

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