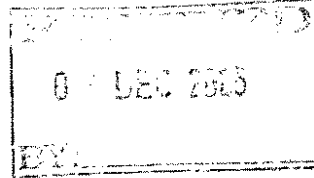


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CHC

Hon John Hill MP
Member for Kaurana



Government
of South Australia

05EC4573

Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan
Chair
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Senator

Thank you for your letter to the Premier, Hon Mike Rann MP, inviting the South Australian Government to make a submission to the inquiry into the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005. As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, the Premier has asked me to respond in his behalf.

The South Australian Government is supportive of harmonisation of animal welfare standards across all Australian jurisdictions. It does not believe, however, that the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005 is justified or necessary to achieve this goal, for the following reasons.

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is a recent initiative that has been embraced by all jurisdictions and there is significant commitment from both the States and the Commonwealth to implement the Strategy in a nationally coordinated manner. The South Australian Government is confident that this will lead to harmonisation of animal welfare legislation over time.

All jurisdictions participate in the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare, which makes recommendations to the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests. The Minister then conveys the recommendations to the State and Territory Ministers who have responsibility for animal welfare. Members of the Committee have already consulted with the stakeholders in their jurisdictions and reached agreement before such recommendations are made.

Similarly, all jurisdictions have membership of the Animal Welfare Working Group that prepares Model Codes of Practice for the welfare of livestock animals. This group reports through various committees to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council. Jurisdictions adopt the Model Codes in a manner consistent with their legislative framework.

Through these three processes, harmonisation is occurring at a rate consistent with the wishes of the jurisdictions. A Federal Act of Parliament that attempts to overrule the State and Territory law may not be in the best interests of animal welfare in the longer term. The mechanisms for amending the law may struggle to take into consideration the varying social, climatic and environmental differences in the different regions of Australia.

In summary, animal welfare is, in the main, the responsibility of the States, and I believe that South Australian animal welfare legislation is adequate and enforceable. The South Australian Government believes that consistency of animal welfare legislation across all jurisdictions is important and that, where appropriate, this will be achieved in time via existing strategies and processes.

Thank you for inviting comment on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN HILL

Date: 1/12/2005