

25.11.2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am hereby making a formal submission regarding the original proposed National Animal Welfare Bill 2005, as prepared and presented by Senator Andrew Bartlett.

Overall, I support the development of a national approach to animal welfare laws in Australia, and I would now like to state my personal comments, after reading through the proposed Bill.

Part 3: particularly sections 17 and 61. I am very pleased to see increased powers given to animal inspectors, as these people are on the frontline fighting against animal mistreatment.

Part 4: section 86. I would like to see Australia adopt the TNR initiative, which has been so successful in the USA, as it has proven itself to be a superior and more humane method of controlling populations of feral cats. It can then be examined for possible implementation to control other feral/pest species. Read more about the success of the TNR solution at: www.neighborhoodcats.org/about/about_essays_old_3.htm

I would like to see mandatory minimum punishments set for animal cruelty offences so that such crimes are not merely passed over, as is the current trend by magistrates.

Part 5: Live export controls are long overdue, and this piece of legislation is vital. Australia's track record in this area is a shameful embarrassment.

Part 8: section 106. This clause makes it illegal for councils to sell impounded animals to laboratories. It is very important that this section becomes law, as many councils make profits from doing exactly this, in a very secretive and undisclosed fashion.

I feel there is a section missing relating to the welfare of animals used in agriculture. It is well known that the current laws do not protect farm animals from abuse and ill treatment . Furthermore, I would like to see all agricultural Codes of Practice enforced by law, rather than being mere guidelines that primary producers may choose to adopt or discard at will.

The Bill itself is a good document and a positive step forward, yet I would strongly urge that Australia comes into line with other countries around the world by agreeing to officially recognise animals as sentient beings, and purposefully refers to them as "beings" rather than "things". As a progressive nation, Australia should be striving toward the highest ethical ideals, thus making an effort to lead the way rather than simply following along behind.

Thank you for your time, and best of luck with this the continued development and success of this very important document. I look forward to further updates.

Sincerely,

Christina Louise Dicker