

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate

28th November 2005

Michael Adams
(Address supplied separately)

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these thoughts and observations for consideration in your deliberations on Senator Andrew Bartlett's Bill. – **The National Animal Welfare Bill, 2005.**

It would be reasonable for an Australian Citizen to expect that all animals in Australia are protected from cruelty by enforceable legislation. It would not be naïve to assume that a compassionate, democratic society would proactively endeavour to provide the 5 Freedoms for Animals.

- 1 Freedom from Hunger and Thirst
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
- 2 Freedom from Discomfort
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3 Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease
by prevention by rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4 Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- 5 Freedom from Fear and Distress
by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The reality is sadly different.

The Bill lists a number of common practices in Australia which are clearly cruel.

There appears to be a concerted effort by various industries which exploit animals, to cover up cruel practices with tactics such as:

The exclusion of certain animals from protection through industry biased representation in the formation of State and Territory Codes of Practice.

Applying pressure on news media to 'can' exposés.

Using 'Bio-Security' to deny public scrutiny of intensive farming practices.

Asserting that the killing or capture of animals for entertainment or sport does not necessarily inflict pain or suffering.

Asserting that labeling of domestic and imported animal products is contrary to Government Policy, and that 'sound science' should be the basis for changes rather than 'community attitudes and expectations'.

Recommendations for scientific studies are a classic way of deferring corrective action.

The urgency for effective National Legislation and Enforcement is evident when one realizes the number of animals which are being cruelly treated now in such industries as live export, battery hen farming and intensive piggeries.

The correlation of animal cruelty and human cruelty is scientifically proven¹ so for our own sake as well as out of compassion for animals the Committee's deliberations are timely.

The complexity of existing Constitutional Law, State and Territory Legislation and the difficulties of enforcement are competently addressed by the submission of 'Voiceless'.

Can the overlap of a National Animal Welfare Act with the *National Animal Welfare Strategy*, the *Neuman Report* and the *Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock* be resolved by scrutiny of the latter under Standards set by the former?

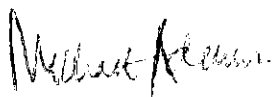
If the Labeling of Animal Products as proposed by the Bill is to be considered separately from Australia's Animal Welfare Legislation as 'Voiceless' suggests, it should also be done expeditiously. Consumers should know what it is they are eating or wearing, where it comes from and how the animals are treated in its production. We can then make informed choices rather than suspecting that we are complicit in acts of cruelty.

It is not true to say that current farming practices are the traditional way. Population growth, increased consumer demand, competition within industries and government policies favouring agribusiness for efficiencies and economic return at the expense of animal welfare have brought about massive changes in the last few decades. The public is becoming aware of these changes, the cruelty involved and the ecological unsustainability of modern western farming practices.

Senator Bartlett's Bill has stimulated much constructive thought. I trust the Committee will be able to make the most of it.

'The greatness of a nation and its moral progress may be judged by how its animals are treated' – Mahatma Gandhi.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Adams

¹ "Child Abuse Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse" edited by Frank Ascione and Phil Arkow and "Concern over abuse, animal cruelty link" by Farah Farouque, *The Age*, 17 Oct 2005.