



16 April 2018

Mr Mark Warner
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Legislation
Parliament House, 4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Members of the Legislation Committee

SUBMISSION TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REGARDING ANIMAL WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Thank you for reporting on the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 and considering my submission.

Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 2002 would dramatically improve the lives of animals due to introduction of desperately needed transparency and accountability of businesses that use animals.

• **New Class of Inspectors**

Currently inspectors are not permitted to do unannounced inspections of Live Export feedlots, Live Export ships, poultry farms, abattoirs, piggeries, pet breeding businesses and vehicles. The amendments would mean that inspections can be carried out without notice, ensuring accountability of those in charge of animals; hence increasing the likelihood that the animals' care complies with correct welfare standards.

The horrific conditions on Live Export ships is another compelling reason that it is crucial for introduction of the new class of inspectors permitted to inspect conditions on the ships. Currently they can only do inspections when receiving a complaint and obtaining a warranty for entry. As you are no doubt aware, the recent grossly inadequate conditions on the ships were kept hidden. If unannounced inspections had taken place, the recent tragedy would have been prevented.

Incredibly there was an article in Farm Weekly on 4 January 2018 which included the ironic quote "Australia already has the highest animal welfare standards in the world – especially with Live Exports." Yet the amount of publicity regarding continuous cruel incidents in the Live Export industry for so many years makes it seem that barbaric treatment of animals aboard ships is routine. The full extent of it has now come to light due to a whistleblower. It should have been exposed by an inspector not a whistleblower.

If the footage had not been captured, it could be assumed that the barbaric conditions would continue for years and years as nobody would be any the wiser, apart from those in the Live Export industry at great pains to conceal the conditions from the public and the authorities. The amendments to the act are crucially needed to prevent this happening again.

Introduction of the new class of inspectors would improve the lives of animals in puppy farms and other breeding facilities. In Western Australia raids of clandestine puppy farms have revealed animals in wire cages stacked five high with dogs defecating down on each other and dogs kept in conditions where they are devoid of sunlight and fresh air and suffering from infections and mite infestations.

With regard to shopping for animal products, members of the community have expectations of welfare standards and want to be confident that the animal products they purchase are humanely produced. The amendments to the act would reassure consumers that they are not being deceived.

• **Adoption of the Land Transport Standard and Guidelines (LTS)**

Another important reason for the amendments is adoption of Land Transport Standard and Guidelines.

WA is behind other states and territories with its subpar codes of practice and incredibly, WA and NT are the ONLY state and territory that have not adopted LTS standard and guidelines.

The irony is that WA must surely transport a larger number of animals and for vaster distances than any other state. It is perplexing that WA operates this way while other states and territories got rid of the former outdated and ineffective guidelines.

Animal businesses object to the amendments because they claim additional regulations will cause too much red tape that would hinder industries that use animals. However, having less red tape is not worth animals being treated as if their quality of life and suffering are of no significance.

To conclude, the spotlight on recent shocking evidence of extreme cruelty has resulted in immense concern by Western Australians for the wellbeing of animals. Therefore it is of utmost importance that the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 goes ahead for the purpose of endorsing accountability and transparency within animal industries and hence more ethical treatment of animals.

Yours sincerely



K. J. Felix

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