



ANIMALS' ANGELS

we are there with the animals

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10 APR 2018
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Mr Mark Warner
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Legislation
Parliament House, 4 Harvest Terrace
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Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017

Dear Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this very important piece of legislation.

Introduction:

Animals' Angels Australia is nationally respected as a key stakeholder in the saleyard and transport industry and its charter in Australia is to monitor saleyards/markets and short and long distance transport. We are the only non-government organisation in Australia that actively and routinely monitors the saleyard/market/transport industry nation-wide. Over the last 15 years, we have comprehensively and professionally observed and reported to the appropriate authorities and industry non-compliance with relevant State legislation, Regulations and the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs in all States but WA).

Our observations in the Eastern States is that due to the absence of regular monitoring and instruction, the level of compliance to the S&Gs can range from poor to nonexistent. It is evident to us that to achieve behavioural change, it is essential to have clear standards that must be met but also a monitoring and compliance system to promote improvements.

To help remedy the current deficiencies in the application of the legislation and S&G's, our approach with industry in the Eastern States is to help management understand their legal animal welfare obligations including the S&Gs. Improvements can be initiated by identifying the

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areas of greatest concern and encouraging management to implement effective policy and procedures to rectify operational failings.

Submission:

We note that the current *Western Australian Animal Welfare Act 2002* (Act) focuses on provisions for cruelty, but the Act fails to prescribe acceptable animal welfare benchmarks for the welfare, safety and health of animals. The S&Gs address those failings by regulating “*the conduct of people in relation to animals, including the manner in which animals are treated, cared for and managed.*”ⁱ They are two differing concepts; cruelty being an end result of the mistreatment of the animal. The S&Gs provide for acceptable welfare and prevent the outcome of cruelty from occurring.

The Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 is essential because it meaningfully facilitates the transition from theory to practical implementation. This would be achieved with Designated Compliance Officers being onsite in commercial premises to not only ensure compliance, but to provide guidance and education thus instructing the non-compliant business to meet their legal obligations with the relevant S&Gs.

We are aware from repeated observation that compromised animals; those in poor condition, emaciated, diseased, injured, non weight bearing and often in pain have been transported from farm to saleyard and thereafter onto slaughter facilities and, from live animal export registered premises then to the port for live export. The animals who are not destroyed at aggregation points continue to suffer whilst waiting again to be transported and then during that final transport, when they are not actually fit for transport at all.

The level of welfare provided in facilities hidden from regulatory scrutiny, such as the treatment of animals in slaughterhouses for pet-food, is a major welfare concern that could be addressed with monitoring by Officers who have the authority under the proposed Bill.

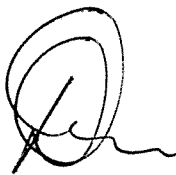
As has been highlighted in recent days with the live animal export industry, there is a need to back up standards with meaningful monitoring and compliance activity. The proposed Bill will provide the authority to establish such monitoring and compliance through Designated Compliance Officers. It is our view that the Designated Compliance Officers are an essential part of the Bill as otherwise there would be no monitoring and compliance activity and the result would be no improvement to the welfare of farmed animals in this State.

Just enabling the S&Gs in this WA will not be enough if real change is the outcome that is sought.

Legislation containing oversight and quality control will ensure that industry can perform with transparency and integrity and provide greater confidence for the rest of the community that our animals are being given the respect they deserve from a caring society.

This is a complex issue and so I would be very pleased to answer questions from the committee should the members wish to discuss any element of Animals' Angels submission. I am happy to provide additional documentation if required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dawn Lowe', with a large, stylized 'D' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dawn Lowe
Animals' Angels Australia

ⁱ Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 - 3. Content and intent

(1) This Act provides for the protection of animals by — (aa) regulating the conduct of people in relation to animals, including the manner in which animals are treated, cared for and managed;