



Legislation Committee

From:
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To: Legislation Committee
Subject: WA Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2017 - submission to committee

WA ANIMAL WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Mr. Mark Warner

Committee Clerk

Standing Committee on Legislation

Parliament House, 4 Harvest Terrace\

WEST PERTH WA 6005

18TH April 2018

WA ANIMAL WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL 2017 – SUBMISSION TO COMMITTEE

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

In light of the current horrific footage of sheep being shipped in overstocked conditions, standing during the entire transport in their own manure and urine and being held in inhumanely hot temperatures while waiting to unload highlights vividly that we are not abiding by the existing animal cruelty act but that it is being deliberately made difficult to be assessed or processed to prosecution without being brought to the fore by a whistle blower.

This is totally unacceptable on all counts. It is in breach of public trust that the government and its representatives are given to making sure that the laws are in line with the public's expectations. It is totally unacceptable that those in charge of inspecting and prosecution have to rely on the occasional footage and information provided by a whistle blower and it is totally unacceptable that that whistle blower should be prosecuted by losing their job and be alienated from any future work for just doing the job that is supposed to be done by the inspectors.

As a farmer of some 50 odd years I am devastated that commercialism of livestock under the regulations and guidance of the Agriculture Department has been allowed to progress unchecked over the past 50 years to incorporate such extreme cruelty. Driving out real farmers with animal husbandry skills and personal one on one care for the welfare of their animals has been replaced by a \$ value instead of animal welfare values. We now have piggery where sows are forced to have and rear their babies for years on end in no bigger than ½ the space of a standard toilet no heating, cooling on concrete slab in my days we always had hay nest lots of room and also sunshine and fresh air. We now have chicken hatcheries that grind up or suffocate male chickens, have density packed chicken in tin shed in 40+

degree temperatures and laying hens still in tiny metal cages that they cannot spread their wings. We having spent a lifetime of farming had never seen such things. The latest addition to all this cruelty is we now have “live” export in some of the most un natural and horrendous conditions. We cannot let commercialism hijack our morals and our sense of humanity for the sake of making a few people rich or for pure entertainment. We must make sure our animals which are sentient beings be treated humanely live with freedom and without pain and die humanely and with dignity.

- The amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 2002 will enable the State to legally enforce national welfare standards for livestock, bringing WA in line with most of the country.
- The changes now proposed will enable the implementation of these Standards. Additional changes to the Act are also required, principally to provide the capacity for inspectors to monitor compliance.
- The current Animal Welfare Act is very limited in its capacity to regulate matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of animals.
- The Act in its current form is still largely based on the old concept of prohibition of cruelty to animals rather than on setting standards for health and welfare of animals.
- The Act is unable to give full regulatory effect to the National Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for livestock, which Western Australia, along with all Australian jurisdictions, has agreed to implement.
- All other States and Territories, except for the Australian Capital Territory, have already regulated national welfare standards for land transport of livestock agreed to in 2012, but the Animal Welfare Act has prevented this occurring in WA.
- Legislative changes that will significantly improve animal welfare in Western Australia.
- The amendments also include provisions for the appointment of a new class of animal welfare inspector with the power to enter any non-residential place or vehicle to check compliance with the Act and regulations, as well as official directions and court orders

Having now had 12 years’ experience dealing with the Cat and Dog acts with running the Armadale Community Animal Rescue group and just recently two snip and chip op shops offering free de sexing and micro chipping to pensioners, disability and concession card holders and president of Cat Alliance of Australia we find is totally unworkable without “enforceable” laws and prosecution .

We have cat laws and dog laws but without right of entry and the will power of Councils to participate. It is not compulsory for councils to enforce or participate in the laws. Yet they collect licensing fees but expect rescues to cover their incompetencies.. We I approached the Local Government Minister to bring in Cat laws at our first meeting with Joe Francis and members of Local Government they asked me what I wanted. I said keep it simple..de sex and microchip of all cats. After numerous rounds of interested parties intervention we have the AVA wanting de sex at 6 months – cats can conceive at 4 months thus a lot of cats fall outside the requirement. The local Government wanted licensing to pay for rangers to police and enforce. The Councils get the money but no extra staff were put on. The Government paid them in advance to alter pound facilities a lot just kept the money or amalgamated with other pounds or used rescue groups to do the work. It is a total shambles

Some support the cat laws and will assist with cat problems others do not and refer all to rescue groups. Most consider it a nuisance and it takes a great third place to fire prevention and parking fines.

There is no uniformity in protocol or procedures with some still shoot dogs even though the animal cruelty act says they are to be euthanized and some euthanize their way through some 25,000 dogs a year just in WA alone. It is totally unacceptable that such a simple task cannot be trusted to be carried out by the very bodies that are in charge of applying the law. Those in charge of carrying out the Dog and Cat act do not have power of entry and those in charge of prosecuting animal cruelty do not have the capacity or funding to carry out their job. So those of us in rescue some, 48 various rescue groups, work together to do this work with the backing of the public via volunteers and funding.

- **We need an independent office of animal welfare. We need people to be on the boards and committees of the Organizations and Government Departments who do not have a vested interest or a purse to fill but more over to carry out the will of the people. Most groups like the RSPCA and the Agriculture Department are groups that are tainted or have a vested interest should not have the powers of prosecution as it has been proven beyond doubt they cannot or will not protect the animals by carrying out prosecutions when needed to the full extent of the law. Bearing in mind the law is also totally inept with not real power to prevent real animal cruelty.**

I plead with you not to squander this opportunity and to have these much need changes to the WA Animal Welfare Amendment bill 2017 approved for the very reason we are all discussing this “animal cruelty” and not allow it to get hijacked by apathy and special interest groups. **Your public awaits your decision.**

Christine Yurovich

Public / Internet

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