



Mr Mark Warner
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Legislation
Parliament House
WEST PERTH WA 6005
Via: lccl@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Warner

ANIMAL WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL 2017

I thank the committee for the opportunity to comment on the Bill.

In summary, I support the proposed amendments because they will improve the lives of animals and affect an overdue accountability for production animal businesses. However, if passed, the Compliance Officer component must be adequately resourced to be effective.

My reasoning is as follows:

- As it is, the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* is unable to give full regulatory effect to the national Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines, which WA has agreed to implement. All other Australian jurisdictions had adopted these standards into their animal welfare legislation by 2012, so the fact WA still hasn't, six years later, is embarrassing. Indeed, there has been a purposeful delay in adoption of the Standards & Guidelines.

The Amendment Bill would modify the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* so Regulations can be drafted to facilitate the Land Transport Standards & Guidelines, as well as the more recent Sheep Standards, Cattle Standards and Saleyard Standards.

It is nonsensical and contrary to accepted science that livestock and production animals be treated so differently to companion animals under the law.

- The *Animal Welfare Act 2002* has a focus on prohibition and punitive action, rather than setting standards (i.e. setting expectations) for animal welfare. This is a far more positive approach. Obviously, I still want robust penalties for violations.
- The *Animal Welfare Act 2002* does not permit routine inspections to ascertain compliance at a private facility, be it a cat, dog or bird breeding premises, a livestock/rabbit/poultry farm, feedlot, slaughterhouse, live animal export premise or live animal export vessel. An Inspector may only gain access if they are in receipt of a complaint and, as a result, believe cruelty may have occurred or is occurring.

The Amendment Bill will allow Compliance Officers to be appointed. These Officers will be able to randomly (without notice) and routinely check vehicles and non-residential premises for compliance with standards and guidelines (once legislated). This provision is especially significant given the recent footage of ewes giving birth on live export vessels (bearing in mind heavily pregnant animals are not meant to be transported or loaded).

It is unacceptable that industry wants its worthless voluntary Codes of Practice to remain. How can privacy and financial considerations be of more importance than animals' suffering?

I would like to receive a copy of the Committee's report when it is published.

Yours faithfully

Liddell Williams

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