

**Submission
No 267**

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Francesca Agosti

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Animal justice must be at the front and centre of any competent, functional government, because that government must reflect community standards. And the Australian community in 2022 demands that greater respect be shown to animals, greater acknowledgement of animals rights, and much higher animal welfare standards that reduce the pain and suffering inflicted on animals in the name of profit, be it in the factory farming industry, or on smaller farms.

The proposed Animal Welfare Bill 2022 falls significantly short of community expectations in a number of areas. I wish to discuss how it falls short of community standards.

Animals in NSW need laws that will:

1. recognise animal sentience and the intrinsic value of animals;
2. cease carving out exemptions for farm animals that allow continuation of cruel practices such as:
 - mulesing of lambs;
 - hot iron branding of cattle;
 - carrying out painful procedures without mandatory pain relief; and
 - intensive confinement (such as battery cages and sow stalls).
3. establish well-funded and independent compliance and enforcement regimes, free from conflicts of interest through an independent NSW Animal Welfare Authority that has the unfettered power to inspect premises at will, enforce serious penalties every time breaches occur, and the power to shut down facilities that continually breach animal welfare standards irrespective of the financial loss incurred by those who have breached the regulations.

Positive aspects of the bill include:

1. minimum care requirements for animals, including opportunities to express normal behaviours;
2. the expansion of the definition of animals to include cephalopods and decapods (e.g. octopus, squid, lobsters and crabs);
3. the inclusion of psychological suffering in the definition of harm to animals.

Current practices in regard to the inhumane treatment of animals are totally unacceptable. They are anathema to any well-informed, intelligent, thinking, feeling person. We would not subject our pet dogs and cats to these types of barbaric practices, because that would be cruel, barbaric and inhumane. All animals, irrespective of the species, are sentient creatures and must be regarded as such. Animals experience pain, fear, love, joy. We must not only acknowledge but respect this sentience and behave in a compassionate, decent, just manner if we are indeed to be regarded as a 'civilised' society.

This legislation has the potential to impact the welfare of millions of animals across the NSW and represents a rare opportunity to create positive change, helping to bring an end to unnecessary suffering and improve their lives. I urge every single Member of Parliament to seize

this opportunity that comes along very rarely to enact changes that are desperately overdue and much needed.

We must act now and act decisively to end harmful, cruel, barbaric practices that cause an enormous amount of pain and suffering to animals, whose dead flesh we then ingest. I urge NSW Parliament to be bold and strong and to strengthen and bolder this legislation in order to keep animals safe from all forms of harm and abuse. Any government or opposition that is willing to take strong, unapologetic and decisive action to stop abhorrent animal cruelty and abuse has my vote.

Yours faithfully
Francesca Agosti