

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES
INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Supplementary questions: Animals Australia

Answers are to be returned to the Committee secretariat by Thursday 12 March 2020.

1. **Would Animals Australia support additional parliamentary scrutiny of animal welfare compliance agencies in NSW**? For example, annual reports tabled in parliament and scrutiny at a public parliamentary hearing in the same manners as the ICAC parliamentary oversight committee? If so, why?

Animals Australia believes that any additional parliamentary scrutiny of animal welfare in NSW at this time must focus on where the biggest need is. As explained in our submissions to the Committee on 12 February 2020, and our written submissions: the greatest number of animals ('production animals') in NSW are exempted from protection under animal cruelty laws. Instead, they come under the ambit of minimum standards (as set by industry) and largely unenforceable codes and standards. What **is** needed is urgent attention to:

- Bringing all animals under the ambit of POCTAA;
- A review and modernisation of legally compliant husbandry practices to align with science and community expectations. The current standards were set in the 1980's by industry, and have not evolved much since then. Invasive procedures without pain relief and intensive housing systems (and many 'codified' husbandry practices), for example, are at odds with the current science and community expectations; and
- The establishment of an Independent Office of Animal Welfare to remove the portfolio from the State department of agriculture and address the conflict of interest (regulatory capture) that currently exists in this space.

Animals Australia believes that addressing the above is where effort is best invested at this time and is long-overdue.

When these systemic issues are addressed the focus should then move to additional scrutiny of compliance agencies. As outlined in our submissions to this Inquiry, an Independent Office of Animal Welfare – if established - could contribute to the effectiveness of all compliance agencies and provide oversight and regular reporting of activities and outcomes.

Answer ends.