11 March 2020

The Hon Mark Pearson MLC
Chair
Select Committee on Animal Cruelty Laws in New South Wales
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Mr Pearson

Cat Protection thanks the Committee for its concern for animal welfare.

I wish to make a clarification relating to my evidence at the hearing on 13 February 2020. In the discussions about the composition of AWAC, I noted that a potential parallel framework could be the "medical health research council" (uncorrected transcript, Thursday 13 February, page 32).

To clarify, by this I meant the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

For the information of the Committee, the NHMRC is comprised of:

- The Chair
- The chief medical officer for the Commonwealth
- The chief medical officer for each state and territory
- A person with expertise in the health needs of Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders
- A person with expertise in consumer issues
- A person with expertise in business
- At least 6, but no more than 11, persons with expertise in one or more of the following:
    - Health care training
    - Professional medical standards
    - The medical profession and post graduate medical training
    - The nursing profession
    - Public health research and medical research issues
    - Public health
    - Ethics relating to research involving humans
    - Other appropriate expertise.

As I indicated at the hearing, Cat Protection believes that a lay perspective is valuable but, just as the NHMRC has a majority of health and medical experts, so should an animal welfare advisory council comprise a majority of members with relevant scientific expertise in animal welfare. It is also our view that a person with expertise in animal/veterinary ethics would make an important contribution to any animal welfare advisory council.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify my comments. Cat Protection wishes the Committee well in its important deliberations.

Yours sincerely

Kristina Vesk OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Cat Protection Society of NSW