

The Hon. Catherine Cusack
Chair
Standing Committee on State Development
Email: State.Development@parliament.nsw.gov.au



11 April 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee for the inquiry into animal welfare law reform in NSW. I have reviewed the questions on notice, and the supplemental questions, and have provided responses below.

1. How does the United States, Canada, and China rank on World Animal Protection's Animal Protection Index?

The United States and Canada both have a 'D' rating, which aligns with Australia's rating under the latest report. In the 2020 report, China received a ranking of 'E', which places it one tier below Australia on animal welfare matters. However, it is worth noting that other key trading partners such as the United Kingdom, with whom Australia has been negotiating a free trade agreement, achieved a 'B' ranking in 2020. Similarly, European Union (EU) nations, many of whom will be covered by the EU-Australia free trade agreement currently under negotiation, also achieved much higher scores on the index. Countries including Denmark and the Netherlands scored 'B' rankings, while countries like Germany and France were still one tier higher than Australia on 'C'. These countries are ahead of Australia in areas such as the legislative recognition of sentience. The full index can be found here:

<https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/>

2. Proposal to lift the ban on Game Parks

World Animal Protection would not support a proposal to remove the ban on game parks in NSW. Lifting this ban would have a negative impact on wild animals across the state. There is no humane way to hunt animals in the wild. Hunting is unethical and often causes welfare issues such as extreme stress and



prolonged suffering.¹ The methods employed to catch or kill wildlife usually cause fear, distress and often prolonged suffering to the animals involved. There are also a range of secondary welfare issues caused by hunting. Animals taken in hunts may leave behind offspring that are unable to survive alone. Further, hunting animals that have close-knit family units can permanently disrupt whole groups.

3. Consumption of Shark Fin and Shark Fin Products

World Animal Protection would support the introduction of a ban on the consumption of shark fin and shark fin products. More than 100 million sharks are killed every year for the shark fin trade. While some sharks are legally caught, illegal shark finning also happens where fisherman cut fins off live sharks and dump their bodies into the open ocean to avoid being caught. Shark finning, whether legal or illegal, raises significant welfare concerns. Sharks are thrown back into the ocean after their fins are removed, dying from suffocation, predation, or blood loss. This practice is also fundamentally unsustainable. Sharks are apex predators and play a vital role in maintaining marine ecosystems. By banning the consumption of shark fin products, NSW could help reduce the demand of this cruel and unsustainable practice.

4. Ban on cat and dog meat consumption, and other practices

World Animal Protection would support a ban on the consumption of cat and dog meat. We note that there is currently only an express prohibition on consumption in South Australia, but we would welcome a decision from NSW to introduce a similar legislative prohibition. Our reason for supporting this ban is because the production and consumption of dog meat involves inherent cruelty in all of its phases. In some cases, dogs may be killed inhumanely via methods such as clubbing. Furthermore, dogs may be killed in front of other dogs, thereby causing distress. While World Animal Protection acknowledges and celebrates cultural diversity, we firmly believe that culture should never be an excuse for cruelty and World Animal Protection calls for these inhumane practices to stop.

With regards to the question on whether there are other practices we would like to see banned, please refer to our initial submission which called for a prohibition on mulesing, ear-tagging, branding, teeth and tail cutting.

¹ Bateson, P. and Bradshaw, E. L. (1997) Physiological effects of hunting red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Biological Sciences*. vol. 264 no. 1389, 1707-1714.



Should the committee require further information or clarification, I am happy to send through additional resources and responses as required. Thank you again for the opportunity to be involved in this inquiry. Please do keep me updated on opportunities for further consultation.

Warm regards,

Rochelle Flood
Campaign Manager
World Animal Protection
Australia and New Zealand