

**Submission
No 45**

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Australian Pork Limited

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The Hon Mark Pearson MLC
Chair
Legislative Council Select Committee on Animal Cruelty Laws in New South Wales
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
By email: animalcrueltylaws@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Pearson

Inquiry into Animal Cruelty Laws in New South Wales

Australian Pork Limited (“APL”) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Animal Cruelty Laws in New South Wales.

APL is the peak national representative body for Australian pig producers. It is a producer-owned company combining marketing, export development, research and innovation and strategic policy development to assist in securing a profitable and sustainable future for the Australian pork industry. The Australian pork industry employs more than 36,000 people in Australia and contributes \$5.2 billion in gross domestic product to the Australian economy.

APL has a firm policy against animal cruelty and supports comprehensive laws designed to protect animals from abuse. Any individual or organisation that mistreats pigs in their production system ought to be subject to the full force of these laws and APL has a history in referring members to authorities if it becomes aware of mistreatment.

Current investigations of animal cruelty in NSW are undertaken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). APL believes that the RSPCA provides an effective service to uphold animal cruelty legislation through their inspections. They are independent in their assessments and understand that animals used for production can be raised humanely. Whilst not set out in the terms of reference for this Inquiry, there is a movement in NSW that is seeking to bring production animals within the same framework as companion animals, essentially banning the production of animals for food and fibre. This is a standard that APL cannot agree to and urges the Committee to ensure that the Inquiry is held within the terms of reference to genuinely assess the capacity of animal welfare officers to identify and prosecute cruelty in NSW.

The Inquiry into Landholder Protection from Unauthorised Filming and Surveillance, which was held in August 2018, recommended a review of the capacity of the RSPCA to undertake animal cruelty investigations. APL supports the adequate resourcing of the RSPCA, allowing it to appropriately regulate animal cruelty laws. We ask that the recommendation from that inquiry be progressed as soon as possible so that accurate information can be gleaned on what deficiencies currently exist, if any.

APL and the RSPCA are both committed to improvements in animal welfare and work together to review standards of production, including on respective certification schemes. In accordance with a policy of science-driven animal welfare, APL does not insist on changes to standards unless there is research which supports doing so. APL also assisted the RSPCA with the development of their Approved Standards Scheme. This certification scheme is useful for farmers seeking to market themselves under an alternative quality assurance program.

There is no conflict of interest in a consultative relationship between the RSPCA and industry bodies. In fact, there is a confluence of interest in that both organisations wish to see an improvement of animal welfare outcomes. Animal welfare improvements have already been achieved as a result of collaboration between industry bodies that consider animal welfare as an important element within the broader production context and groups whose sole motivation is to advance animal welfare outcomes. Both parties can assist one another in sustainably managing and improving animal welfare outcomes.

APL is willing to provide further evidence if it may assist with improving the welfare for pigs across Australia. If you require further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours faithfully

Andrew Robertson
Acting General Manager, Policy