

Submission  
No 23

**INQUIRY INTO PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS  
AMENDMENT (RESTRICTIONS ON STOCK ANIMAL  
PROCEDURES) BILL 2019**

**Organisation:** Animal Welfare League NSW

**Date Received:** 3 August 2020

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# **Submission for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restriction on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019**

## **Animal Welfare League NSW**

### **Overview of Animal Welfare League NSW**

Animal Welfare League NSW (AWL NSW) is a registered charity that has been operating for over 61 years. We provide expert care to surrendered, neglected, injured, and abandoned animals across New South Wales. Animal Welfare League NSW is made up of the following departments,

- Inspectorate
- Veterinary
- Shelters
- Administration
- Branch Network

The objects for which the Company is established are for the pursuit of charitable purposes, to apply its income to promote those purposes and including (but without limitation) the following:

- a) To promote the welfare of animals in all forms
- b) To make provision for lost, neglected, abandoned and unwanted animals
- c) To prevent cruelty and neglect of animals
- d) To relieve pain and distress, and otherwise aid injured and sick animals
- e) To promote sterilisation of all companion animals
- f) To employ Inspectors to investigate complaints relating to animal's wellbeing and enforce the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
- g) To take or cause to be taken any legal action in relation to these objects
- h) To make public by any means the objects of the company
- i) To provide teaching facilities in the care and training of animals
- j) To raise and administer funding for the company to enable the company to achieve its objects
- k) To encourage the making of gifts and testamentary dispositions to the company to enable the company to achieve its objects
- l) To make donations for charitable purposes
- m) To do all such other acts as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects

## Animal Welfare League NSW's Position to the amendment

We are in support of the proposed amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979. These amendments will improve animal welfare in Australia by preventing unnecessary pain and suffering of sheep that endure Mulesing and other stock animals that endure other certain procedures that are performed without the administration of pain relief.

It is our position that any animal that must undergo any procedure that would cause pain and distress to that animal must receive adequate pain relief.

However, greater definition is required for “analgesic or other appropriate form of pain relief”. This will set clear guidelines for how to provide pain relief to stock animals and allow appropriate enforcement of this amendment whilst minimising the chance of misunderstanding or misinterpretation by those governed by the act. There should be a set standard of pain relief required and the associated information supplied, such as

- Which medications are required to provide adequate pain relief for each procedure
- Who can administer the medication
- Is a veterinarian required to assess the animal to dispense the required medication?
- Do you need special training or licensing to purchase and administer this medication?
- How to obtain the specific medication
- Meat/milk with-holding periods when medication in use

It is understood Mulesing has been used for the prevention of “flystrike” in Australia however there are alternative treatments to alleviate this condition in sheep. It is common for sheep who have had the mulesing procedure to subsequently develop flystrike in the mulesing site due to the blood and exposed flesh of the animal.

There are common treatments that do not cause any unnecessary pain and distress to the sheep, including but not limited to.

- The use of insecticides and other topical treatments, which are effective at preventing flies (and other insects) from interacting with the sheep. These have successfully been used by farmers in Australia to prevent the issue of flystrike. There are various licensed products for use in NSW with relevant information available through the Department of Primary Industries and Environment. Many of the products available do not leave any residue in the wool of the sheep allowing it to be processed at the same quality.
- Regular and close-up monitoring of the sheep by the farmer to help discover potential issues early and administer appropriate treatment quickly. This is also beneficial for the over-all herd health and can help a farmer better manage the animals in care.
- Regular shearing of sheep to ensure sheep do not have excessive wool burden. This can assist sheep in extreme heat conditions, aiding to minimise sweat and subsequent flystrike.

- Breeding sheep to decrease the amount of skin folds the animal possesses therefore eliminating areas which can become flyblown. Please note though that a timeline to genetic improvement would be difficult to establish due to environmental factors.
- Keeping sheep in more temperate zones within Australia. Sheep originate from countries with colder climates and are biologically more suited to these environments. By keeping sheep in areas with lower average temperatures you will eliminate some issues associated with the exposure to severe heat climates.

These treatments have successfully been used in Australia, and overseas with great success and have proven to be appropriate alternatives to Mulesing. Mulesing was invented in the 1930's due to the science available at the time. We have far surpassed this level of knowledge and understanding of science and animals, therefore it is time to update our current practices to prohibit the painful and unnecessary procedure of Mulesing and to ensure the administration of pain relief to stock animals that must be exposed to other procedures that would cause them pain, distress and suffering, as would be expected with any other companion animal that was receiving the same procedure.