

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Shooters Union New South Wales
Date Received: 4 February 2022



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Submission: NSW Animal Welfare (Draft) Bill 2022

January 2022

SHOOTERS Union NSW Pty Ltd thanks the NSW Department of Primary Industries for the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022

Shooters Union NSW Pty Ltd is affiliated with the NSW Peak Shooting Body, the Game Management Council of New South Wales (Gamecon) and represents some 17,000 financial members. There are approximately 24 NSW Peak Shooting Bodies recognised by the NSW Firearms Registry & NSW DPI.

It remains a grave concern that no hunting club or Peak Body within the hunting and shooting industry was included in the initial Key Stakeholders groups targeted for consultation despite statistics from the NSW Department of Primary Industries showing that in the 2019-20 financial year, recreational hunting was **worth more than \$1.4 billion** to the NSW Gross State Product. By comparison, wool production in NSW in the same period was \$1.09 billion.

Any discussion into animal welfare *must* include all stakeholders so a fair and balanced result is achieved.

It is our view that the NSW Animal Welfare Draft Bill includes veiled implications for all legal hunting pursuits, particularly for those that legally pursue wild pigs with appropriately trained dogs. If passed in its current form, the resulting legislation will be used as a launching pad for further attacks on the shooting sports.

Shooters Union NSW remains concerned that no inclusion of the NSW Governments own Code of Practice, and/or Code of Ethics, as determined by the NSW Department of Primary Industries Game Licensing Unit, as they pertain to legal recreational hunting or fishing, have been included in this draft Bill.

The omission of these codes of conduct/ethics from this Bill is a gross oversight.

Division 2, Exemptions and related matters (1b) (1C)

Shooters Union NSW notes that specific exemptions have been granted for the legal activities of fishing, hunting, shooting, trapping, snaring (illegal in NSW already) catching or capturing an animal and destroying an animal for human consumption.

However, we don't believe these exemptions go far enough in protecting the legal practices of hunting and fishing. We ask that these exemptions be expanded to specifically state ***rifle hunting, bow hunting, hunting with trained dogs and catch & release fishing.***

With the above in mind, Shooters Union NSW also requests that specific definitions be made to include:

1. That the legal practice of hunting wild pigs with appropriately trained dogs is defined as **NOT** animal fighting,
2. That dogs sold for the purpose of legal pig hunting are **NOT** defined as being sold for animal fighting,
3. The preparation for legally hunting wild pigs with dogs is **NOT** defined as preparing for animal fighting,
4. That Videos/DVDs and Social Media video clips or images, often used as training material for new hunters, that show the legal hunting of wild pigs with appropriately trained dogs is **NOT** defined as Animal Cruelty Material,
5. We also ask that all traditional legal methods of hunting with recognised sporting gun dog breeds be specifically defined as **NOT** animal fighting.
6. We ask the definition of "unreasonable" and "unnecessary" explicitly exclude situations where a hunter has accidentally missed a clean-killing shot for any reason and/or is unable to finish off the injured animal quickly (such as when the injured animal escapes into dense bush).

Part 2, Interpretation, Division 2, points 7, 8 & 11

While we understand that the terms 'unreasonable' and 'unnecessary' exist in the current Protection of Cruelty to Animals legislation, Shooters Union NSW is still seeking a clear definition of what is 'unreasonable or unnecessarily harm and what constitutes psychological harm – please see point 6, above, as an example of a potential situation

We believe the terms “unreasonable” and “unnecessary” are still far too subjective and open to incorrect, fraudulent, or malicious/abusive interpretation by investigating officers as a result.

By way of example, we note that under proposal 13 of the consultation outcomes, RSPCA officers would have powers under this Bill. The RSPCA is an outspoken advocate for the abolition of hunting therefore cannot be expected to be objective in cases where legal hunting is being practiced.

We reject the assertion of the *NSW Animal Welfare Reform Consultation Outcomes* paper (page 41) that there is nothing inappropriate about the RSPCA having enforcement powers under the Bill and reiterate our belief that the organisation’s public anti-hunting stance makes it fundamentally incapable of keeping its inspectorate activity operations completely separate or free of influence from its non-inspectorate activities.

Part 4, Offences relating to animal cruelty, 29 (a) Injuries to animals struck by vehicles

Shooters Union NSW agrees that in the case of an animal being struck by a vehicle the driver of that vehicle must take all reasonable steps to alleviate any harm caused to the animal however, it should be added that “this must only be done if the situation is safe for the driver of the vehicle to do so” as too many human deaths have resulted from drivers trying to help vehicle struck animals.

Part 4, Offences relating to animal cruelty, 30, Poisoning a domestic animal

In any discussion on animal welfare the question must be asked about the ongoing use of 1080 Poison. We note regulations apply to the poisoning of domestic animals but appear to be silent on the issue of pest animals.

Are they not subject to the same cruelty protections?

How ‘cute’ or ‘social-media friendly’ does a pest animal need to be before it is protected from an agonising death due to poisoning?

1080 poison is an insidious poison that kills indiscriminately and subjects animals to an extreme, torturous and painful death, yet no mention of the use of 1080 Poison has been made in this Bill.

Can you please advise where, in the definition of ‘unnecessary harm’, ‘psychological harm’ and ‘cruelty to animals’, does the use of 1080 poison sit?

Finally, it has come to our attention that Adam Marshall MP referred the Animal Welfare (Draft) Bill 2022 to the State Development Committee a full day before the committee chair, Catherine Cusack MLC, received that letter of advice from Adam Marshall MP.

We further understand that, just prior to committee chair Catherine Cusack MLC being advised, Emma Hurst MP requested to join the Committee before anyone knew a referral by Adam Marshall had been made.

We also question the referral of this Bill to the State Development Committee instead of Portfolio Committee 4 where it should have been referred.

Our reason for raising the above is that, if correct, we believe it shows collusion between the NSW National Party and the Animal Justice Party and further justifies our concerns that this Bill is 'a Wolf in Sheep's clothing' and is a blatant attack aimed at legal recreational hunting and fishing.

It also raises concerns about the agenda of Adam Marshall MP in colluding with Emma Hurst MP.

It is therefore our view that The Animal Welfare Draft Bill 2022 should be scrapped in its entirety in favour of the existing Protection of Cruelty to Animals legislation remaining in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Craig Golding
Director
Shooters Union NSW Pty Ltd