

**Submission
No 174**

**INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: D White

Date Received: 25 February 2022

It is encouraging to see improvements in the proposed Animal Welfare Bill 2022, including minimum care requirements for animals that recognise the need for them to express normal behaviors, and including psychological suffering in the definition of animal harm.

The inclusion of cephalopods and decapods under the definition of animals is another long overdue and welcome step. Considering octopi have been observed using high-order planning, and demonstrating intelligence in a number of other ways, it is upsetting to think of them being thoughtlessly subjected to cruelty.

Further to the above, it is sad indictment on the human race that the further a class of an animal away from our own, the less empathy there generally is with any distress that animal is experiencing. Section 7 regarding "acts of cruelty" is inconsistent in that it treats fish differently to every other animal by exempting them in part 3. Why?

The proposed Bill still falls well short of delivering community expectations in a number of areas. In NSW, there needs to be laws that acknowledge animal sentience and the inherent value of animals.

Section 14, "what is appropriate for minimum care requirements" shows a disturbing lack of commitment by lawmakers to true reform in animal welfare laws. Judging the needs for minimum care by an animal's species, environment and particular circumstances, leaves a lot of room for the carving out of exemptions for farm animals to allow continuation of cruel practices such as mulesing of lambs, hot iron branding of cattle and carrying out painful procedures without mandatory pain relief.

Intensive confinement such as hens in battery cages and pigs in sow stalls is an absolute abomination. Public support has dramatically increased for free range animal products and demand is leading to more caring options on supermarket shelves, but all intensive farming needs to be stamped out immediately so that animals like pigs, which operate at a much higher IQ level than dogs, are given the same protection against cruel practices as our companion animals.

The requirements for transporting dogs neglects the need for shade and water in the case of dogs tethered on an open-backed vehicle on a hot day when the vehicle is parked.

In regulations regarding the need for animals to be able to display normal behaviours the following must surely be considered:

- The use of animals in laboratories for experimentation. Experimentation on animals is horrific and needs to be abolished. Laboratories get away with causing distress and suffering in animals that would never be tolerated in the wider community. Laboratory animals endure extreme torture.
- The keeping of birds in small cages and denying them forever of their ability to fly and need to socialise with their own kind. There is nothing sadder than to see an intelligent parrot wasting the days of its long life alone confined in a small cage. Although it seems to be widely accepted by the general public, it is cruelty in the extreme, akin to locking a human being alone in a small room for the rest of its life without any company of its own kind.
- The keeping of lone goldfish in tiny or unsuitable bowls.
- Circuses, rodeos and other forms of entertainment that abuse animals. These environments must be a nightmare for the animals involved.

Many in NSW applauded the ban on greyhound racing. The racing of greyhounds and horses causes many needless injuries and death either on the racetrack, when the animal has outlived its usefulness, or if the animal is deemed unsuitable for racing at a young age. Although regulation was enacted to prevent many of the problems, it is hard to trust that some of the undesirable practices will not continue.

Animal abuse is not adequately punished. There needs to be a register of animal abusers that prevents such individuals from owning another animal.

Through an independent NSW Animal Welfare Authority well-funded and independent compliance and enforcement regimes should be created, free from conflicts of interest.