

Submission
No 284

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

The international recognition of animal sentience is on the rise in line with popular opinion that if man is not to be left the only animal left standing on Earth he needs to protect the welfare of all the other animals with who we share our precious planet.

The Australian Capital Territory has legislation recognising animal sentience. In October 2020, the ACT government started enforcing legislation that recognizes animals as "sentient beings that are able to subjectively feel and perceive the world around them" and possess "intrinsic value."

In late February 2021, Scotland appointed members to a new independent Animal Welfare Commission, claimed to be the first body of its kind in the United Kingdom. Among the Scottish commission's remit: to consider "possible legislative and non-legislative routes to further protect the welfare of sentient animals."

The U.K.'s ruling conservative government, meanwhile, recently pledged to enshrine the concept of animal sentience into national law, bringing it in line with European Union directives that have been in place for decades. France, New Zealand and the Canadian province of Quebec all explicitly recognized animal sentience in their laws in 2015. Sweden and the Belgian capital of Brussels both joined the club in 2018.

In short it is time, if not overdue that NSW catches up with similar initiatives in Commonwealth and OECD Countries to recognise and protect the welfare sentient animals.

I am greatly concerned that the proposed Animal Welfare Bill 2022 falls short of community expectations in a number of areas.

All birds and animals, be they domestic animals, livestock and farm animals bred and kept for food production, animals bred and kept for sports such as racehorses and greyhounds, native animals or those animals considered feral animals in NSW such as cats, dogs, brumbies, deer and pigs need laws that will:

- A. Recognise animal sentience and the intrinsic value of animals,
- B. Establish well-funded and independent compliance and enforcement regimes, free from conflicts of interest through an independent NSW Animal Welfare Authority.
- C. Stop carving out exemptions for farm animals which allow continuation of cruel practices such as:
 - a. mulesing of lambs
 - b. hot iron branding of cattle
 - c. carrying out painful procedures without mandatory pain relief
 - d. intensive confinement (such as battery cages and sow stalls)

I also strongly support the initiatives in the Bill such as

1. Minimum care requirements for animals, including opportunities to express normal behaviours
2. The expansion of the definition of animals to include cephalopods and decapods (e.g. octopus, squid, lobsters and crabs)
3. The inclusion of psychological suffering in the definition of harm to animals.

In summary, I strongly support this introduction of this legislation because it will impact the welfare of millions of animals across the whole state and represents a rare opportunity to create change, helping to bring an end to unnecessary suffering and improve their lives and, as a byproduct foster the values of a more caring society both now and in the future for our children.

Sincerely,