

**Submission
No 302**

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

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Date Received: 28 February 2022

NSW Government Animal Welfare Bill 2022

SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Earlier, I made a submission on the 'Animal Welfare Action Plan'.

It promised to modernise the 40-year-old framework underpinning the protection of animals in NSW, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1979.

The NSW government said it aimed at improving compliance and enforcement, applying contemporary scientific evidence to ensure positive animal welfare outcomes, and said that it would listen to feedback from the community.

Unfortunately, after all that community consultation, the new bill is very disappointing in the extreme.

Precious little has changed with regard to animal protections.

Exploitative industries, such as factory farming and forestry will continue. Animals will not be protected.

The number of intensive farms continues to increase. Intensively farmed pigs in NSW has increased by 45% in the past decade.

NSW has the most commercial duck farms in Australia – they are trapped in large sheds and never see open water.

What of NSW's native animals. It is a sad fact that inaction by the government has pushed nearly 1000 ecological communities to the brink of extinction.

So often, habitat is bulldozed to make way for intensive farms and expanding housing developments.

Any native animals that survive this barrage, face increasing risk from bushfires and floods in their habitats. Some are hunted and shot. Kangaroos are still hunted for their meat and skins or are exterminated as pests – to our shame in the eyes of the world.

Unbelievably, NSW has not taken the opportunity to clamp down on the cruelty in puppy factories. They churn out more and more dogs, while pounds and shelters are overrun with discarded pets. Thousands of healthy companion animals are killed in them every year.

Some unfortunate animals are still subject to cruelty and terrible treatment in scientific experimentation - as well as those suffering commercial exploitation by entertainment industries such as racing, circuses, and zoos.

Please amend the bill to include the following:

- any new law must contain explicit recognition of animal sentience – because failure to do so is a structural inadequacy that goes against all modern science.
- the proposed legislation must prevent the differential treatment of animals based on their species or their intended purpose - the law must apply equally without prejudice or discrimination
- the animal welfare framework must be appropriately and transparently enforced - conflicts of interest must be abolished so that the government department responsible for overseeing animal protection is not influenced by interests that rely on their commercial production
- legislation must be consistent and adhere to contemporary and emerging community expectations - Australians expect and deserve stronger legal protections for all animals
- an independent Office of Animal Welfare must be established to guarantee consistency and accountability.

Why does the proposed legislation not recognise animal sentience? Merely acknowledging that animals experience pain is not sufficient to meet scientific evidence, international standards, or community expectations.

The new legislation continues with inadequate codes of practice. This means it will legalise cruel animal procedures and practices that would otherwise constitute cruelty. Routine husbandry procedures that are inflicted without pain relief and intensive confinement of animals in crates and cages will continue.

It is completely unacceptable that the regulation and enforcement of animal protection remains under the control of a charity and not the government.

All animals are sentient creatures; they are entitled to be safe and free from harm by self-interested users who are driven by profit.

This new bill was an excellent opportunity to enshrine our moral obligation to protect all species and break down the double standards where certain species are offered some protection while others like farm animals and those called 'pests' are not.

Please re-draft the bill to make it do what the people want – animal protection.

Charles Davis

February 2022