

Inquiry into Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025

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PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Australia
PO Box 20308
World Square
Sydney NSW 2002

08 8556 5828
Info@peta.org.au
PETA.org.au

**SUBMISSION REGARDING THE CROCODILE CONTROL AND CONSERVATION
BILL 2025.**

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All correspondence regarding this submission should be directed to:

Emily Rice

Senior Communications Advisor to PETA Australia



Entities

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

PETA Australia Pty Ltd
ACN – 128209923

A. About PETA

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Australia is an animal liberation organisation opposed to the exploitation of living, feeling beings PETA opposes speciesism, the justification of mistreating sentient beings by regarding some species as superior to others. PETA entities worldwide have more than 9 million members and supporters.

PETA works through public information, litigation, research, lobbying, celebrity involvement, and public campaigns to focus international attention on—with a view to ending—the exploitation and abuse of animals for experimentation, food, clothing, entertainment, or any other reason, and help promote a more just society.

B. PETA’s Comments on The Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025 (herein referred to as ‘The Bill’)

Introduction

PETA submits two main concerns with this bill, which we raise in the context of crocodile farms that confine, abuse and ultimately cruelly slaughter crocodiles for their skins and meat.

We highlight crocodiles’ sentience and individuality and refute that they are ‘pest’ animals who must be eradicated so humans can occupy their natural habitats.

We also oppose The Bill’s proposed “payment from a quota of ‘High-End Clients’ who wish to live harvest the crocodile¹,” as any part of the “management” plan. The explanatory speech hints at allowing safari-style hunting of crocodiles², and may allow for crocodile farms (including those servicing foreign fashion houses) to buy live crocodiles, increasing “stock” levels in the crocodile products sector and guaranteeing more crocodiles will suffer on cruel factory farms.

PETA raises concerns that the introduction of The Bill is not an act of conservation or crocodile population control but is designed to expand the state’s profit from crocodiles via hunting or farms under the guise of improving human safety and supporting Indigenous enterprise.

The Potential for Animal and Human Exploitation

While we acknowledge that expert and careful relocation of crocodiles to another natural home may occasionally be necessary to facilitate human and animal harmony, the inclusion of profitable control methods—like the sale of live crocodiles to intensive crocodile farms—unfairly encourages the adoption of these options in lieu of non-profitable means of

¹ Queensland Parliament. Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025, Explanatory Notes . <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/5825t0104/5825t104.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2025

² Queensland Parliament. Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025, Explanatory Speech https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_02_19_WEEKLY.pdf#page=29 accessed 2 April 2025

relocation or giving sanctuary to these animals. The outcomes—animals being hunted and an increased number of crocodiles languishing on filthy factory farms to be skinned, often while conscious—are reprehensible.

The Bill claims to empower Indigenous landowners to profit from the control of crocodiles³. However, alongside weakening protections for the animals, we foresee the potential for the same kind of *human* exploitation seen inside other animal exploitation industries, such as aboard live export ships and inside abattoirs.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, six of the top ten most disadvantaged areas in Australia are in Queensland and are predominantly Aboriginal communities⁴. Indigenous Australians have a unique relationship with crocodiles, who play an important role in the Dreaming⁵.

While Indigenous Australians *have* traditionally hunted crocodiles to trade or sell their skins, they have *not* traditionally been appointed intermediaries to supply animals to hunters. Nor have they been appointed intermediaries to supply to crocodile farms, which in turn may supply French fashion houses, where a single crocodile-skin handbag (comprising the skins of several animals) can sell for upwards of AUD\$200,000⁶, disproportionately more than what Indigenous Australians likely stand to gain.

When animals are labelled a threat and their capture and killing are monetised, you turn ordinary humans into bounty hunters and animals into commodities. As we've seen with the continued inhumane slaughter of kangaroos⁷, who are routinely shot and have their at-foot joeys bludgeoned for their meat and skins, cruelty to animals follows⁸.

The Crocodile Skins Industry: Cruel Factory Farming

Confinement

The waters of Queensland are Crocodiles' only homes, and humans have already encroached on them. Just as sharks don't infest the oceans, crocodiles don't infest waterways; they live in them. Humans can avoid these swimming areas, but crocodiles can't.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\), Australia](#), ABS Website, accessed 1 April 2025.

⁵ Richardson, H. and Rigby, M. (2022) *Crocs and people have shared these waterways for millennia, but one thing could alter that harmony forever*, ABC News. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-03/kowanyama-crocodiles-part-of-life-and-dreamtime-stories/101381612>, accessed 1 April 2025.

⁶ *How Hermès Birkin Bag Prices are changing in 2020* (2020) Grazia. <https://graziamagazine.com/articles/hermes-birkin-bag-prices-2020/>, accessed 1 April 2025.

⁷ *An open letter about Kangaroos* (no date) Kangaroo Matters. Available at: <http://www.kangaroomatters.org/>, accessed 01 April 2025.

⁸ *An open letter about Kangaroos* (no date) Kangaroo Matters. Available at: <http://www.kangaroomatters.org/>, accessed 1 April 2025.

Crocodiles have lived on Earth since prehistoric times, but humans are still learning about these ancient and complex animals. We *do* know that crocodilians are sentient individuals who engage in the main types of play as *defined* by behaviour specialists, including with objects (such as balls and sticks) and with other animals⁹.

Crocodiles are also dedicated, gentle parents who communicate with their young in much the same manner as birds¹⁰. They are intelligent and inquisitive¹¹, and, like all animals, it's natural for them to explore and move about.

Australian saltwater crocodiles often use ocean currents to travel long distances. One study that tracked 20 crocodiles via satellite transmitters discovered that eight ventured into the open ocean, and one travelled 590 kilometres in only a few weeks¹². On factory farms, though, active, curious crocodiles are confined to filthy, cramped pits or dank, urine- and faeces-polluted water in dark sheds on farms¹³.

Despite being able to grow to lengths of more than 7 metres¹⁴, a 2021 investigation by Farm Transparency Project revealed that Australian crocodiles are kept in crowded group pens, solitary wire cages, or concrete pits with mere inches of water that is foul, green, or otherwise unsanitary¹⁵. At any given time, an estimated 100,000 juvenile crocodiles are being raised in cramped conditions on squalid factory farms in Australia¹⁶.

Reptile biologists note that farms can never be anything close to an adequate habitat for them because of their biological and social needs¹⁷.

⁹Dinets V. Play behavior in crocodilians. *Anim Behav Cogn.* 2015;2(1):49-55.
<https://doi.org/10.12966/abc.02.04.2015>

¹⁰Chabert T, Colin A, Aubin T, et al. Size does matter: crocodile mothers react more to the voice of smaller offspring. *Sci Rep.* 2015;5(155547). <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep15547>

¹¹Dinets V. Apparent coordination and collaboration in cooperatively hunting crocodilians. *Ethol Ecol Evol.* 2014;27(2):244-250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03949370.2014.915432>

¹² *Crocodylus porosus* Schneider, 1801 in Döring M (2022). English Wikipedia - Species Pages. Wikimedia Foundation. Checklist dataset <https://doi.org/10.15468/c3kkgg> accessed on 1 April 2025

¹³ Hermès Crocodile Farming Exposed on Vimeo (Defend The Wild). [player.vimeo.com. https://player.vimeo.com/video/592530128?h=0254dad9b](https://player.vimeo.com/video/592530128?h=0254dad9b), accessed: 01 April 2025.

¹⁴Oceana. Saltwater crocodile. 18 May 2023. <https://oceana.org/marine-life/saltwater-crocodile>, accessed 1 April 2025.

¹⁵Farm Transparency Project Knowledge Base. Crocodile and Alligator. 30 August 2021, <https://www.farmtransparency.org/kb/clothing/crocodile-alligator>, accessed 1 April 2025.

¹⁶Pattison R, Isberg S, Strappe P. Australian crocodile industry RD&E plan 2024–2029. November 2023. <https://agrifutures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/23-201-Crocodile-Industry-RDE-Plan.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2025.

¹⁷O'Connell S. Crocodile farms: is it cruel to keep these wild creatures captive? *The Independent.* 5 October 2006. <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/crocodile-farms-is-it-cruel-to-keep-these-wild-creatures-captive-418794.html>, accessed 1 April 2025.

Egg Collection

In their natural home, crocodiles are attentive parents. They watch their nests carefully, gently handle eggs with their powerful jaws, and carry their young in their mouths to “greener pastures” should they be born in unfavourable environments.¹⁸ The current Code of practice recognises that female saltwater crocodiles “usually guard nests in captivity” and “[a] risk of crocodile attack may be incurred when wild and captive-laid eggs are collected¹⁹,” acknowledging crocodiles’ desires to protect their young. Despite this, egg collection stands to be considerably expanded under the proposed bill²⁰.

Aside from causing distress to crocodile families, encouraging the collection of adult crocodiles and their eggs contradicts the ‘safety’ concerns The Bill purports to address. Rather, it puts Indigenous Australians—and anyone else who attempts to harvest eggs for proffered profits—in more danger via increased crocodile interaction.

Slaughter

In their natural homes, crocodiles can live for an average of 70 years²¹, but those exploited for their skin and flesh are slaughtered at just under 3 years old.²² The current Code of Practice on the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles allows for two slaughter methods: shooting crocodiles in the head and banging a sharp chisel into their spinal cord with a hammer²³.

¹⁸Hurt A. Crocodiles are particularly good mothers. *Discover*. 23 May 2023. <https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/crocodiles-are-particularly-good-mothers>, accessed 1 April 2025.

¹⁹Australian Government. Code of practice on the humane treatment of wild and farmed Australian crocodiles. 2009. https://storage.googleapis.com/files-au-climate/climate-au/p/prj29661bbc77474f5e43860/public_assets/Crocodile Code of Practice - PDF Version.pdf, accessed 1 April 2025.

²⁰ Queensland Parliament. Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025 . <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/5825T0103/5825t103.pdf> accessed 1 April 2025

²¹Saltwater crocodile. *National Geographic*. 11 November 2010. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/facts/saltwater-crocodile>, accessed 1 April 2025.

²²Pattison R, Isberg S, Strappe P. Australian crocodile industry RD&E plan 2024–2029. November 2023. <https://agrifutures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/23-201-Crocodile-Industry-RDE-Plan.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2025.

²³Australian Government. Code of practice on the humane treatment of wild and farmed Australian crocodiles. 2009. https://storage.googleapis.com/files-au-climate/climate-au/p/prj29661bbc77474f5e43860/public_assets/Crocodile Code of Practice - PDF Version.pdf, accessed 1 April 2025.

Many farms claim that the twitching crocodiles display after spinal cord injury “simply reflects the ability of muscles to continue operating independently after the brain has been totally destroyed²⁴,” however, more recent welfare guidelines conclude that *this movement indicates consciousness*. The World Organisation for Animal Health notes, “Some reptiles may remain conscious for over an hour after decapitation or spinal cord severance, which makes this method acceptable only in stunned and unconscious animals²⁵”.

Several investigations into the [wild skins industry](#), released by PETA, have exposed the extreme suffering crocodiles ultimately endure when farmed and slaughtered.

C. Summary

As PETA’s mission statement sets out and as the world is increasingly accepting, animals are not ours to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment, or abuse in any other way. Just like humans, crocodiles are sentient beings with thoughts, feelings, and individual personalities who show the desire to play and spend time with family and friends.

The proposed Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025 raises significant ethical concerns and fails to honour crocodiles' intrinsic value as sentient individuals. The Bill prioritises profit over the welfare of these unique animals, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and suffering.

Australia must stop treating animals as commodities and allowing businesses that serve no societal purpose to profit from these animals’ capture, confinement, and slaughter.

Crocodiles deserve dignity and respect and should be left in peace unless they pose a threat, at which point humane relocation by experts should be the only option.

We recommend that the committee reject the entire Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵World Organisation for Animal Health. Annex 24: Chapter 1 4: Animal health surveillance of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission. September 2017. https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/A_TAHSC_Sept_2017_Part_B.pdf , accessed 1 April 2025.