

Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 190
Submitted by: Rupert Macgregor
Publication: Make my submission and my name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Overview: Response Comments re QLD Animal Welfare & Protection Bill 2022

In broad overall terms, this Bill offers some important improvements for animal welfare in Queensland.

However, that said, my responses also include a catalogue of significant qualifications; and, particularly, some major concerns in respect of glaring omissions on points of major importance.

Unless such failings or omissions are addressed and rectified, the proposals fail to meet the needs of community expectations around animal welfare.

Positives and Advances: I support and commend these proposed amendments to the Bill:

- (5) New breach of duty of care offence.
- (6) New unreasonable abandonment offence.
- (9) Ban of tail docking!!
- (14) Ban of prong collars (possession & use).

[However, while this is certainly an advance, I would recommend the Bill go further and ban other cruel devices including tethering while unattended, electric collars, and other cruel training devices.]

- (14) Ban on firing or blistering.
- (15) Allow for euthanasia of animals in relevant circumstances by vets where owner cannot be located.
- (16) Ban of CSSP pig poison.

[However, I question why this is limited to CSSP pig poison and recommend that this be extended to include other cruel poisons including 1080.]

- (32) Recognition of interstate prohibition orders.
- (44) Expanding QRIC's powers to include retired racehorses in possession of a racing participant.

Additional Suggestions: I urge the committee to consider changes to the following amendments:

- (3) I welcome the inclusion of all Cephalopoda in the Act under the definition of animals.

[incontrovertibly these are neither vegetables nor minerals... However, to be consistent, I would like to see inclusion of some Malacostraca such as crabs, crayfish, lobsters, and prawns, in line with modern animal welfare science.]

- (7) Calf roping should be banned.

[Rather than changing the Act to specifically allow what would be acts of animal cruelty at rodeos, the Bill should instead simply seek to ban calf roping as a prohibited event.

A new study 'The legality of calf roping in Australia' ([Stonebridge, UQ Law Journal, 2022](#)) confirms that "beneficial contributions of calf roping do not justify the harm caused to the calves and that calf roping would therefore likely not be legal if the standard of unnecessary harm applied". This follows several recent Australian scientific studies ([Sinclair et al, 2016](#) and [Rizzuto et al, 2020](#)) that confirm that this event causes significant stress to vulnerable calves.]

- (10) I have strong concerns that allowing spaying surgery on cattle to be performed by non-vets and allowing pregnancy tests by laypersons is a backward step for animal welfare.
- (12) The restrictions on debarking and supply of 'debarked' dogs are supported.

[However, I would recommend the committee listen to advice from rescue organisations and shelters when considering obligations places on those that care for dogs. In particular, the penalty for supplying a dog from a shelter without a certificate being greater than the penalty for illegally performing debarking procedures on a dog in the first place seems disproportionate.]

- (22) CCTV required at 'livestock slaughter facilities' is too limited.

[The definition of livestock slaughter facilities should be expanded to include all facilities that slaughter livestock and not just horses.

I note this is based on recommendations from the Martin Inquiry, where the scope of the inquiry was limited to racehorses. However, there seems to be a lack of any scientific justification for CCTV use on horses yet not recording other animals who are just as capable and likely of suffering.

I also urge for an independent monitoring regime to be put in place to monitor the CCTV footage. If the CCTV recordings are only accessed from a complaint, then they are so limited to be largely meaningless; and thus will result in minimal animal welfare improvements if any.]

[Similarly, powers for inspectors to enter a slaughterhouse without a warrant or permission from the owner should not be restricted to only when horses are at the facility. It is vital that inspectors have the power to enter slaughterhouses (as well as factory farms) without notice.]

Proposed Changes to s.178

[I question the rationale for changes to s178. This appears to be a backward step for animal welfare and removes any possibility of private prosecution or even the ability of RSPCA Qld to independently decide to prosecute without permission from the Department (chief executive).

This is a backward step for animals and concentrates all power to prosecute in one person.

Notably, the person who authorises prosecution also has responsibility for the viability and growth of animal agriculture industries, which may at times represent a conflict of interest.

Instead, s178 (3) should be amended to explicitly allow private prosecution of animal cruelty offences, as well as by Queensland Police and RSPCA Qld. s178 (b) should also be amended to increase the statute of limitation of animal cruelty offences (currently 12 months, or 2 years in some circumstances).

I note that some animal cruelty investigations currently take close to 12 months, so the current statute of limitation is completely unworkable. Currently, if someone commits a horrendous act of cruelty, but it is not discovered until 2 years later, they cannot be prosecuted under the Act.

Additional Comments and Suggestions:

In addition to the points raised above, I urge the government to commit to further reviews and amendments to the Act and to properly consider:

- Specifically acknowledge the sentience of non-human animals in the Act.
- An Independent Office of Animal Protection, separate from the Department of Agriculture.
- Banning calf roping and other cruel events in the name of entertainment.
- Further consideration to mandatory reporting of suspected animal cruelty cases.
- Make meaningful changes to factory farming and other farmed animal welfare, including transport or slaughter, and ensure codes of practice do not provide excuses for committing acts of cruelty.
- Major changes to monitoring and enforcement of animal welfare, particularly for farmed animals. This should also include increased transparency around enforcement action taken by the Department of Agriculture.

Conclusion: Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on these important issues.

Best wishes

Rupert Macgregor

26 May 2022