

Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 1249
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Publication: Make my submission and my name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission to the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill. As scientific progress and public knowledge has made us more acutely aware of the ability of animals to feel pain, fear and distress their sentience is now a more accepted fact. For instance, that over 85,000 petitioners are calling for the abolition of glue traps shows the revulsion the community feels to the evidence of slow and horrific deaths from thirst, starvation, suffocation and the injuries incurred as animals, birds and invertebrates struggle, and often mutilate themselves, to attempt release from these traps. Glue traps are widely available in Australia and although 3 states have limited their use, they can still be purchased online. These traps have already been banned in such countries as England and New Zealand. There are NO controls at all regarding their use, accompanying advice is ineffectual and unfortunately many people put them outside and do not check to see if anything has been caught. Although stores carry many insecticidal products, this form is too inhumane and indiscriminate to be tolerated. Australia is facing a wildlife extinction crisis and we need to stop unnecessary deaths of wildlife. Carers and vets have rescued (and tried to save) reptiles, small native mammals (including bandicoots, antechinus, native rats), birds, raptors, endangered frogs, pet kittens, and most often, our insectivorous bats. Most do not survive after suffering unimaginable torment. But no life form deserves an end such as this. I am a former employee in the veterinary field and I am painfully aware of the stages involved when creatures die from dehydration. In our indulged society we can now afford to give animals the mercy and dignity of as pain and suffering free a life and death as possible. Due to unintended consequences on our native wildlife, as well as the humaneness of the process glue traps should be included as a threatening process in the Bill and I earnestly request that they be banned. Although there is this very welcome mention of humaneness of treatment there is an absence of the impacts of animal management practices on our native wildlife. There is growing evidence of secondary poisoning of birds and other native predators who have taken baited "pests", or eaten the poison directly. There is evidence that many native species have eaten 1080 and died in horrific ways. Aerial spraying of pesticides and weedicides and the effect on numerous forms of wildlife from beach worms to bees urgently needs a governing body overseeing the effects of such practices on our diminishing native fauna. The use of poisons has often been indiscriminate and careless, and possible impacts on native wildlife is rarely mentioned, or where it has been, not adequately or correctly assessed. A third matter needing attention is the plight of animals who undergo indescribable suffering during their lives and excruciating deaths in the name of science and teaching, with no representation outside sealed laboratories. To address animal suffering, increased openness on the use of animals in science is essential. It has been estimated that more than 115 million animals are used per year to supply the biomedical industry, Australia being one of the top four countries in consumption. There are now alternatives to using animals, new, and not so new, methods and technologies that can replace live animals in research, testing, education and training which Governments, the scientific community, industry and other stakeholders, in particular in the EU and the US have started to make efforts to use. They are pooling knowledge and resources to replace animal experimentation with more human, more human-relevant and often cheaper and faster methods. The use of primates, for instance has been found to be poorly predictive of human outcomes and their use has proven to be ineffective at providing substantial contributions to biomedical research, besides the ethical impropriety of using highly intelligent and social beings as mere tools and subjecting them to unimaginable mental and physical suffering and death. Currently no institution is taking responsibility for change, despite a legislative obligation to only conduct research for which there is

no alternative, and so progress remains stalled. As a society we are finally expressing a demand that animals be given recognition, plus the dignity of as pain and suffering free life and death as possible. I am gratified to see the Bill is being updated after all this time and look forward to an Independent Office of Animal Protection and, hopefully, a Royal Commission into the treatment of animals and how we care for our wildlife. Respectfully, Chris Hughes