

Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 1381
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Submitter Comments:

Hon Mark Furner (Minister for Agriculture), please accept my submission in relation to amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act.

I welcome the following 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). Although, I would recommend the Bill go further and ban other cruel devices including electric collars, and other cruel training devices.

On the topic of prong collars I have recently witnessed the cruelty inflicted on a dog who was wearing one of these collars when he was surrendered to an animal shelter. The prongs had caused multiple deep puncture wounds around the neck of the animal, plus these wounds had become inflamed and infected (please see attached photos). The pain he would have experienced as a result is undeniable, but this has also likely caused him stress and psychological trauma.

I believe our society is progressing in a way which recognises that entertainment, at the expense of animal welfare, is no longer acceptable. Consequently I believe this bill needs to address the issue of calf roping. There are multiple risks to a young, vulnerable animal during this activity, including damage to the windpipe and neck from being suddenly jerked in a different direction, bruising and broken ribs from being forced to the ground, not to mention the fear and pain from being yanked off their feet and choked as they are dragged. The community would be absolutely outraged if this activity were to be performed on a puppy, so why is that we justify and tolerate it when it is carried out on a young animal of another species? That is simply no longer acceptable.

This leads to a discussion on whether animals should be recognised as sentient beings under the law, as they have been by the Victorian Government and by other governments around the world. To be able to perceive or feel things defines sentience and therefore from a scientific perspective, animal sentience is in no doubt. Most of us in modern society would also concur that animals are able to feel emotion, form attachments and have distinct personalities. Understanding and recognising animal sentience is important when identifying the needs of animals and also in guiding legislation to assess and protect their welfare. I therefore believe that consideration should be given regarding the addition of animal sentience to this bill.

Whilst this bill has made positive amendments, it has unfortunately not addressed the largest source of animal cruelty in the world - Factory Farming. Any choice about how to live their lives is completely removed for animals that grow up and die in factory farms. At the expense of their health and welfare, they are raised to grow as quickly as possible to meet supply and profit targets. They are subject to various bodily mutilations, extremely tight and crowded confinement and often spend their entire lives indoors, deprived of what would be a normal environment for their species. Mother pigs are separated from their infants, causing mothers to cry for days, piglets have their teeth and tails cut off, right through the bone and male animals are castrated without anaesthetics. Due to the unnatural growth speed of chickens, millions of young animals suffer and die in farm sheds because their bodies simply cannot cope. This brings shame to our animal welfare standards and needs to be addressed in this bill.

I thank you for your consideration of the issues I have raised and I look forward to seeing further amendments to the bill.











