

Dear Commissioners

There is a shift in the consciousness of the Australian public. What was once considered standard industry practice for the treatment, housing, routine animal husbandry has come under the spotlight thanks to the tireless efforts of several admirable animal protection organisations.

The vast majority of Australian citizens abhor animal cruelty, even if at times, that sits in direct contrast to their consumption of them and their products.

I urge you to accept recommendations 5.1 and 5.2 in the draft report seeking to provide national independent frameworks for animal welfare. I recommend this body is a statutory Independent Office of Animal Welfare (IOAW) which would:

- Have a mandate to achieve excellence in animal welfare.
- Facilitate balanced consultation between all stakeholders on nationally consistent, evidence based standards to protect animals from some cruelty and promote good animal welfare.
- Meet the expectations of the public and consumers with regard to animal welfare standards.
- Safeguard Australia's reputation and investment opportunities, by meeting international benchmarks for animal welfare.
- Reduce poor animal welfare incidences by taking a proactive, instead of reactive approach to animal welfare.
- Be staffed by policy, law & community consultation experts, and guided by a balanced advisory committee, with strong animal welfare expertise.
- Act to eradicate any practices that contribute to animal suffering or pain

The establishment of a national body for animal welfare (the Independent Office of Animal Welfare) has broad community support. Galaxy polling undertaken by World Animal Protection in early 2016 found;

- 75% of people support the re-establishment of a national body focusing on animal welfare.
- 84% believe the federal government should set goals for animal welfare and have a plan to achieve them.
- A clear majority of Australian believe farm animals could be treated better, both city residents (73%) and rural and regional people (70%) alike.

Whilst horrific practices are easy to find in Australia – on “farms”, in sale yards and feedlots, in slaughterhouses and transport to same, it cannot be denied that THE biggest contributor to egregious animal cruelty, suffering and abuse, is the live animal export industry. Numerous polls in the last decade have shown majority support for an end to this trade.

Governments can only declare “animal welfare is top priority” for so long, whilst regulatory breaches are exposed in the same places, by the same people, year after year – places that have been reported many times previously. When every single animal stepping onto a ship is

guaranteed a worse animal welfare than if stunned and slaughtered in Australian facilities, to Australian standards, under Australian law AND the trade is contributing to a loss of Australian jobs and value-adding here, one must ask “what does it take?” Maybe an IOAW.

Yours sincerely