

Submission to the Productivity Commission on Regulation of Australian Agriculture 2016

17 August 2016

Regulation of Farm Animal Welfare

With so many ad campaigns highlighting deficiencies in the regulation of farm animal welfare, the Australian community is starting to understand that this is an animal welfare area that has been neglected for too long. There has been a lack of oversight generally or, where there is regulation, a too apparent conflict of interest (eg where the Agriculture Department is part of the regulatory environment).

I fully support the draft recommendations 5.1 and 5.2 of the Report.

As the three levels of government – federal, state and council – have responsibilities for people, so to do they have a duty towards animals in their jurisdiction both farm and domestic. Greater resources need to be dedicated to animal welfare policy and enforcement particularly at the federal and state levels.

An independent animal welfare body is needed to oversee this policy and enforcement process. Such a body would be responsible for developing animal welfare standards that are based on both current animal welfare science and community expectations.

One of the priorities for this body would be to take responsibility for overseeing the effectiveness of live export regulation – a most pressing and immediate need.

This body would also require strong and effective powers to enforce animal welfare at a state level, alleviating the present patchwork regulatory environment across Australia.

Implementing these reforms will go a long way to improving Australians confidence that the livestock industries are doing the right thing, because there is strong, independent and transparent regulation. It would also show that there is government commitment to the importance of the ongoing improvement of animal welfare in this country.

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