



Animal Care Australia

The Animal Care Expert

"Animal welfare by the experts — those who keep, care for and breed animals"





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“Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.”

In this issue:

- 5 Presidents report
- 7 Submissions, news & correspondence
- 9 ACA attends *NSW Charitable Organisations Inquiry*
- 12 ACA attends *Puppy Farms in NSW Inquiry*
- 15 ACA responds to misleading Sunday Telegraph article
- 17 ACA consults on NSW Public Spaces Act 2021
- 20 Careful placing traps for pest control
- 21 “I can talk about animals until the cows home”
- 23 Double standards, hypocrisy or both?
- 25 Bird news
- 27 Horse Traceability Register update
- 29 When legislative change is emotional not outcome based
- 30 A puppy farm Inquiry — but what is a puppy farm?
- 32 Feline aggression — part one
- 35 NSW Native Wildlife Licensing reforms



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Watch out for our next
issue in September
2022.

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President's Report

By Michael Donnelly

Let's get louder!

This past three months has truly highlighted the need for ACA to exist and to get louder and stronger.

ACA appeared at three Inquiries in NSW. The first looking at the draft Animal Welfare Act with the next looking at the effectiveness of the charitable organisations in enforcing animal welfare legislation in NSW, and last but not least an Inquiry into Puppy Farms in NSW.

You can read more of our opening statements from page 9 of this issue, including links to our submissions on our website.

Emma Hurst (AJP) in NSW has certainly ramped up its push against 'puppy farms' as well as every other dog and cat breeder. She claims she wants to end puppy farms. No doubt all Australians want to see the end of those vile situations. Her Facebook posts have ramped up considerably in a bid to garner more support. No doubt Ms Hurst is desperate not to fail in NSW following the implementation of similar extreme restrictions of breeding dogs and cats in Victoria and Western Australia. So desperate was she, that her public outcry of being victimised was conveniently timed just days before the Federal Election, with AJP hopefuls in half the seats around

the country. It's amazing how quickly she moves once the realisation hits home that the Animal Justice Party may be losing some ground.

Now I don't condone bullying of any kind, and I hope that pet owners across Australia would never go that far either. The same cannot be said for the extremist followers of the AJP, PeTA and Oscars Law. They are incited to cyberbullying by Ms Hurst's public outcry of 'standing defiant' in one sentence and revealing to the media that she is looking at legal action as a response, playing the defiant yet impacted victim card.

I do wonder if Ms Hurst will own the responsibility of the bullying, social media stalking and harassment of the innocent responsible breeders who recently signed up to the new Companion & Pet Animals Party, perpetrated by her followers. Breeders personal pages were targeted with offensive claims of being animal abusers and worse – simply because they keep and breed animals.

Ms Hurst is trying to overturn laws that prevent trespass on private property and what she calls 'AgGag' laws to legitimise animal activists accessing farms and animal business to harass owners and steal

animals at will. But she claims to be the victim in this?

Her followers don't see any breeder as being responsible especially when following Ms Hurst's onslaught of accusations against dog breeders.

Ms Hurst claims she is not anti-companion animals (she has that rescue cat, who just made itself at home, after all) yet she refuses to acknowledge the fact that the AJP Policy document (still viewable until just before the Federal Election) included clauses such as:

3. Animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and animal assistants like Maremma, donkeys, and guide dogs must only be bred by licensed breeders under strict controls.
4. To phase out the breeding and sale of all companion animals other than from shelters or rescue groups.
5. To phase out the breeding of companion animals until shelters achieve no-kill status with no turn-away, then work with companion animal NGO's on only using breeding schemes that benefit the animals involved.

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Whether she wants to admit it or not these Policies ARE going to see the demise of companion animals. Restricting the breeding of female dogs and cats to just two litters in their lifetime WILL and already has seen the reduction of rarer breeds in this Country. These policies align with PeTA and other extremist animal rights organisations.

Ms Hurst was the media officer for PeTA and Campaign Officer for Animal Liberation has never contraindicated any of their policies to stop companion animal ownership, yet she expects us to believe she doesn't want to stop people keeping and breeding companion animals. She claims she wants to protect animal welfare, and yet every policy or amendment she has put forward is designed to restrict, prohibit or phase-out. That is not animal welfare – that is animal rights – anthropomorphic ideologies. Ms Hurst and the AJP don't even deny they want to give animals individuality by removing the ownership of animals from the rest of us.

The Animal Rights movement is getting stronger because they are successfully using political power, and political exemptions from truth in advertising laws to make false claims in order to regulate the bejesus out of animal keeping to the extreme where it will simply become too difficult or too costly to keep our pets and companion animals.

That is the truth of the Animal Justice Party – that is the truth of Ms Hurst's agenda and that is why I am proud to be the President of Animal Care Australia – an organisation that represents the keepers and

carers of pets and companion animals. An organisation that is here to fight back against the ideological infiltration of Australia's animal welfare policies in order to ensure we educate on how to care for our animals, we stand against animal cruelty and it's perpetrators, but we do it in a way that protects the animals and the ability for our society to continue to own and care for pets in this country.

WE NEED YOU!

Moving forward ACA will refresh our website with a new look and sections that allow you to find our submissions easier as well as an **Information** section that will outline what animal welfare is; how you can be a responsible breeder or buyer; and over time we will add more information about caring for your animals.

We will also be updating our **Animal Welfare Policies** and making it easier for you to find our position on the different aspects of keeping, breeding and caring for our animals.

We have launched a **Members and Supporters Only Discussion Group** on Facebook designed to allow you to interact with our Species Reps and to share your concerns with us.

In order to ensure ACA can respond to issues as quickly as possible, we will be creating a **State & Territory Advisory Team (STAT)**. The role of the team will be to monitor the increasing activities of government, local councils and of course animal activism, in each State. We will be seeking a volunteer from each State and Territory to join STAT. They will advise us directly and participate in coordinating ACA's response. Could that be you?

There is a lot to do and to do it we need you!

You may also have noticed a new member to the ACA Team—Tracey Dierikx. With many years experience working in zoos, petting zoos and animal rescues, Tracey joins us as our Exhibited Animals Representative.

I do hope you enjoy this edition of the **Animal Care Expert**.

Happy reading!





ACA Submissions, Correspondence & Meeting Reports



ACA responds to Inquiry into the Use of primates and other animals in medical research in NSW

31st March 2022 - ACA acknowledges the greater extent of the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry falls outside our purview, with the exception of how animal welfare is ensured, implemented and continues after research, where the animals have been rehomed.

Our perspective and input is limited to the experience of our Committee and Membership. Some have personally worked in the medical research field, and others have adopted former research animals

Therefore, ACA made the following statements:

1. Animal Rights is not a science. It is not animal welfare - and should not be given weight out of context to appease a small, noisy number of Animal Rights Extremists (groups).

2. ACA does not believe the general public

are qualified or have the sufficient knowledge on the subject matter of this Inquiry in order to comment in good faith and should not be given a louder platform than experienced industry experts.

3. Re-naming the escapee baboon simply exploited him and his colony in order to garner public sympathy.

4. ACA supports the scientific method and the systems already in place to approve, monitor and review medical research conducted on animals in NSW.

5. ACA acknowledges medical research benefits both humans and animals, with no health risks to the public.

6. ACA supports the use of modern non-animal technologies and encourages the continued reduction of animals used in medical research.

7. ACA does not support a total ban on the use of animals in medical research due to the potential unintended consequences on the veterinary sector.

8. ACA is satisfied that the importing,

breeding and use of animals in medical research is currently well regulated and has proper oversight.

9. ACA supports increased transparency and accountability on all issues that could impact animal welfare.

10. ACA is genuinely surprised that this Inquiry has proceeded to this point, to discuss an extreme philosophical perspective, with no basis in reality, and at a cost to the tax payer

Animal Rights as an ideology may have its place, but it is NOT in scientific conversations such as this.

Click on the pdf icon for the submission:



ACA tables Supplementary Submission to the NSW Inquiry into the charitable organisations.

28th March 2022 - ACA submitted additional information supporting our call to revoke the powers of the RSPCA NSW.

Click on the pdf icon for the submission:



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ACA responds to Bayside City Council’s Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2026

17/4/22 —ACA responds to Council’s draft plan.

ACA applauded Council’s education initiatives.

ACA continues to highlight issues with placing number restrictions on pets such as small mammals and birds. It is still clear the numbers are not based on animal welfare or neighbourhood amenity.

ACA questioned the validity & need to restrict dog walking numbers to only 4 dogs at a time.

ACA requested to meet with Council to outline ways to improve the DAMP 2022-2026.

Click on the pdf icon for the submission:



Animal Care Australia responds to misleading Sunday Telegraph article.

26th April 2022 - Animal Care Australia (ACA) is appalled by the lack of journalistic integrity and blatant bias depicted within an article appearing in the Sunday Telegraph dated 24th April 2022.

For more information see our article on page 12 of this newsletter



ACA responds to Upper Lachlan Council’s Draft Dog & Cat Breeding Chapter for Development Control Plan 2022

27/5/22 —ACA responds to Council’s draft plan.

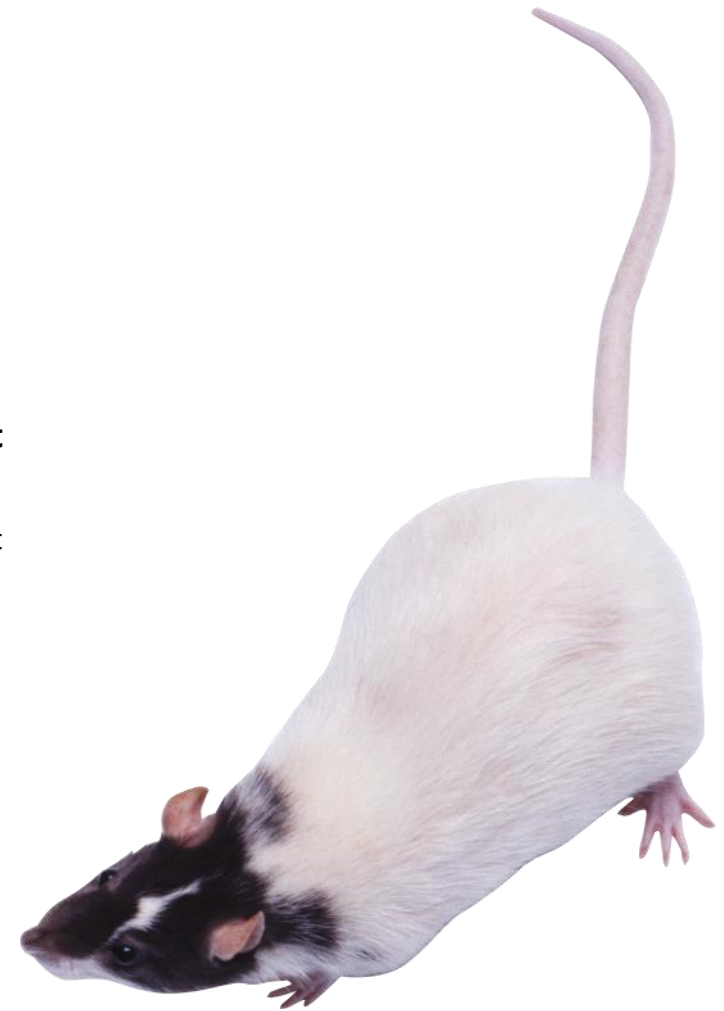
ACA questioned how Council could place restrictions more onerous and in contradiction to existing legislations.

ACA continues to highlight issues with placing number restrictions on dog breeders. It is still clear the numbers are not based on animal welfare or neighbourhood amenity.

ACA questioned the validity of requiring dog breeders to hold an ABN.

ACA requested to meet with Council to discuss.

Click on the pdf icon for the submission:





ACA appears at NSW Inquiry into Charitable Organisations.

Animal Care Australia's (ACA) President, Michael Donnelly & Vice President, Sam Davis provided evidence at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under POCTAA 1979.

Opening Statement

Good morning,

Chair – I ask that this statement and document be tabled.
I am Michael Donnelly – President of Animal Care Australia or ACA, and I am joined today by Sam Davis – Vice President. ACA represents keepers and breeders of animals nationally, our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

There you are going about your daily routine in the garden. One of your children is asleep in full view on a sun lounge nearby.

A car arrives. Your gate is opened, you look up to see what is happening and notice two people, in full uniform. They look like the police – all the equipment including what appear to be weapons. There's just one difference the uniform colour is wrong.

Without asking your permission, one officer walks towards your child while the other immediately approaches you. Your request for them to identify themselves is ignored. You are however told they have arrived because someone has reported that you abuse your children.

You are taken aback by this claim and begin to ask for more details. All the while the officer has looked at your child – now no longer sleeping.

You are enraged. How dare these people! You ask if they have a warrant to be on your property. You are again ignored. You repeat – and this time told they don't require one.

The officer declares your child looks ill. Has this child been to a doctor? You respond yes, and they are being treated.

You expect the next question to be seeking the details of that doctor – but it isn't. Instead, the officer starts talking to someone on his phone.

Quickly it is declared that this child must see someone immediately.



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Despite knowing your child is not in pain, and is exhibiting all the behaviours etc that you were informed would occur and are normal – you offer to take the child straight away back to their treating doctor.

“No that is not sufficient – this child must be seen by our doctor” That doctor is well over an hours drive, while your doctor is 15mins down the road.

The child is immediately grabbed and forced into a secured section of their vehicle.

Your child’s eyes are fixated on you – wondering why you are not stopping them! Your child begins to scream in opposition to being manhandled. There isn’t a damn thing you can do.

They leave you with a receipt for your child.

You phone your doctor – who tries to contact them. Nothing!

The next day you are asked a series of questions by one of the officers from the previous day. Your mind is on the health of your child – not on their repetitive and seemingly irrelevant questions. Never the less you respond. They leave – again.

Days go by – each day you call to check on your child – each day you are told nothing.

On the 5th day you are informed their doctor determined your child could not be helped and in their wisdom they terminated the life of your child. Unknown to you, that day, 5 days ago was the last time you would ever see your child!

Now you cannot collect that child’s remains – as you are being charged with child abuse and failure to provide adequate medical care.

You now face the loss of your child – and if found guilty – the loss of your job, and more.

Can’t happen? Right? The Police cannot do that without a warrant. A doctor cannot make that decision without a court order. You – the person charged must be provided with the opportunity to defend yourself. The child’s doctors - not just one doctor – but several, school counsellors, teachers, and other family members would all be consulted before any decision was made on the child’s fate.

Now replace that word child with family pet, and it ALL can happen and it does!

Worse still – no warrant. No court intervention. No opportunity to say goodbye. No opportunity to have an independent assessment of your pets health – why not? Because it has been euthanised & cremated – without your knowledge. No opportunity for a fair trial – you can’t challenge – there is no way of doing that with the sole evidence — your family pet - having been destroyed.

Our state governments allow this to happen every day – they do nothing to stop it. They even pass the buck back to the organisation that took your pets life!

No accountability. No liability. No appeals process and god forbid you do fight it and prove your innocence – no compensation – not even an apology.

Today we shouldn’t be sitting here talking about Annual Reports and the effectiveness of the organisations – we should be striving to stop this inhumane behaviour from continuing.

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Last week the RSPCA stated they shouldn't be held liable because what they do is in 'good faith'. The contents of the document we table today question their understanding of what 'good faith' is.

Thank you for your time. We welcome your questions.

Closing Statement:

We ask that Minister Saunders acts in the best interests of the public and the animals and revokes the authorisation of the RSPCA NSW as an approved compliance organisation – that would be an act of good faith to the people of NSW.





ACA appears at NSW Inquiry into Puppy Farming

Animal Care Australia's (ACA) President, Michael Donnelly & Dog Representative, Kylie Gilbert provided evidence at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Puppy Farming in NSW,

Animal Care Australia Opening Statement:

Good morning,

Chair – I ask that this statement and related survey results be tabled.

I am Michael Donnelly – President of Animal Care Australia or ACA, and I am joined today by Kylie Gilbert – ACA Dog Representative. ACA represents keepers and breeders of animals nationally, our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

“There are an estimated 200 puppy farms located in NSW ... which is a legal operation producing 103,000 puppies annually” (Emma Hurst 2/4/22)

“Dogs are often living in filth, deprived of social interaction ... with animals kept in squalid conditions and forced to breed and produce litters until they can no longer cope.”

(Emma Hurst 2/4/22)

“... dogs are often kept in small, empty crates for most of their life without ever seeing the daylight.” (Emma Hurst 2/4/22)

Those are not statements from ACA – they are Ms Hurst’s words from an article¹ dated April 2nd 2022 in the Daily Mail UK.

“Most puppy farms are secretive and out of public view and are almost impossible for authorities to locate ... there are likely thousands of dogs living in squalid conditions on these puppy



farms, but because of secrecy of the industry ... it's impossible to know exactly how many there really are.” (Emma Hurst 2/4/22)

Also from the same article! So which is it? We have an actual estimate with a very specific number of puppies, or the industry is so secretive it is IMPOSSIBLE to know?

Rather than play the speculation game I’d like to focus on some facts.

Fact: The very conditions described by Ms Hurst in that article are NOT legal – they directly defy welfare standards outlined in both POCTAA and the Breeding Code of Practice. Poor food, squalid conditions, mass breeding, restrictive confinement, and so on. All illegal in NSW.

Fact: The description outlined in that article and social media propaganda produced focusses on what the general public find abhorrent, but nowhere in any legislation or even the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry is an agreed definition of what an actual puppy farm is.

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Fact: It is agreed no-one likes ‘puppy farms’ but what is a puppy farm? ACA’s own social media posts have seen an array of opinions. That array and the lack of a definition will have resulted in many submissions that would be based on ideological and perfect world responses, and not the reality of the problem.

ACA is appalled by the idea of puppy farming, but in the real world the primary issue we should be focused on is educating breeders and the public on what are ethical breeders and what they offer as opposed to the unethical breeders who blatantly disregard all laws and act immorally.

Fact: ACA recently surveyed all Councils in NSW – provided to you today - seeking data on the total number of DAs, and DAs in the past 3 years, both rejected and approved for what Council refer to as ‘dog breeding facilities’. We received 84 responses from 128 Councils. The majority reported no ‘puppy farms’ – err – breeding facilities, and most of the others just 1 or 2 facilities. In addition, just 15 new breeding facilities state-wide were recorded in the past 3 years.

Based on the results of our survey, combined with the RSPCA NSW puppy farm taskforce experience, leads ACA to seriously question whether there is a significant ‘puppy farm’ problem at all, and, in particular, is this problem deserving of the funding and attention it currently receives?

Fact: The great migration across the border into NSW is not proven. Of the 10 Councils on the border, 8 of whom responded, only 3 DAs have been identified in the past 3 years – one facility being the Moama facility is well known to authorities.

Where is the evidence Councils are inundated? Underground/secretive puppy farmers wont apply for DAs!

Fact: While on Councils, those in Victoria are now refusing to approve the Excess Animal Permits that allow for retired older animals to remain with their forever families. They are forcing them to give up or euthanise their animals. Legislative sanctioned forced rehoming and killing! Councils should not be playing as compliance officers in this manner, and NSW Councils will be given full control if the current Puppy Farm Amendment has its way.



Fact: The proposed NSW Puppy Farm amendment requires all excess dogs to be desexed if they are to be kept. It also requires all non-breeding bitches to undergo a hysterectomy as an 8 week old pup or kitten – not cruel correct? Yet during this past month’s Inquiry into Animal Welfare the AJP and cohorts opposed surgical AI – a surgical procedure of far less implication than a hysterectomy. A major hypocrisy! One is cruel – but the other isn’t?

Fact: The Amendment doesn’t even fit within the NSW Companion Animals Act which centres on the registration and management of dogs and cats to ensure they do not cause nuisance, endanger or otherwise affect neighbourhood amenity.

Fact: The placing of restrictions on the numbers of bitches, and age of breeding males etc only incentivises the unethical breeders. It’s simple to understand: Less puppies annually equals higher demand which equals higher sales price which incentivises greedy breeders. Simply put – anti-puppy

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farm legislation equals MORE puppy farms. This has been proven in Victoria during the Covid pandemic, with the media releases from the RSPCA Victoria and the shelter industry in Victoria.

Final Fact: Unethical breeders or puppy farms are not going anywhere regardless of the outcomes of this Inquiry. The only real way of reducing them is to educate the public. When was the last time you saw an advertisement from any government on responsible pet buying or responsible pet breeding? Want to stop the unethical breeders – then pull them out of the shadows by educating the public and leave the responsible breeders alone.

Thank you for this opportunity, we welcome any questions.

Animal Care Australia Closing Statement:

Animal Care Australia does not support regulations that will further restrict breeders who are doing the right thing by their animals.

So called Puppy Farm regulations only penalise the ethical breeders and incentivise the rest. It's time the public are educated in responsible pet ownership.

Welfare education over regulation is the best solution.

Submissions and Opening Statements for the Inquiries:

Animal Welfare Policy in NSW:



Opening Statement:



Submission:



Supplementary Submission:

Puppy Farming in NSW:



Opening Statement:



Submission:



Supplementary Submission:

The Effectiveness of the Charitable Organisations:



Opening Statement:



Submission:



Supplementary Submission





ACA responds to misleading Sunday Telegraph article

Sydney, NSW, (26 April 2022) Animal Care Australia (ACA) is appalled by the lack of journalistic integrity and blatant bias depicted within an article appearing in the Sunday Telegraph dated 24th April 2022.

The integrity of the article must be questioned given that it relied solely on quotes made by Emma Hurst MP – Animal Justice Party – an extremist animal rights advocate and ex-media officer for PETA and ex-campaign coordinator for Animal Liberation.

ACA notes Ms Hurst’s devious attempt to thwart the truth in her quotation of statistics taken from the RSPCA’s report on the Puppy Farm Taskforce. Ms Hurst relies on information from a submission provided as part of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Puppy Farming. Within that the RSPCA state:

‘Over an 11-month period (1 April 2021 to 25 February 2022), of the 133 breeding establishments visited, 77% were not compliant with relevant animal welfare laws.’

Given Telegraph’s article was about Puppy Farming and in this instance the Taskforce, we would have expected Ms Burley to research

data on the entirety of the Taskforce and not just a selected period. What Ms Hurst and Ms Burley (the journalist) both failed to state was the testimony provided by the RSPCA during the Inquiry.

The testimony stated:

‘For a period from August ’20 through to February ’22, there were 448 inspections and those 448 inspections generated 199 revisits. Revisits are normally conducted when it has been identified that there is a noncompliance issue with the code. There were 224 section 24N notices issued, which obviously then would generate a revisit.’ – Transcript quote from Scott Meyers, RSPCA Chief Inspector.

A 24N Notice is given as a warning that something needs correcting or updating and does not directly imply there is full non-compliance, thus the terminology of ‘non-compliance issue’. Full non-compliance comes following a revisit and a penalty infringement is issued. In this case only 62 infringement notices for non-compliance were issued.

The truth is, from 448 inspections only 224 potential issues of non-compliance were found after which, following being advised there was an issue, only 62 remained non-compliant – a statistic of just 14%. This is a major difference to Ms Burley’s claim of almost 80% and Ms Hurst’s 77%

Ms Hurst’s claims that ‘paperwork were vital to animal care’ is in itself a stretch of the facts. Paperwork required to be kept under the code also includes a ‘written return policy’ and ACA has documented proof that this alone accounts for some of that missing paperwork, supporting claims made by breeders that missing paperwork is minor.

While ACA acknowledges the code requires breeders to keep records of immunisations and other veterinary records, ACA can also confirm some of the veterinary records in question were being maintained by the breeders digitally and not in paper form. Paper form records were required by the code at that time and many breeders were ordered to provide paper copies upon the inspectors revisit – also accounting for the issue of ‘non-compliance’.

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It should be noted those records are also kept and maintained by the treating vet and are certainly not the neglect of ‘really important care’ as claimed by Ms Hurst.

A vast number of the issues were indeed incorrect fencing heights – a matter that created a large amount of contention when people were issued warnings to raise their 1.2m fencing to 1.8m – despite the fact many of the breeds kept were small breeds, and in some cases 1.8m was not approved by Council, and in other cases the kennels dogs were held in had 1.8m enclosure heights, but because the dogs were let out of their enclosures to run and exercise, the breeders boundary fences were considered non-compliant.

Another misdirect from Ms Hurst claiming puppy farmers are setting up on the border between Victoria and NSW is not substantiated. Animal Care Australia recently surveyed all Councils in NSW seeking data on

the total number of DAs, and DAs in the past 3 years, both rejected and approved for what Council refer to as ‘dog breeding facilities’

We received 84 responses from 128 Councils. The majority reported no ‘puppy farms’ and most of the others just 1 or 2 approved breeding facilities. In addition, just 15 new breeding facilities state-wide were recorded in the past 3 years. Of the 10 Councils on the border, 9 of whom responded, only 3 DAs have been identified in the past 3 years – one facility being the Moama facility is well known to authorities

The only element within the article that ACA can agree with Ms Hurst on is the charitable organisations are not funded sufficiently to carry out compliance.

However, ACA do not believe the responsibility of enforcing compliance should be out-sourced to the charitable organisations. The NSW Department of Primary Industries should be undertaking this responsibility itself.

The entire article simply highlights the unscrupulous lengths a very desperate Ms Hurst will go to in order to validate an

Amendment that she knows is not fully supported by the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League, many Local Councils or other political parties.

Ironically, had Ms Hurst actually consulted with Animal Care Australia, and the dog and cat breeding associations, she may well have found support in trying to end ‘puppy farming’ – but she didn’t because that is not her goal. The Animal Justice Party – just like PETA – want to see the end of dog and cat breeding by private owners and only being carried out by their beloved and approved Shelters.

Animal Care Australia provided a submission to, and attended as a witness at the Inquiry into Puppy Farming. A copy of their submission and opening statement can be found on the ACA website.

In the future, rather than relying on Ms Hurst’s untrustworthy and ideological viewpoint, we strongly suggest when formulating articles relating to pets and companion animals that the media should fact check statements from politicians before printing them without disclaimers. In this instance, the statements made by Hurst did not match what was said on the day.

Michael Donnelly

President, Animal Care Australia Inc

Testimony source: [Select Committee on Puppy](#)



ACA attends consultation on new Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021 NSW.

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative

In my role as ACA Horse & Livestock Representative, I was ACA's delegate in the Impounding Act Review Workshop, hosted by BD Infrastructure on behalf of the NSW Office of Local Government (OLG). The meeting was held via Zoom on 29th April, 2022. Other attendees included councils from across NSW, Local Land Services, Department of Primary Industries, NSW Farmers, NSW Police, RSPCA NSW, and Sydney Botanic Gardens, among others, with ACA and RSPCA were the only welfare organisations in attendance.

The new act is outcomes focused, and the workshop discussed draft changes to:

1. Situations where animals are found lost or abandoned
2. Penalties and who is responsible
3. Arrangements for moving animals into and out of care

The definition of Animal (for the purposes of this Act) includes livestock, horses, native animals kept domestically, and companion animals other than cats and dogs, who are addressed under POCTA/Animal Welfare Reform. Cats and dogs in National Parks are covered under this Act, and Sydney Botanic Gardens proposed that botanic gardens be included to protect conservation and scientific study that occurs in botanic gardens.

The definition also excludes feral animals, but how feral animals can be identified proved to be an issue discussed and not resolved in the

workshop. Stakeholders will need to discuss this further.

OLG stated that 1 in 41 road fatalities were a result of collisions with animals - primarily native animals, followed by stray livestock — this is a key issue of this review.

It was acknowledged that 'unattended' did not mean 'not under supervision' or legally unattended (such as legal access rights to travelling stock routes).

The new draft allows owners and caretakers to be held legally responsible for an animal, and is believed to be the first time an Act allows for multiple people to be held responsible for different offences of the same incident (i.e. landowners can be charged with some offences in an incident, while the animals owner for another, and the personnel employed for something else.)

Fines are separate to fees, and allow some discretion for first time offenders, those struggling financially, and sufferers of mental illness.

This is also the first Act to introduce Compounding Fees - where the fine increases with the number of animals involved in the incident up to a maximum cap. Straying livestock can sometimes involve 500 animals or more, at significant cost to councils to transport and feed while impounded. ACA pointed out that this could have unintended consequences if the cost of recovery exceeds the animals worth or the

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owner's ability to pay. Owners may not reclaim their animals. It was acknowledged that this is an issue for companion animals and horses, rather than livestock.

In response, Scott Myers, Chief Inspector of RSPCA NSW stated: "We just want the animals to be cared for, first and foremost - Not to be fining people."

A new fine of \$660 is being proposed for NOT claiming an impounded animal within 7 days. Some councils said they would like to see this apply to all animals, including cats & dogs. ACA pointed out that this would lead to increased welfare issues, with companion animals and horses, as owners may then claim animals to avoid the large fine, but then dump animals somewhere else, where they are less likely to be found and

reported.

Mr. Myers agreed that this could be an issue for horses in particular. He said that horses are the most abandoned animals in Australia, even though the numbers are small, often due to agistment owner and horse owner disputes, but that livestock were considered to have higher value and were very rarely abandoned. He also said that "abandonment was not a big problem for companion animals".

Within the current Act, the statement that "if the cost of impounding animals exceeded the value of those animals, they could be destroyed" in the current Act has been removed in the new Act and was a key reason this Act was being reviewed at this time.

The 7 day holding period before impounds could rehome animals was legislated by parliament and not able to be extended by this Act, as requested in ACA's submission. The 7 days will begin from when an owner was notified OR it was determined that the owner could not be found. Animals could not be euthanised before a further 14 days had passed and attempts were made to rehome, give away or sell the animal. There was some discussion on what Give Away could mean, and whether this phrase should be removed.

The final step for Arrangements for Animals in Care, includes what happens to the profits when animals are sold from impound. In this Act, animal owners have 6 months (some stakeholders wish to reduce the time to up to 3 months) to claim those profits (note that there may not be any profits). Issues with cross overs into other Acts were discussed, from Stock Welfare panels, POCTA, and cross border issues with conflicting council laws. ACA flagged the National Horse

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Traceability Register as one to be incorporated into the Act when its finalised. Non animal Acts were also discussed, such as the Mental Health Act that could impact who is held responsible, whether animals should be seized or not from a person's custody, and to acknowledge that some people simply cannot comply with legislation regardless of how much they want to. A desire to not disadvantage animal owners with financial, mental health, cultural, education or other circumstances was a goal of this review.

OLG is not required to review this Act periodically, but does intend to consult stakeholders every 5 years on whether any further changes should be made.

ACA also raised animal rights issues that could affect the Impounding Act in future - in particular the intentions of AJP to recognise sentience, afford animals personhood and remove animals from property status. This would effectively remove all animals from the Impounding Act and leave no one responsible for them. While it may not happen any time soon, provisions need to be considered now so that owners will remain responsible for their animals. Many attendees were not aware of this issue, and felt it was a concern. There was some discussion that changing public expectations of how animals are managed needs to be recognised.

Positive outcomes:

Most of ACA's concerns outlined in our original submission are being addressed to our satisfaction.

Horses are being recognised as an issue in that they do not currently fit into livestock nor companion animal legislation and have unique welfare problems that are not being adequately addressed.

The meeting was very productive, respectful and welfare oriented.

Further consultation will continue and ACA will provide further feedback on the matters proposed in this Workshop.





Careful when placing traps for pest control

By Michael Donnelly — ACA Native Mammal Representative

Please note the misleading claim of the product pictured as being wildlife friendly - it is not.

If you do wish to use this rather than a poison/bait, please remember where you place it is of utmost importance.

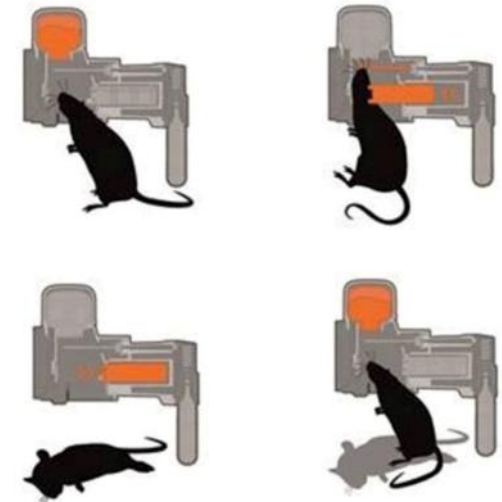
Placement should not be out in the open such as pictured.

The bait/lure utilised is 'nut butter' which is very attractive to a range of animals from native mammals, to birds, or reptiles.

Having a knowledge of the paths the pests travel as well as what native animals you have in your area can assist you in deciding the best location for placement. In this case simple curiosity can kill more than the mouse/rat you're intending to dispose of.

It is dangerous for a few reasons - the manufacturer recommends that it be installed outside, where the food bait will attract wildlife. The bolt is triggered as soon as any small animal sniffs the bait lure inside. It then resets automatically (up to 24 times!), so may kill multiple native animals, before anyone realises what is happening.

Always consider our natives when deciding on the best method to remove feral pests.



Story and above photos from: <https://www.facebook.com/KanyanaWildlife/>

Eastern Barred Bandicoot photo from en.wikipedia.org



I can talk about animals until the cows come home... literally!

By Tracey Dierikx — ACA Exhibited Animals Representative

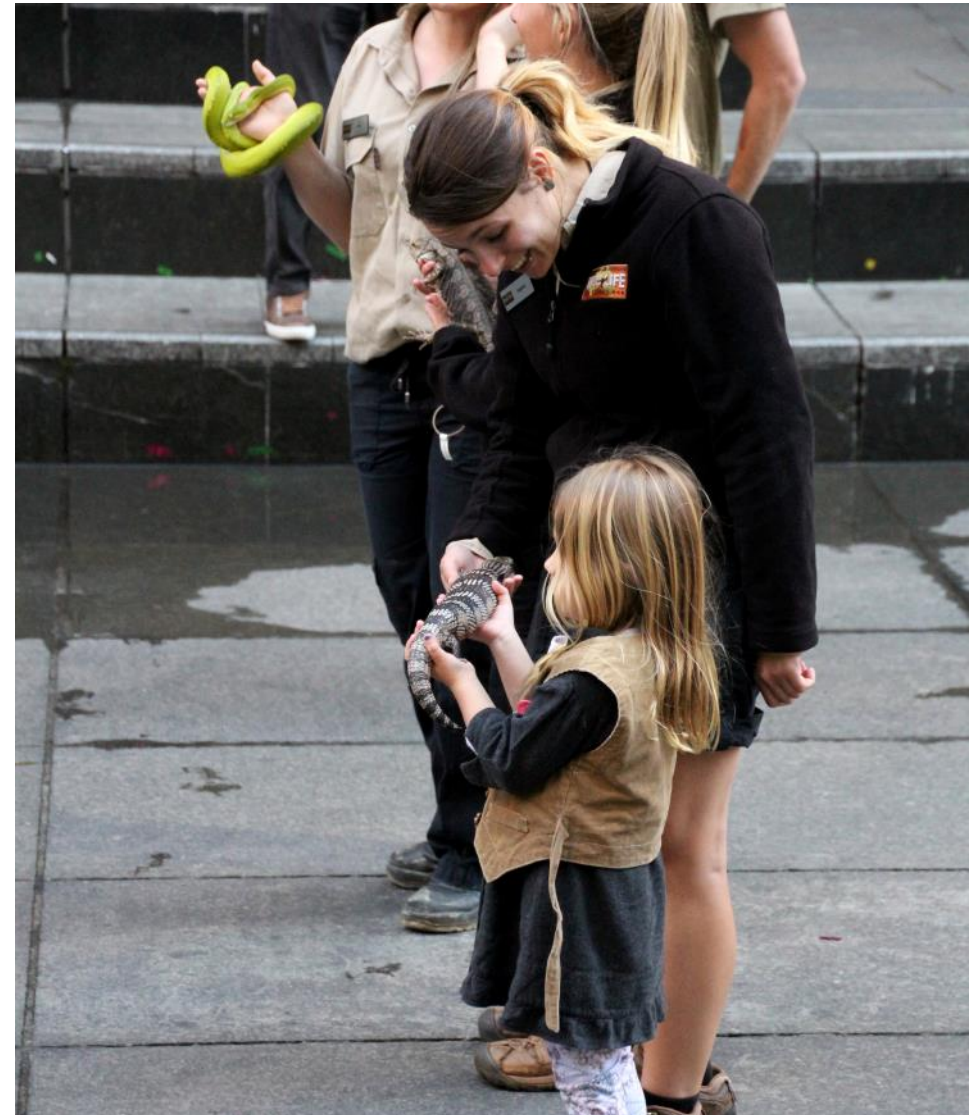
On a recent visit to one of Sydney's zoos, I was confronted by multiple classes of school students from varying age groups. The first thought was one of "oh heck... this is going to be fun navigating around hordes of excited children poorly controlled by their carers"... but then I stopped and thought about the reason these children were visiting. They were there to learn about the various species housed there.

I decided to take the opportunity to talk to some of the children and their carers/teachers about the animals they were seeing around the zoo. Questions fired back and forth, most of the children were really engaged and wanting to know more.

I will admit that not all zoos have worked out the perfect way to impart educational messages regarding animal extinction rates, loss of habitat, poaching, and the general rigours of being an animal in the wild fighting for survival every single minute of every single day. Most zoos have the obligatory signage, keeper talks at set times of the day, exhibits set out to try to resemble as natural a habitat as possible, etc... but it is an evolving process.

Are there better ways to get the messages across? Definitely! We must never become complacent about how we educate our future (and present) generations about animals. We must continuously review what is and isn't working, explore more effective ways of getting those messages across to the benefit of all involved.

By explaining the massive differences between generations of captive born animals and their wild counterparts with regards to how they



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interact with each other and the environment they are in; why we have exotic species of animals in zoos and wildlife parks; why those animals are being bred in captivity; how the survival of species at risk of extinction depends upon zoo breeding programs; and the fact that most captive born species cannot be released to the wild; we can overcome many of the mistruths and in doing so the important role played by zoos.

We have come a long way from the zoos of old, and this needs to be acknowledged.

As does the fact that it is a constantly evolving process, and we won't always get every little aspect right 100% of the time.

Unfortunately, progress in this area requires funding. If we are looking to employ staff to be out talking to and educating the public, that takes money - or at the very least a comprehensive volunteer program, which actually does cost money to run too. At the moment, most zoos are privately run, and rely on gate takings to fund all facets of running the zoo. Very few privately run zoos receive any government funding, and that needs to change if we are looking to utilise zoos to their fullest potential in the education sphere.

The Animal Justice Party clearly state that they wish to remove government funding from zoos that do not remove non- native species from their collections – when removal of those species also removes the opportunity to educate the public about those species.

Where is the sense in that if we are looking to understand and educate about human impact on all species across the world?



Double-standards or hypocrisy or both?

By Rachel Sydenham — ACA Small Mammals Representative

I like to stay informed, and to ensure that I hear both the Left and the Right side of the arguments, I follow various groups, politics and popular figures on social media, Facebook being my primary go to.

I do find it fascinating how diverse people are in their ways of thinking, cultures, ideologies, as well as their basic understanding of things like 'Life'! When you get into the knitty gritty of it, it is downright mind boggling what you come across in the comment sections of various groups and pages. Sometimes it can be a terrifying revelation when you are skimming through the comments sections of groups and pages that the people making some of the comments are out there in society amongst us.

Unless a topic tweaks my interest and I have a genuine question or I can contribute an educated answer or reasoning to a subject, I rarely post comments on posts. I am always open to friendly and diplomatic discussions and debates, as well as open to common sense, proven and science based facts or at least reliable and /or peer reviewed sources

P.S. I have a general policy not to block or delete comments disagreeing with our position on animal protection. However, I assume the puppy farmers and their supporters will attack this post in droves. Honest questions are welcome - but comments with lies and further deception might see you getting a holiday from my FB page. My team are too busy to moderate lies from puppy farmers.

Peace and love, Emma xx

of information to back declarations and reasoning. I respect that everyone is entitled to an opinion, as long as it is understood that an opinion is not the be all and end all, nor does it make it fact. I am also not too proud to admit I am wrong or to be enlightened by and learn something from someone else should they offer a different perspective to a situation.

One page in particular that I follow is that of Ms Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party. I do so to keep up with her radical statements and grand plans. I follow to remain informed so that I can establish a level playing field of the Left thinking to the

Right, and maybe somewhere in the middle I may find some common sense, the truth and reliable information that everyone can benefit from.

Recently Ms Hurst posted to her social media page stating that she was being bullied into silence by those who were opposing her proposed Puppy Farm Bill. She stated they were also circulating memes on social media that were spreading lies about her and AJP policies. She also went on to explain that whilst she had a policy to not block or delete comments disagreeing with her position on animal protection, she would assume that supporters of the breeders would attack her in droves, and whilst honest questions are welcome, comments with lies and further deception might see some getting a holiday from her FB page, because her team are too busy to moderate lies.

This post was pretty much to rally sympathetic support right before the federal election in an aim to give AJP relevance. Needless to say her supporters did not disappoint and were consoling with great vigour and determination to protect their leader.

As someone who is involved in following and contributing to the Parliament Inquiry of Ms Hursts' proposed Companion Animal

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Amendment (Puppy Farm) Bill, of course I was going to comment. In fact myself and others commented pretty much the same thing, pointing out exactly where the bill fails and its lack of weight and capacity in eradicating puppy farms. We called it out for what it was, this bill was not going to protect animals but instead cause far greater negative animal welfare outcomes.

Ms Hurst's following are protective and defensive of her and the AJP ideology, and the lengths that some members will go to is actually quite intimidating and unnerving to say the least. I have borne the brunt of some of her following a few times, and you have to be of good mind and very thick skinned to deal with their antics. In fact it is ridiculous the hypocrisy of someone posting about being bullied into silence, and then allowing the following to perpetrate bullying within the comments of that same post of anyone who disagrees with the animal rights narrative.

The retaliation to my comment was fairly normal response expected from die hard Animal Rights extremists. One person name calling me a 'Troll', (I have been called a murderer and an animal abuser in the past), while two others went to great effort of going through my personal FB profile page, one of which then proceeding to write snide comments on many of my own personal

Rachel Sydenham

Interesting when your bill does not have a definition of nor mention of puppy farm within the contents of it's pages. Also interesting that your bill adds extra enforcement and regulation on responsible breeders while insentivising commercial breeders and back yard breeders 🙄

I am not a dog breeder nor do I advocate poor animal welfare outcomes in any animal breeding establishment. But even the massive flaws in your proposed "puppy farm" bill are obvious to me and I dissagree with it. Along with introducing personhood for animals, which is in your policies. That there opens a huge conundrum of problems for animals thier safety and welfare. But animal rights is NOT about animal welfare.

Just now Like Reply

profile page posts, (I had to block that person and remove all of her comments from my profile page posts), while the third person proceeded to attack me in comments on Ms Hurst's post, making judgements of my character based on my personal FB profile page. This is not the first time I have been subject to unprovoked attacks in an attempt to bully and silence me, (oh the irony), after making comments of common sense that

go against an ideology and has people potentially questioning their faith in the AJP/Ms Hurst.

Honestly, there is no point to name calling and personal attacks, but some people really do like to adorn the armour of the proverbial Keyboard Warrior. I suppose it is easy when you are not face to face and toe to toe with someone in real life who has a voice of reason.

To add further to the irony of the original post about being bullied into silence, several of us were then consequently blocked from Ms Hurst's page. We must assume we were considered to be puppy farmers disagreeing and commenting in droves? Or perhaps, we were lobbyists of puppy farmers? Or, was it that our common sense and facts were a little too damning and we needed to be silenced?

None the less some of Ms Hurst's followers learned of at least one source of the circulating memes and they openly made threatening statements to search out and harass those individuals on social media.

Despite being blocked from Ms Hurst's page, that is OK, I will still continue to access her content so that I can remain just as informed as I was before.



Bird News

By Sam Davis — ACA Bird Representative

Draft Animal Welfare Bill (NSW) 2022

On 21/3/22 I provided evidence to the parliamentary inquiry into the Draft Animal Welfare Bill (NSW) 2022. Main concerns were in regard to restricting right of entry into residential properties by inspectors and ensuring aviculture continues to self-regulate.

Regarding right of entry, subsequent correspondence with senior policy staff at DPI indicates the wording will be tightened to ensure inspectors can only enter residential premises (includes land) with permission from the owner, with a warrant or when there is imminent danger of a cruelty offence occurring. Currently RSPCA (not AWL) officers are entering properties, including forced entry, whenever they deem an animal trade to be taking place – this includes having bred a puppy/kitten some time in the last 5 years.

The new Bill, should it become law, includes mandatory care for all animals based on the 5 freedoms/domains. Essentially this means everyone must ensure basic food, water, shelter, etc. is provided for animals in their care. There are then prescribed enforceable standards which will be specific to particular

animals, events or practices. For example, dog breeding, rodeo, pet shops, etc. On behalf of CCBFA and ACA we have been arguing that our codes prove we are self-regulating very successfully therefore prescribed mandatory standards are not required. Instead, our codes (such as our new bird sale code) should be ratified so they can be used as a defence should anyone ever be charged with an offence or perhaps more importantly become the subject of allegations by animal rights extremists.

A similar system of mandatory care and prescribed standards is likely in all states. We will continue to argue that self-regulation for aviculture has worked for decades and continues to work, therefore should continue.

Details of the Parliamentary inquiry including evidence provided by Michael Donnelly and I from ACA into this draft Bill are here...

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2853>

The draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 is here...



<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-reform>

Budgerigar Disease Update

I've received further advice from the Chief Animal Welfare Officer NSW, Dr Kim Filmer, as follows.

Fortunately no exotic disease was discovered.

The final report shows that potentially this

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was a multifactorial process of

1. coccidiosis
2. E coli

Coccidiosis and e-coli spreads easily within an aviary complex, particularly during wet weather and given that Budgerigars are known to eat their own faeces. Please advise CCBFA of any new cases that your club suspects may indicate the problem spreads from one aviary complex to another. Currently we are unaware of such indications.

Based on the above, CCBFA reaffirms its position that the issue is not widespread, there is no evidence of it being infectious, is unlikely to be caused by an exotic disease and is unrelated to any particular seed source.

We recommend clubs consider a focus on wet weather preventative management practices at their meetings and in their publications. To assist, CCBFA plans to publish articles on coccidiosis and e-coli in an upcoming edition of Feathered World.



Please advise should anyone become aware of further cases or evidence of transmission?

Proposed National Registration Scheme for Native and Exotic Live Birds.

Ongoing communication with Canberra regards the release of the Thinkplace report and recommendations. Advice this week from the head of wildlife trade in Canberra indicate further delay due to election and hence government in caretaker mode.

I am quietly confident there will be no recommendation for an exotic bird registration scheme in the report, however, there remain hurdles to overcome, therefore I have requested input to the Minister's office once the report is provided to the new Minister.

NSW Bird sales and auctions code of practice.

The Fairfield sale was held on Sunday 1/5/22. 1500 copies of the new code were distributed as well as posters with the QR code to the sale. I personally walked around talking to sellers prior to the sale commencing. All were understanding of the need to restrict all wire cages, have a limit of 4 birds per cage and to ensure suitable boxes were used by buyers. I anticipated opposition, but this was not my experience.

One man with large numbers of gold finches and Gouldians wondered how he would manage but accepted we must both ensure welfare and be cognisant of how animal rights extremists may view how our birds are offered.

The current code is here...

<https://www.ccbfa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CCBFA-NSW-Bird-Sale-and-Auction-Standards-and-Guidelines.pdf>

More information is available by contacting the CCBFA.



Psittacine Birds Import Risk Analysis

The process of finalising this risk analysis is well and truly dragging on. Since March I have written to the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment twice with no substantive reply received to date. They now appear to be backing away from their commitment the final document would be "released first half of 2022".



Horse Traceability Register Update

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative

The National Horse Traceability Working Group (NHTWG) met again in May, and opened a survey to gain feedback on draft “Business Rules” for biosecurity tracing.

Biosecurity is the primary focus of the NHTWG, following the Recommendations from the Select Committee Inquiry into the Feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register, which concluded in December 2019.

The draft Business Rules will make owners, carers and breeders of any equines responsible for keeping records of horses movements when they move from living at one property to another (with a different PIC). ACA is relieved to see that horse owners will not need to create records every time a horse leaves home for the day, or a trail ride, as was being discussed.

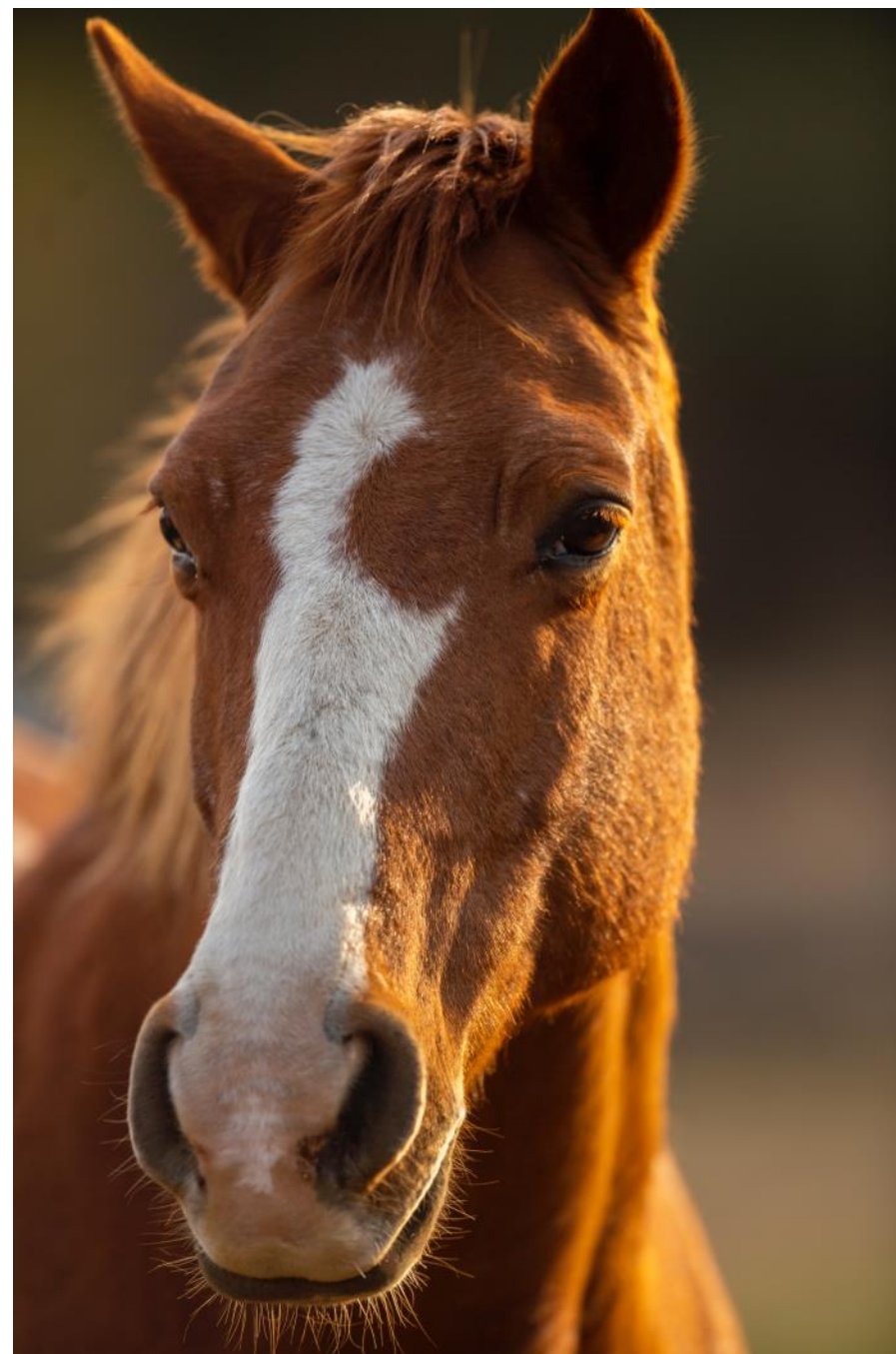
Club and competition organisers will need to keep records of all horses attending events. Transporters, agents and processors will need to keep records of all horses they work with.

The draft Business Rules do not require these records to be lodged or reported officially and any record keeping format is acceptable, but they must be kept for at least 6 months and made available for review if required.

ACA responded to the survey positively in support of the proposed Business Rules and the work so far of the NHTWG, and its practical and pragmatic approach to Traceability.

The one criticism made by ACA was for the term “Business Rules” itself,

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as the proposed rules will apply to ALL persons involved with horses, whether they are an equestrian business owner, employed by a business, a volunteer in a non-profit, a club committee, or private horse owner. ACA feels this will cause confusion and unnecessary conflict when introducing the new rules.

Just prior to the NHTWG meeting, ACA received an email from the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses (CPR), an animal rights group aligned with Peta Australia. The email expressed dissatisfaction with the NHTWG's progress, and for not addressing other concerns that were raised during the Inquiry. The email invited ACA to endorse CPR's unpublished Report claiming the NHTWG is not following its own Terms of Reference.

ACA does not agree that the NHTWG is not following its Terms of Reference, and ACA would need to review CPR's Report prior to agreeing to endorse it as a signatory. At the time of publishing, this Report has not yet been provided for review, and ACA has concerns that any organisation would be irresponsible enough to sign an endorsement of any document they have not yet seen.

As ACA's submission to the Inquiry pointed out, Traceability of horses has no inherent ability to protect horse welfare or rider safety, and much more work needs to be done before implementing traceability to make the register feasible in the long term. ACA supported the formation of the Register only if our 3 Recommendations were implemented alongside it.

Recommendation 1: All horse related legislation in Australia is updated and consolidated into one National document that is consistent across all states and for all horses

Recommendation 2: The National Horse Register is introduced as an integral part of the new National legislation

Recommendation 3: A government funded Department is created to

regulate the horse industry in Australia, maintain the Register, provide education and respond to the issues that the register reveals

Without all three of these recommendations being implemented, the register simply cannot perform the functions that the public expects of it. As a result, ACA does not support a National Horse Register, and ACA does agree with the NHTWG's approach to bring horses into line with other livestock biosecurity requirements, without overcomplicating the process or increasing costs for horse owners.





When Legislative changes are made based on emotions not on the best outcomes

By Kylie Gilbert—ACA Dog Representative

Over the past few years, we have seen many legislative changes that affect the animal industry, unfortunately it is apparent that a lot of the changes made are done so based on emotions and not thinking about the bigger picture and the possible outcomes these decisions could have.

One example is the shelter reforms that are taking place. While no one wants to hear of animals being euthanised - and there are shelters that have been highlighted that have high rates of this - unfortunately there are some animals that due to predominantly behavioural issues are not suitable for rehoming. The issue with the changes is dogs (and cats) now need to be offered to other rescues before they can be deemed unsuitable for rehoming.

There is clear evidence that there are a lot of rescues that are not equipped to modify the behaviours of these dogs, but that does not necessarily stop them from taking them in. In this circumstance the dog then goes on to be re-homed and depending on the seriousness of their behavioural problems they are a huge risk to their new family and the community. The other possible outcome is we see an increase in hoarding within rescues where they take on more dogs than they can possibly re-home. How is that a better life for them?

Are there solutions? Yes. There needs to be more funding put into rehabilitation of animals in rescue, there needs to be more education around responsible ownership and possibly a pre-dog course. This course would see potential owners attending to learn about what it means to own a dog; the training responsibilities and socialisation; what reputable breeding is etc, because this is what will reduce shelter



numbers and will help alleviate some of the behavioural problems shelters are dealing with.

We only have to look at the numbers of shelter dogs rising in Vic and NSW following the lockdowns ending. A large majority of these dogs now have separation issues, as people thought it was a good idea to adopt a pet while they were home. The majority of these new owners were not educated on how to ensure the transition into the home should be undertaken and they were not provided

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assistance with ongoing training advice. Simply, they were just sent home with a great feeling as they had “saved” an animal, but did they really save it? Chances are if it hasn’t been taken back to the shelter then it’s living a life confined to the back yard due to its new behavioural issues.

An upcoming legislative change in Queensland is around training equipment and more precisely the prong collar. These changes again are proposed by those that do not have a clear understanding of the place these collars hold in the training world. They don’t understand how they actually work and that if used correctly they do not inflict any pain, and the same people don’t understand that any training device used incorrectly can be a dangerous device. The concerning point here, is if these tools are taken away, what will be the consequences? Who does it affect? Which dogs without other training options will now see themselves euthanised? So again, a decision that is being made based on emotions and perceptions, having had no public or stakeholder consultation and most importantly, not on actual welfare grounds.



A Puppy Farm Inquiry — but what is a puppy farm?

By Karri Nadazdy—ACA Horse & Livestock Representative

The Legislative Council, Select Committee on Puppy Farming in NSW - Inquiry into Puppy Farming in NSW 2022 has concluded its second day of hearings this week, and it’s been a wild ride – for all the wrong reasons.

In our submission to the Inquiry, ACA highlighted that at no point during the introduction by the Animal Justice Party of their Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farm) Bill, within the Bill itself or within the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry has a definition of a ‘puppy farm’ been provided for the ability of all respondents to provide accurate and equitable feedback and/or submissions.

The Inquiry hearings have only confirmed this lack of definition to be an obstacle to reasonable and rational testimony as well.

It is generally agreed no-one likes ‘puppy farms’ but what is a puppy farm?

The dictionary defines it as:

‘an establishment that breeds puppies for sale, typically on an intensive basis and in conditions regarded as inhumane.’

Wikipedia says:

‘A puppy mill, also known as a puppy farm, is a commercial dog breeding facility characterized by quick breeding and poor conditions.’

RSPCA Aust:

‘an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs’ behavioural, social and/or physiological needs’.

Animal Justice Party (AJP):

- refuse to provide a definition.

With so many variations on what a puppy farm/factory MIGHT BE, ACA had concerns on the validity of many submissions and responses to this Inquiry – given the likelihood of such a broad ‘guesstimate’ of a puppy farm. And this concern was proven justified during the Hearings, where we heard even more diverse definitions:

Dogs NSW: Intensive breeding

Master Dog Breeders and Associates: Breeding dogs in substandard conditions

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Sentient: Companion animal breeding by the unscrupulous, including backyard breeders

Murray River Council: Large-scale breeders

Amy Johnson: Large commercial intensive breeding facilities

Shirene Donnelly: A moneymaking business, not interested in welfare

Grace Gate: A puppy bought from a pet shop

Animal Defenders Office stated that “the expression or term “Puppy Farm” is simply a colloquial term that we use to refer any kind of breeding set that has poor animal welfare outcomes at a certain level. I do not think it should be defined in legislation. ... It would just be very problematic to define that. Of course, legislation has to be clear.”

Yep we did a double take at that, too!

ACA’s definition, supplied in our submission is:

A ‘Puppy factory’ or ‘Unethical operator/breeder’ is any person or entity who is breeding an animal with poor welfare outcomes in defiance of the animal welfare standards.

How can you gain evidence to make rational decisions about any issue when no one agrees on what it is that is actually under investigation? When each witness is testifying to a different concern, to a different standard and with a different expectation?

This inquiry has been poorly defined and as a result there can be no clear answers because no one was given a clear definition for what the argument even was to begin with.

The more cynical among us are confident this Amendment Bill always intended to ban commercial breeders, and the lack of transparency was

intentional to garner public opinion knowing most people never read more than the headline.

This would have been a worthy Inquiry to have and to investigate openly and honestly. With the misleading focus on puppy farming distracting everyone to the real issue at hand, we will likely never know.





Feline Aggression - part one

By Michelle Grayson—ACA Cat Representative

What is normal?

Cats often behave very differently to dogs and humans. Some normal behaviour that your cat may exhibit are stalking, pouncing, or exploring their surroundings. In order to understand cats, you should learn normal cat behaviour. Cats hate their routine being changed and can act out or misbehave, which drive us humans crazy. When their environment is to their liking, they coexist with humans very well.

When cats exhibit bad behaviour it is typically due to owners not being aware of cues sent by the cat beforehand. For example if your cat nips or bites you. Your first response would be to punish or shout at the cat for being bad or aggressive. Usually what happened was the cat gave you a warning sign when you were over stimulating him with petting and you didn't recognize this as a cue to stop.

A few of the warning signs a cat may exhibit are:

- ◇ The cat's body may tense up
- ◇ The tail starts to quiver or twitch
- ◇ The ears become pinned back

When you observe any of these signs while petting or interacting with a cat it would be wise to stop. These are signals in his body language that he has had enough petting. If you don't stop and continue to pet the cat even though the cat is trying to communicate with you, his only recourse is to bite or nip your hand to get your attention. That usually gets you to immediately stop petting him!

Cats are natural-born hunters. Their stalking and pouncing behaviour comes from this and it is something that you are not going to get your cat to stop. Younger cats are especially fond of stalking any prey they can find even if it larger than them. This includes their owners who find the cat attacking their ankles or feet without warning. When they are in the mood for hunting it is better to distract them with another form of play activity.

Though dogs are usually known for their digging activity, cats also have an instinctive need to dig. Litter boxes and house plants are common victims to this digging behaviour. Cats hate the smell of citrus so one way of keeping them from digging is to spray a citrus (orange, lemon or lime) product on or around areas that are off limits.

Cats are very territorial and will claw to mark their territory, visually and by leaving their scent. This behaviour can be distressful

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when it involves furniture or that expensive oriental rug! Clawing increases when there are other cats in the house. The best way to discourage this is to provide plenty of scratching posts or boards scented with catnip. This gives the cat an appropriate avenue for clawing without destroying valuable property.

Aggression with other animals

Cats can sometimes show aggression to other animals that live in the same household. This is commonly a dog or another cat. Cat versus cat aggression is the hardest to treat as most dogs will submit to the more dominant cat. The first step when multiple cats are in a household is to identify the cats that do not get along.

Cats that get along well together groom each other, sleep together and approach each other with a relaxed elevated tail. However, not all cats live together amicably and it is possible to have varying levels of tension ranging from avoidance to overt aggression. Recognizing and dealing with some of the early warning signs may help to prevent further break down of the relationship or higher levels of aggression. People often interpret the lack of overt fighting as evidence that the cats are still getting along normally when that may not be the case.



Early warning signs may be as subtle as a lack of direct interaction between the cats and this may go unnoticed. In more obvious cases, you may see the cats avoiding each other or spending more time in parts of the home away from the other cat. In some cases, you may also see active displacement of one cat from a favourite resting locations by the other, or one of the cats resting in such a way that they block the other cat's access to food, water or litter box locations. There may also be periods of tension after situations such as one of the cats being reintroduced after being absent (e.g. returning from a veterinary appointment) or after seeing an outdoor cat through one of the home windows.

Normal play in cats includes mutual interaction from each of the cats and can be very active with intense physical contact. However, if all of the physical interactions are characterized by one cat chasing or stalking the other or if the "target" shows frequent hissing, swatting or avoidance behaviours, the relationship may not be as friendly as it first appeared. In many cases there may not be a clear aggressor and victim. Being able to identify signs of a fearful cat is crucial. You could video what your cats are doing and what they look like in various situations to work out who is the aggressor and who is the victim.

Treatment of cat -to-cat aggression

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Cat shelves should be placed around the home to offer an elevated escape location for the victim or offer the aggressor a location where he is less motivated to control the other cats. By increasing vertical space in the home, the owners are effectively increasing the living space for the feline companions.

Placing various hide spaces such as tunnels, cardboard boxes etc. around the house provides opportunities for a fearful cat to eliminate a visual source of fear/anxiety.

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Providing cats with increased availability of resources such as food stations (not necessarily more food), water sources, and litter boxes (one for each cat, plus one, distributed throughout the living space) all help to decrease the social pressure and decrease resource based competition between the cats.

In households where the tension between the cats is already intense, it will be necessary to physically separate the cats until they can be gradually reintroduced to each other with rotational access to a shared living space, scent transfer, and behaviour modification sessions. You should be aware of the physical and emotional damage that could be caused by constant exposure to an aggressor without a way to alleviate that stress. Attempts at behaviour modifications may be unsuccessful or at least less successful without segregation.

ENRICHMENT

It is also important to be sure that young, active cats have access to appropriate outlets for predatory and play behaviours so he is less likely to strike out at the other cat(s). Using active toys, clicker training, increasing the number of owner-initiated play sessions, feeding with food dispensing toys, providing supervised outdoor access can all help to lessen tension between the cats.

PHEROMONES

Pheromones are naturally produced by cats and can bias their behavioural responses. Feliway may be useful in cases of mild to moderate inter-cat aggression to help decrease anxiety. Both cats

Although we want cats to be able to hide when they are fearful, the intention is that this serves as a temporary respite. If a cat is choosing to hide the majority of the time, this is a red flag that the environment is not conducive to a state of good welfare and the cat is likely experiencing generalized anxiety.

In addition, an owner can place a cat door within the home that only the resident cat/s can access (via electronic tags).

In all cases, the aggressor should also wear a collar with bell which may provide the other cat with an advance warning, allowing for easier conflict avoidance.



(both the aggressor and the victim) should have a Feliway diffuser in their space while separated.

BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATIONS

The cornerstone of a behavioural program is to help change the cats' perception of one another. In short, we want the cats not only to be exposed to one another in a very minimal manner and to less anxious or scared (desensitization), but we also want them to associate the other cat with very positive things. If this is done successfully, the cats underlying emotional state about the other cat will change followed by their behaviour.

MEDICATIONS

Medications are commonly used for the aggressor to calm them. One should consider medicating the victim as well if he/she is experiencing considerable anxiety. Once the decision is made to start medication, there is often a lag time of 2 weeks and the individual usually has to stay on medication for at least three months. The cats will be reassessed at that time, and if successful the doses can be reduced or we may attempt to wean them off, but some cats may need to remain on meds for life.

However, you should be aware that medication alone is not a cure; you must still put in the hard work on behaviour modification in order to have a successful outcome.

Part Two — Feline aggression with humans continues in our September edition



NSW Native Wildlife License Reforms

By Michael Donnelly—President.

National Parks & Wildlife Service has now appointed a new reforms team to again review and (hopefully) implement the native wildlife licensing reforms.

Native bird licensing will be the first priority followed by reptiles.

ACA has appointed Michael Donnelly and Rachel Sydenham as our representatives. Both Michael and Rachel have kept birds and reptiles.

NPWS made it very clear they wish to avoid conflicts of interest, and accordingly given our Bird & Reptile Representatives are members of the respective species breeding clubs, we feel it appropriate to avoid any future claims of bias. ACA will be attending to provide animal welfare input from the perspective of native animal keepers.

Other stakeholders attending will include bird and reptile keepers' representatives, RSPCA NSW, Taronga, AVA, WIRES, NSW DPI.

It should be noted the Biodiversity Conservation Act in NSW is now due to be reviewed again – hopefully without interfering with this process.





MISSION STATEMENT

“Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pet and companion animals in Australia”.

ACA encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. To encourage responsible pet ownership, and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community ACA continues to promote welfare education over regulation



OBJECTIVES

- To represent Animal Care Groups as the peak animal welfare body
- To engage and advise Government and legislators on welfare issues relating to pets and companion animals.
- To protect the rights of ethical hobbyists & animal keepers to breed and keep pets and companion animals.
- To clarify the difference between animal rights and animal welfare
- To promote higher animal welfare outcomes



ACA GENERAL MEETINGS IN 2022

7.30 to 8.30pm

MARCH 14th

MAY 9th

JULY 11th

SEPTEMBER 12th

NOVEMBER 14th — AGM

Meetings in 2022 will continue via Zoom to ensure members nation-wide can attend..

Any member wishing to join a meeting will need to RSVP by no later than 5pm on that Monday via email: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au with your details. A link for the meeting will be emailed to you.



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