



ANIMAL WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL - EXPOSURE DRAFT 2019
Submission from the Animal Protectors Alliance

The Animal Protectors Alliance supports most of the amendments to the Act. We are very glad to see the inclusion of stated objects of the Act at last, and that one of those objects is "that animals are sentient beings with intrinsic value".

We do, however, have some very serious concerns with the Amendment Bill, as follows:

1. This recognition of animal sentience would be more meaningful if the vast majority of animals in the ACT were not still precluded from the Act's protection. Under Section 20 of the main Act, acts of cruelty are exempted from prosecution when they are permitted by a code of practice. Codes of practice permit the routine use of unconscionable cruelty because it is considered by industries to be in the interests of those industries, even though it is well-known to be antithetic to the interests of animals.

Until Section 20 is amended, the vast majority of animals in the ACT will continue to be treated as things without feelings, rights or any inherent value, despite the Act's new objects.

2. Our major concern with the Amendment Bill is with the replacement of current section 17 (*Matches, competitions and baiting*) with a new section 17 (*Violent Animal Activities*).

This replacement would seem to exclude in its entirety the offence of any 'activity in which an animal is released from captivity for the purpose of being hunted, caught, confined, injured or killed by a person'.

We strongly urge that the bloodsport of releasing animals for the purpose of hunting, harming or killing them remains a serious offence under the Animal Welfare Act of the ACT.

3. We are also concerned about the reduced penalties for offences such as: poisoning animals; trapping animals; unlawfully releasing animals; and failing to alleviate pain.

We urge that these amendments be carefully reviewed before this Bill passes into law.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Amendments Bill.

Yours sincerely

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28 January 2019