



ANIMAL WELFARE PRIORITIES
for the Australian Government 2019



PREVENTING CRUELTY TO ANIMALS SINCE 1871

As Australia's biggest, best-known and most trusted animal welfare organisation, the RSPCA is dedicated to improving and promoting the welfare of Australia's animals.

RSPCA Australia member Societies care for and protect animals (including through animal shelters and inspectorate services) in every Australian state and territory.

Each year the RSPCA in Australia:

- Receives and cares for over 130,000 animals
- Investigates around 55,000 complaints of animal cruelty and neglect
- Provides information to millions of Australians about animal welfare, responsible animal care, and pet ownership through school, community and online activities; and
- Calls for changes to legislation and policies that improve the lives of animals.

AUSTRALIANS CARE ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

Animals play a pivotal role in the Australian way of life; socially, culturally and economically, and Australians care about animal welfare.

The RSPCA is calling on parliamentarians and the next Australian Government to demonstrate they care about the welfare of animals too.

There is much we can and must do.



ANIMAL WELFARE IN 2019

We have identified three priorities to improve animal welfare that fall within the responsibility of the Australian Government, and which have strong community support:

1. Re-establishing the Australian Government's leadership role in animal welfare.
2. Growing meat exports and phasing out the live export of sheep for slaughter.
3. Ending animal testing for cosmetic purposes.



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ANIMAL WELFARE

ISSUE

National leadership on animal welfare is critical to ensure there is continuous improvement, coordination and consistency across states and territories. Standards and regulations must be designed to meet the expectations of the community and protect animals. Sadly, in Australia this leadership and focus is lacking.

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In 2013, the Australian Government withdrew funding for the *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy*, removed the Animal Welfare branch within the Department of Agriculture, and dissolved advisory committees that provided independent advice to the Government.

In 2014, the *Animal Protection Index* gave Australia a 'C' grading alongside India, Brazil, Malaysia and the Philippines. This index ranks countries around the globe according to their standards, legislation and policy commitments as well as efforts to

educate and communicate about the importance of protecting animals.

In 2016, the RSPCA, alongside all major animal protection groups, the Australian Veterinary Association, and representative organisations from a range of animal industries wrote to the Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister calling for the Australian Government to re-establish its leadership role in animal welfare.

The 2016 Productivity Commission report on the regulation of Australian agriculture recommended the establishment of a national independent animal welfare commission to coordinate the development of national standards and to provide a source of excellence in animal welfare policy advice.

In 2018, a review by Phillip Moss AM found that the Department of Agriculture struggled to balance its competing roles of promoting the live export trade and protecting animal welfare, and that the cuts made to animal welfare services in 2013 contributed to a culture that neglected animal welfare responsibilities.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

Achieving consistency in animal welfare standards within a federated system of government requires national leadership and coordination.

The Australian Government is responsible for providing representation to international forums on animal welfare and for improving the nation's international standing.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. **The Australian Government must reinstate its leadership role in animal welfare and dedicate resources to a new national framework, which includes the establishment of an independent statutory body dedicated to animal welfare.**
2. **The framework must be one that facilitates expert input and advice to government from a broad range of perspectives, seeks to harmonise animal welfare standards across jurisdictions, and coordinates research funding to improve animal welfare outcomes.**
3. **Government departments responsible for developing animal welfare policy must be independent of conflicting institutional objectives, and appropriately resourced and staffed with personnel who have expertise in animal welfare.**

GROWING AUSTRALIAN MEAT EXPORTS AND PHASING OUT LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS

ISSUE

In 2018 Australians saw the conditions sheep experience on board live export ships. Sheep cannot lie down at the same time or easily access food and water. Animals stand and lie in their own waste and endure extreme temperatures and humidity as well as the constant movement of the ship. Most sheep suffer and thousands die on board every year.

The changes introduced by the Government since April 2018 are inadequate and do not protect the welfare of sheep during this journey.

The Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) governs the handling and management of Australia live-exported animals from the point of disembarkation to slaughter. The ESCAS does not adequately protect Australian animals from abuse. The 2015 review of the ESCAS found, 'it is not known what proportion of non-compliance is detected and reported'. When breaches are detected, the penalties imposed are consistently inadequate.

The new Livestock Global Assurance Program (LGAP) proposed by the livestock export industry will lead to less government oversight of an industry that continues to see shocking breaches of animal welfare.

Over many years and many chances, the live export industry has consistently failed to meet community expectations, flouted Australian regulations, and continuously resisted any efforts to improve animal welfare. As a result, this industry has irrevocably lost its social license to operate.

There is a growing international demand for Australian meat. Meat is exported to more than 50 countries and contributes seven times more to the Australian economy than the live animal trade.

Supply of Australian lamb and mutton carcasses in the Middle East alone is now three times greater than the supply for live sheep.

Expanding meat exports supports growth in regional areas and the creation of more local jobs.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The *Australian Meat and Livestock Industry Act 1997* (Cth) and the *Export Control Act 1982* (Cth) regulate the live export trade from on-farm sourcing to the point of slaughter in the importing country.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. The Australian Government must implement a phase out of long-haul live sheep export within a five-year period.
2. Until this phase out can be completed, the Australian Government must immediately halve the stocking density on all ships and permanently end the trade during the high-risk northern summer months of May to October.
3. Until live sheep exports are phased out completely, the Australian Government must implement all recommendations of the Moss Review, including the establishment of an independent Inspector-General to oversee the regulator.
4. The Australian Government must commit to implementing a revised version of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) that improves animal welfare outcomes during transport.
5. The Australian Government must dedicate greater resources to the administration of the ESCAS, including strengthening the Government's role in investigating reported non-compliances and imposing adequate sanctions.
6. The Australian Government must announce new actions to expand the share of Australia's chilled and frozen meat exports and reduce that represented by live animal exports.

ENDING COSMETIC TESTING ON ANIMALS

ISSUE

Many of the cosmetics products used by Australians every day have been tested on animals.

An estimated 27,000 live mice, rats and rabbits are used each year for this purpose, with each animal experiencing pain, suffering and distress, before being killed after the experiment.

The changes brought into place in the European Union have already demonstrated that a prohibition on the use of animals in cosmetics testing is feasible and can be implemented without significant impact on the industry or consumers.

There is a bank of more than 20,000 existing ingredients that are considered by regulators to be safe for human use in cosmetics products. These ingredients do not require further testing on animals, and their use avoids causing this unnecessary animal suffering.

In addition, non-animal scientific alternatives now exist that can be used to test new ingredients and cosmetic products.

Most international cosmetic companies have internal policies to end animal testing; however implementation of this policy is not occurring in Australia voluntarily.

Cosmetics sold in Australia are tested overseas. However, it is not against the law to undertake such tests here.

Therefore, effective regulation must include both cosmetics manufactured here and those imported

85%
**OF AUSTRALIANS
OPPOSE THE TESTING
OF COSMETICS
ON ANIMALS.**



from overseas; and must include testing of ingredients as well as complete cosmetic products.

In 2017, the Australian Government introduced legislation that aimed to end animal testing for new cosmetic ingredients. However, this legislation has not passed the Australian Senate, and as currently drafted, only applies to chemicals used solely for cosmetic purposes.

Most ingredients are also used in other products, such as household cleaning products, and these multi-use ingredients could still be tested on animals. This loophole must be closed to ensure that no new ingredient in cosmetic products can be tested on animals.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The *Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Act 1989* (Cth) and the *Cosmetics Standard 2007* (Cth) regulate chemical safety assessments for cosmetics, their ingredients, and marketing.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. The Australian Government must introduce legislation that will ensure no cosmetics tested on animals are manufactured or sold in Australia.
2. This prohibition must apply to all chemical ingredients used in cosmetics regardless of whether they are also used for other purposes.
3. The Australian Government must invest in non-animal models as alternatives to research and testing on live animals.



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The RSPCA is Australia's oldest, largest and most trusted animal welfare organisation.