

## Animal Law Committee

### Submission on The Agriculture Competitiveness Green Paper

**11 December 2014**

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The NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee (**the Committee**) is grateful for the opportunity to make a submission to the Agricultural Competitive Taskforce on the Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper (**Green Paper**).

## **NSW Young Lawyers**

NSW Young Lawyers supports practitioners in their professional and career development in numerous ways, including by encouraging active participation in its 15 separate committees, each dedicated to particular areas of practice. Membership is automatic for all NSW lawyers under 36 years and/or in their first five years of practice, as well as law students.

The Committee comprises of a group of approximately 180 Young Lawyers members interested in animal welfare and laws regulating the treatment of animals. The Committee aims to raise awareness and provide education to the legal profession and wider community, while increasing understanding about the importance of protecting animals from abuse and neglect. A common theme amongst the Committee members is a passion and desire to use our legal skills and the law to help improve the lives of animals.

## **Introduction**

The Committee commends the Government for seeking to evaluate and shape the direction of Australia's agricultural industry, and for its acknowledgement in its Green Paper of the relevance of animal welfare to the competitiveness of the industry.

However, the Committee is concerned that the importance of animal welfare issues to the competitiveness of Australia's agricultural industry has not been recognised in the Green Paper. Specifically, the Committee is concerned that:

- the Federal Government is not engaging with the State and Territory governments to create high, and nationally consistent, animal welfare standards;
- the Federal Government has expressed support for laws to curtail the activities of animal activists, without condition that laws of this nature should only be introduced after the State and Territory governments work to ensure that compliance with animal welfare standards is enforced;
- the Federal Government has failed to give consideration to the need for truth-in labelling laws (that is, laws which give meaning to commonly-used marketing terms which connote higher standards of animal welfare such as 'free range' and 'organic');
- the Federal Government has expressed continued support of live export as a long-term viable trade for Australia; and

- the Green Paper contains repeated references to the need to control wild dog populations in Australia, with \$10 million flagged for pest management, without any indication that the government has a preference for humane forms of pest management.

As we argued in our submission on the Government's Agricultural Competitiveness Issues Paper (*the Issues Paper*) (attached), failure to consider animal welfare issues when creating a blue print for the future of the agricultural industry has the potential to result in economic backlash which would be detrimental to the industry. Concern about animal welfare is increasing, not only in Australia but also in Australia's export markets, and this concern is translating into changing consumer demands.<sup>1</sup> Australia's low animal welfare standards combined with increasing public scrutiny of the industry, and repeat exposure of systematic cruelty, hampers the ability of the agricultural sector to compete in this environment.

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in our submissions on the Government's Issues Paper and Terms of Reference, products featuring higher animal welfare attributes are gaining market share. An Australian survey conducted between 2000-2004 found that 48% of people were more likely to buy free-range eggs than they were a few years before (Franklin, 'Human-nonhuman animal relationships in Australia: An overview of results from the first national survey and follow-up case studies 2000-2004', *Society & Animals*, 2007, vol. 15, pp 7-27). The retail market share for non-cage eggs has doubled in size from 24.8% of the market in 2005 to 50% in the 2012/13 financial year (Australian Egg Corporation Limited, *Woolworths and cage eggs*, media statement, 4 October 2013; IBIS World, *Industry Report: Egg Farming in Australia*, 2013). Higher welfare chicken meat and pork products have also experienced considerable growth – including those sold under the RSPCA's Approved Farming Scheme (RSPCA Australia, *Approved Farming Scheme*, 2013, available at: <http://www.rspca.org.au/what-we-do/working-farming-industry/approved-farming-scheme>, accessed on 6 April 2014). Australia's two major food retailers – Coles and Woolworths – have both made announcements that they will increase the animal welfare standards employed in the production of their branded products. In 2013 Coles stopped selling Coles Brand caged eggs and phased out sow stalls in all Coles Brand fresh pork, ham and bacon production (Coles Limited, 'Better Animal Welfare at Coles!', Coles Blog (9 January 2013) <http://blog.coles.com.au/2013/01/09/better-animal-welfare-at-coles/>, accessed on 6 April 2014). Currently all Woolworths fresh pork meat is sourced from farms that only use stalls for less than 10% of the sows' gestation period; Woolworths will phase out all caged eggs from sale and the use of caged eggs in ingredients in Woolworths-branded products by December 2018; and Woolworths will move to RSPCA or equivalent standard for all fresh chicken meat sold in Woolworths stores by December this year (Woolworths Limited, 'Animal Welfare'. Australian Pork Limited has committed to voluntarily phasing out sow stalls by 2017 (Australian Pork Limited, 'Housing' < <http://australianpork.com.au/industry-focus/animal-welfare/housing/>>, accessed on 6 April 2014). The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has recognised that consumers are increasingly distinguishing products based on animal welfare standards and so has sought to crack down on producers who make misleading or deceptive animal welfare claims. The ACCC has also successfully prosecuted several producers of animal products for inappropriately labelling their products to represent that the animals used in production were kept in better conditions than they were (see e.g. *ACCC v G.O. Drew Pty Ltd* [2007] FCA 1246; *ACCC v C.I. & Co Pty Ltd* [2010] FCA 1511; *ACCC v Bruhn* [2012] FCA 959; *ACCC v Turi Foods Pty Ltd (No 2)* [2012] FCA 19; *ACCC v Luv-a-Duck Pty Ltd* [2013] FCA 1136; *ACCC v Pepe's Ducks Ltd* [2013] FCA 570); and *ACCC v Pirovic Enterprises Pty Ltd (No 2)* [2014] FCA 1028. The ACCC has also initiated proceedings against Derodi Pty Ltd and Holland Farms Pty Ltd alleging that their use of 'free range' in relation to their Ecoeggs, Field Fresh and Port Stephens egg brands was false and misleading: <<https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/accc-takes-action-against-ecoeggs-supplier-for-free-range-claims>>. A study assessing public attitudes to animal welfare in China found that 86% of respondents believed it was necessary to enact animal welfare legislation, and 89.5% stated that they were willing to pay for improved animal welfare standards: Zhao, Y, Wu, S, 'Willingness to pay: Animal welfare and related influencing factors in China', *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 2013 vol 14, at 150-161.

## The Committee's Recommendations

The Green Paper states that the Australian Government's agricultural policy is driven by one key objective: to achieve a better return at the farm gate.<sup>2</sup> In order to achieve this long term, the Committee recommends that the Federal Government:

- facilitate the development, implementation and enforcement of high, and nationally consistent, animal welfare standards;
- encourage State and Territory governments to ensure the enforcement of, and compliance with, animal welfare laws, rather than encourage State and Territory governments to introduce measures to curtail the activities of animal activists;
- provide incentives and support for farmers to develop more ethical farming practices and encourage increased productivity to be achieved responsibly, ethically and safely;
- promote business opportunities to develop the market for high-quality produce, produced in accordance with high animal welfare standards, by making farmers more aware of, and responsive to, market opportunities in relation to animal welfare;
- enhance biosecurity measures to protect the health of animals and legislate to reduce and eventually eliminate non-therapeutic use of antibiotics, hormones and other growth-promoters in raising farm animals;
- implement truth-in labelling laws (that is, laws which give meaning to commonly-used marketing terms which connote higher standards of animal welfare such as 'free range' and 'organic') so that businesses which employ high animal welfare standards can distinguish their products from others on the market;
- transition away from the live export of animals from Australia towards a domestically-processed chilled-meat trade;
- follow New Zealand's lead in banning live export; and
- support the research and implementation of non-lethal methods of managing the populations of wild dogs and other animals deemed 'pests'.

## The Federal Government's role in facilitating the development, implementation and enforcement of high animal welfare standards

The Green Paper recognises the need for States and Territories to drive reform in the implementation and enforcement of animal welfare standards.<sup>3</sup> However, the Green Paper fails to recognise the role the Federal Government must take in this reform.<sup>4</sup> Inconsistent and low animal welfare standards not only jeopardises the ability of

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<sup>2</sup> Green paper, p vii.

<sup>3</sup> Green Paper, p 23.

<sup>4</sup> 'Stakeholders raised a number of issues that are primarily the responsibility of State and Territory governments. Examples included ... animal welfare', Green Paper, p 18.

Australia's agricultural industry to market itself as a provider of high quality produce, it most likely also increases the regulatory burden on businesses, especially those operating across jurisdictions. The role of the Federal Government in reform in this area is not limited to simply paying lip-service to the need for State and Territory governments to implement and enforce high animal welfare standards. It requires the Federal Government to coordinate this change across the State and Territory governments to ensure that laws are consistent and of a standard suitable to meet the demands of Australia's domestic and export markets.

**Recommendation:**

- The Federal government should facilitate the development, implementation and enforcement of high, and nationally consistent animal welfare standards.

**Ag-gag laws should not be introduced before animal welfare legislation is enforced and complied with**

The Committee agrees that the detection of contraventions, and the enforcement, of any legislation should be the prerogative of government bodies or agencies; and that reliance should not be placed on animal activists.

However, the RSPCA is the institution primarily charged with ensuring the compliance with and enforcement of animal welfare laws, and it is a charity, with very limited government funding. In our submission, the RSPCA is not sufficiently resourced by the government to detect contraventions of, and enforce, animal welfare laws throughout Australia.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the detection of contraventions of animal welfare law has, in large part, been left to individuals and animal welfare groups. Had it not been for the work of these activists, illegal activities resulting in the abuse of animals would likely have continued with impunity.<sup>6</sup>

The State and Territory governments have not sought to address this deficiency in the law. In the absence of any amendments to the legislative framework to ensure that authorised persons are able to detect contraventions, it would not be appropriate for the Federal Government to encourage State and Territory governments to impose stricter

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the RSPCA NSW receives less than 2% of its funding in regular funding from the NSW Government and 0% from the Federal Government. It costs on average \$34 million for the RSPCA NSW to operate each year: <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/about/about-rspca-nsw>. Further the number of investigators in Australia is disproportionate to the number of complaints which the RSPCA handles. The RSPCA has 98 inspectors, and in 2012-13 investigated 49,861 cruelty complaints across Australia (excluding the Northern Territory where enforcement is the sole responsibility of the Territory Government): <http://www.rspca.org.au/facts/annual-statistics/cruelty-complaints#sthash.ZZ6TGjuH.dpuf>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, covert footage was used to detect contraventions of POCTA at the Hawkesbury Valley Meat Processors at Wilberforce and at the abattoir in Tahmoor (the subject of this media release [http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/mr-17-May-12-animal-welfare-training-abattoirs/#.UVTn4Rww0\\_U](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/mr-17-May-12-animal-welfare-training-abattoirs/#.UVTn4Rww0_U)). Evidence obtained by animal welfare groups was also instrumental in initiating cases brought by the ACCC for misleading and deceptive conduct including: *ACCC v Turi Foods Pty Ltd* [2013] FCA 1109; *ACCC v Luv-a-Duck Pty Ltd* [2013] FCA 1136; and *ACCC v Pepe's Ducks Ltd* [2013] FCA 570.

penalties on those who seek to do the work which authorised persons cannot or will not do. Instead, the Federal Government should encourage the State and Territory governments to address the underlying problem and examine ways of improving compliance with animal welfare standards.

**Recommendation:**

- The Federal Government should encourage State and Territory governments to ensure the enforcement of, and compliance with, animal welfare laws, rather than encourage State and Territory governments to introduce measures to curtail the activities of animal activists.

**Animal protection is a key factor in Australia's ability to meet the food demand of the growing middle class in our region**

As set out in our submissions on the Federal Government's Agricultural Competitiveness Issues Paper, there is growing community concern, locally and abroad, over the welfare protection of the animals we consume, and a correlation is increasingly made between the proper treatment of farm animals and the quality and safety of the consumable product. This is leading to the development of a separate segment of the consumer food market: that of high quality, safe, ethically-produced, environmentally-sustainable, natural produce. Australia should seek to compete in this segment of the market, rather than try to compete in the mass production of low quality, low priced food. Competing in this latter segment of food markets inevitably involves a race to the bottom, not only in animal welfare standards, but also in profit margins, product safety, employment conditions and environmental protection. It should not be Government policy to try to win this race to the bottom. By contrast, participating in high-value produce markets may give better returns by volume, and may also reduce the agricultural industry's externalised costs to animal welfare, human health, employment standards and the environment.

**The Chinese market**

The growing middle class in our region, in particular China, represents an unprecedented opportunity for Australian farmers. China is already Australia's top trading partner and, with the implementation of the free trade agreement (**FTA**), is set to become a key export partner.

Demand for food in Asia is likely to double between 2007 and 2050, with China accounting for 43 percent of increased demand, particularly for beef, wheat and dairy products.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jue Chan, "Food safety in China opens doors for Australia's agri sector", Australia China Connections, <http://www.chinaconnections.com.au/en/magazine/current-issue/1940-food-safety-in-china-opens-doors-for-australia%E2%80%99s-agri-sector>.

China's growing middle class takes an increasingly strong interest in where their food comes from and food safety. Food safety scandals in China have led Chinese consumers to express concern in their local food industry and which brands they can trust. Coupled with rising purchasing power, Chinese consumers are increasingly turning to imported alternatives. An example of a recent food safety scare that has eroded the confidence of Chinese consumers in domestically produced food products is the use of excessive amounts of antibiotics in chicken feed to help them survive in overcrowded coops.<sup>8</sup>

Chinese consumers are also increasingly conscious about the conditions in which animals are kept. A study assessing public attitudes to animal welfare in China found that 86% of respondents believed it was necessary to enact animal welfare legislation, and 89.5% stated that they were willing to pay for improved animal welfare standards.<sup>9</sup>

It will be of detriment to the future of Australia's agriculture industry if the government attempts to compete with international markets such as Asia by maximising output and reducing costs. Our competitive advantage in the Chinese market relies on our modern farming techniques, processing technology, food safety and a positive perception that our produce is ethical, green and natural.

Australia's animal welfare standards and labelling laws are not adequate to enable our industry to compete in the high-value produce markets. Australia's animal welfare laws are fragmented and inconsistent across the States and Territories. As discussed in our submissions on the Issues Paper, Australia's animal welfare laws also enshrine lower animal protection standards than many other countries. The World Animal Protection's Animal Protection Index grades Australia as a 'C' in both animal protection standards overall, and for protecting animals used in farming. Australia is trailing behind its neighbour and competitor, New Zealand, which received an 'A' on both measures.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note reports that New Zealand has taken market share from Australia in international markets.<sup>11</sup>

Further, as discussed in our submissions on the Issues Paper, Australia's labelling laws do not enable producers who employ higher animal welfare standards to distinguish their

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<sup>8</sup> Jue Chan, note 7.

<sup>9</sup> Zhao, Y, Wu, S, 'Willingness to pay: Animal welfare and related influencing factors in China', *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 2013 vol 14, at 150-161.

<sup>10</sup> The World Animal Protection launched the Animal Protection Index in 2014. The index judges 50 countries on their policy and legislation for animals. The index shows that Australia is one of the countries found to be lacking in terms of animal welfare. The index can be accessed here: <http://www.worldanimalprotection.org/news/ground-breaking-animal-protection-index-assesses-animal-welfare-around-world>

<sup>11</sup> Andrew White, 'Food exporters lose out in China', *The Australian* (25 March 2014) <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/in-depth/food-exporters-lose-out-in-china/story-fni2wt8c-1226863700456> accessed on 30 March 2014.

products from other producers. Developing and implementing nationally-consistent truth-in-labelling laws should be an inherent part of a coordinated approach to domestic and international promotion of Australian agricultural produce.<sup>12</sup>

In our submission, Australia cannot afford to develop a reputation of its produce being the product of animal cruelty. Minimum animal welfare standards must be raised, the enforcement of those standards must be guaranteed, and the labels on food must reliably meet consumer expectations, so that consumers can be assured that when they are buying Australian-made products, they are buying products produced in accordance with the highest standards of animal welfare.

**Recommendations:**

- Facilitate the development, implementation and enforcement of high, and nationally consistent animal welfare standards.
- Provide incentives and support for farmers to develop more ethical farming practices and encourage increased productivity to be achieved responsibly, ethically and safely;
- Promote business opportunities to develop the market for high-quality produce, produced in accordance with high animal welfare standards, by making farmers more aware of, and responsive to, market opportunities in relation to animal welfare;
- Enhance biosecurity measures to protect the health of animals and legislate to reduce and eventually eliminate non-therapeutic use of antibiotics, hormones and other growth-promoters in raising farm animals;
- Implement truth-in-labelling laws so that businesses which employ high animal welfare standards can distinguish their products from others on the market

## **Live export is not a sustainable industry**

The Committee opposes the government re-opening markets for live exports in the Middle East—including Bahrain, Iran and Egypt—and in Asia, including Cambodia and China.

Live exports is a small and declining industry, accounting for only 0.3% of all Australian exports, and not key to the future of the agricultural industry. Most Australian farmers do not produce animals for live export. In 2012-2013, only 6% of cattle and 7% of sheep farmed in Australia were exported live.<sup>13</sup> The trade is widely unpopular amongst

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<sup>12</sup> Green Paper, p 104.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ban Live Export, '10 reasons why the world won't end when live export does', <<http://www.banliveexport.com/features/10-reasons-world-wont-end.php>>, accessed on 23 November 2014.

members of the Australian public and across the agriculture sector. A 2012 survey found that 78% of Australians believed live exports were cruel.<sup>14</sup>

Significant damage can be done to an industry as a result of exposure of its failure to meet the public's expectations of animal welfare standards: for example, economic research from the United States has found that negative media attention concerning animal welfare can cause reductions in consumer demand for meat products.<sup>15</sup>

Given that live export does not contribute significantly to the Australian economy, in the long term live export and reports of animal cruelty will do more damage to Australia's reputation and brand image as a country that values animal welfare, than any short term gain it may provide to farmers and Australia's agriculture industry.

Respecting animal welfare is important to the viability and future of the agriculture industry. The Australian government must promote the agricultural industry to be a leader in the supply of ethical food. Reports of animal cruelty associated with live export taints Australia's image as a leading player in the global ethical food movement.

#### **Chilled meat trade is more economically valuable**

The live export industry is less profitable to the Australian economy than a chilled or frozen meat trade. Australia's chilled meat trade is more economically valuable. Exports of chilled and frozen meat are worth 12 times more to Australia's economy than live export for slaughter.<sup>16</sup>

Relying on the live animal export trade poses a high risk to the industry, in which markets can close to producers overnight, triggered by trade disputes, rejections, incidents at sea or animal cruelty exposés.

#### **Ending live export will create jobs in Australia**

A transition away from live export would create more jobs and contribute more to domestic agriculture. More jobs would be created in the agricultural industry in Australia if the processing of livestock occurred locally and exported as chilled meats.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Lonergan Research, WSPA Live Export Study Report (2012) 4-6.

<sup>15</sup> Tonsor, GT, Olynk, NJ, 'Impacts of animal welfare well-being and welfare media on meat demand', Journal of Agricultural Economics, (2010) vol. 62(2), at. 59-72.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Ban Live Export, '10 reasons why the world won't end when live export does', <<http://www.banliveexport.com/features/10-reasons-world-wont-end.php>>, accessed on 23 November 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Regulatory Compliance Investigations, <<http://www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity/export/live-animals/livestock/regulatory-framework/compliance-investigations/investigations-regulatory-compliance>>, accessed 3 April 2014. Also see, for example, Voiceless the animal protection institute, Animal Law in the Spotlight: Further Live Export Breaches, <<https://www.voiceless.org.au/content/animal-law-spotlight-further-live-export-breaches>>

The vast majority of jobs currently supported by live export will still exist without it — in fact more jobs will be created if we stop live export. Western Australian abattoirs already have capacity to take all sheep currently going into the live trade — a transition predicted to create an additional 2,000 jobs in WA.<sup>18</sup>

Live animal exports is also unpopular amongst industry stakeholders, with the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union backing an export ban, believing such a move would create thousands of jobs in regional Australia.<sup>19</sup>

### **Global movement towards ban on live export**

In 2007, New Zealand, a country comparable to Australia in terms of its distance from foreign trade partners, transitioned from live export to producing processed meat for Europe, Japan and Asia. New Zealand's economy is heavily dependent on agricultural exports, more so than Australia's economy currently is.<sup>20</sup> However, the then Minister for Agriculture, Jim Anderton recognised that:

- a) Animal welfare issues in the live export trade could undermine New Zealand's brand image and thereby result in an 'economic backlash' and;
- b) Live export is a low form of commodity export that undermines the higher-value processed meat trade.<sup>21</sup>

Jim Anderton has recently stated that New Zealand has been economically advantaged by ending the live export trade and focusing on higher-value agricultural exports.<sup>22</sup> This has recently been demonstrated by the fact that Australia's loss of share in the China export market is largely reflected in market share gains made by New Zealand.<sup>23</sup>

### **Recommendations**

- Access international markets and improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector through the transition of live export to a domestically processed chilled meat trade.
- Follow New Zealand's lead in banning live export to create more jobs and contribute more to the Australian economy.

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Ban Live Export, '10 reasons why the world won't end when live export does', <<http://www.banliveexport.com/features/10-reasons-world-wont-end.php>>, accessed on 23 November 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Tim Jeanes, 'Animal lobby and meatworkers united against live exports' (21 July 2011), <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-06-03/animal-lobby-and-meatworkers-united-against-live/2744170>>, accessed on 2 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Jim Anderton (former Minister for Agriculture for New Zealand) in interview with Geraldine Doogue, (18 June 2011) Radio National, Saturday Extra. Transcript available at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/saturdayextra/live-animal-trade-the-new-zealand-experience/2917316>, accessed 8 April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Jim Anderton, above note 20.

<sup>22</sup> Jim Anderton, above note 20.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew White, above note 11.

## Non-lethal, humane 'pest management'

The Committee is opposed to all lethal means of managing or controlling animal populations and calls upon the Government to investigate, or support the investigation of, alternative methods of reducing the financial impact of wild animals on graziers. Alternative methods could include sterilisation, relocation, use of guard animals, fencing and aversion techniques.

For example, the use of guard animals such as Maremma sheep dogs has been shown to be an effective way to deter predators and maintain livestock safety. There is strong evidence to suggest guard dogs efficiently protect livestock against predators such as dingoes because they establish an exclusive territory, which effectively deters these predators.<sup>24</sup>

The Committee acknowledges that the initial investment involved in developing and implementing these alternative measures could be more costly than simply continuing to run lethal population control measures, such as shooting and baiting. However, long term, these alternative measures may be more effective, sustainable and financially rewarding.

Lethal methods of controlling wild animal populations can be, at best, ineffective, and at worst, can increase the risk to livestock. Lethal destruction can fracture pack structures, leading to a breakdown of territorial boundaries and higher breeding and immigration rates, all of which are shown to exacerbate predation of livestock.<sup>25</sup> Baiting appears to produce perturbations that change the way surviving or re-colonising wild dog populations select and handle prey and/or how they interact with livestock.<sup>26</sup>

### Recommendation:

- Support the research and implementation of non-lethal methods of managing the populations of wild dogs and other animals deemed 'pests'.

## Closing remarks

In its submission on the Issues Paper, the Committee argued the commercial necessity of ensuring high animal welfare standards in the production of Australian produce. Growing awareness of animal welfare issues has begun to impact the nature of the demand for

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<sup>24</sup> Linda van Bommel and Chris N Johnson, 'Good dog! Using livestock guardian dogs to protect livestock from predators in Australia's extensive grazing systems' *Wildlife Research* 39(3), 220-229.

<sup>25</sup> Arian Wallach, Euan Ritchie, John Read and Adam O'Neill, 'More than Mere Numbers: The Impact of Lethal Control on the Social Stability of a Top-Order Predator' *PLOS ONE* 4(9) (2009), 5.

<sup>26</sup> Lee R. Allen, 'Wild dog control impacts on calf wastage in extensive beef cattle enterprises' *Animal Production Science* 54(2) (2013), 214-220.

animal products. Consumers in Australia, and in Australia's export markets, are increasingly seeking produce that meets higher animal welfare standards; whereas Australia does not currently have an appropriate legislative framework in place to enable the agricultural industry to compete in the market for these products. These concerns were not addressed by the Government in its Green Paper. The Committee is concerned that the Government's proposed policies are to set and meet short-term goals, and to deprecate long term trends. This is likely to result in the Government's White Paper policies stunting the development of Australian agricultural industry and compromising its ability to compete in the long term.

Finally, the Committee wishes to reiterate that the welfare of animals is important for its own sake, and the Federal Government should seek to avoid cruelty in any form, regardless of where it resides, and not merely for economic or electoral reasons.

The Committee thanks the Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce for the opportunity to comment on the Green Paper. If any further information can be provided, please contact the undersigned.



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