

**From:** Kerri-Ann Laurence  
**To:** [SPSC SPSC](#)  
**Subject:** NT Animal Welfare Bill  
**Date:** Thursday, 8 March 2018 4:02:51 PM

---

Good afternoon,

I agree entirely with the concerns of the RSPCA as outlined below. In particular, number 2. Animals are sentient, they are most certainly able to perceive and feel things. I am a former employee of the RSPCA and have dealt with many of hundreds of animals over the years. The animals can definitely feel pain and abuse, and I feel adding this recognition would be very progressive for the Northern Territory.

It would concern me greatly also if authorised officers were not able to provide veterinary treatment to alleviate suffering.

I am very pleased the Bill has been revised in general, there are a lot of significant improvements within.

If it is helpful, we have summarised some of RSPCA's primary concerns below for reference:

1. The requirement to provide proof that a person INTENDED to cause harm will result in substantially fewer successful prosecutions. People who are indifferent or callous will be able to elude punishment by claiming they were unaware. In other states and the previous Act, the prosecution needs only to prove that a 'reasonable person' would have known the animal was suffering and sought to alleviate it – this new Bill requires them to prove that they DID know, rather than they OUGHT TO have known.
2. Animals are not recognised as sentient. While it is a largely symbolic recognition, in essence this means that psychological stress has minimal impact on prosecution (i.e. breaking a dog's leg isn't very different morally to breaking someone's letterbox, since neither are sentient beings under the Bill)
3. As currently drafted, the Bill does not appear to provide authorised officers with an explicit power to provide veterinary treatment to alleviate suffering, only to direct an owner to do so

Regards,

Kerri-Ann Laurence