

Lasal Cunnington



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Committee Secretary
Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
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Submission in Strong Support of the *Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*

Dear Committee Members,

I write to express my unequivocal and strong support for the *Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* (“the Bill”). This submission is made in response to the Committee’s call for submissions and in accordance with the published guidelines for making submissions to parliamentary inquiries.

1. Support for Strengthened Animal Welfare Standards

The proposed amendments to the *Animal Protection Act 2018* are essential to modernising and strengthening animal welfare standards in the Northern Territory. I commend the Bill’s introduction of specific, enforceable requirements for:

- **Provision of water, shelter, and hygienic environments (Sections 23A & 23B):** These clear obligations reflect basic, non-negotiable elements of responsible animal care.
- **Mandatory treatment for disease, injury or suffering (Section 23C):** This provision closes a critical gap in ensuring animals receive timely veterinary intervention.
- **Prohibition of abandonment (Section 23E):** Codifying abandonment as an offence underscores the moral and legal duty of care owed to animals.

These reforms align NT law with national and international best practices in animal welfare.

2. Stronger Deterrence Against Cruelty

The Bill’s increased penalties for cruelty (up to 3 years imprisonment) send a necessary and unequivocal message that such behaviour is unacceptable. By elevating cruelty offences to more serious penalties, the legislation reflects contemporary community values and enhances deterrence.

Furthermore, the explicit prohibition of inhumane devices, such as prong collars (Section 31A), and provisions regulating electrical devices (Regulations 5–9), demonstrate a commitment to humane, evidence-based handling practices.

3. Improved Enforcement Powers

The enhanced inspection and enforcement provisions (e.g., Sections 81, 83, and 88) will empower authorised officers to act more decisively in cases of suspected cruelty or neglect. These reforms will help close enforcement loopholes and enable swifter interventions where animals are at risk. I would like to see the minimum 24 hour notice to inspect a commercial premises

4. Addressing Emerging Offences

The introduction of offences relating to **animal sexual abuse and crush material (Section 125DA)** is a timely and necessary response to emerging forms of harm, bringing the Northern Territory into line with other jurisdictions and reinforcing zero tolerance for such abhorrent conduct.

5. Integration of Modern Codes of Practice

The Bill's adoption of contemporary national industry codes of practice relating to boarding facilities (Regulation 4 & Schedule 1 Part B) ensures that the NT remains consistent with evolving standards across Australia, particularly in relation to racing animals, exhibited animals, and boarding facilities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The *Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* represents a comprehensive and forward-looking reform package that will significantly improve animal welfare outcomes in the Northern Territory.

I strongly urge the Committee to recommend the Bill's passage without dilution or delay. Its provisions reflect best-practice legislative drafting, address known deficiencies in the current framework, and are supported by a clear community mandate for stronger animal protection.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

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Lasal Cunnington