

From: [Ark Aid Inc Wildlife Hospital Darwin](#)
To: [Legislative Scrutiny Committee](#)
Subject: Re: Call for Submissions on Bill - Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill (Serial 32)
Date: Monday, 11 August 2025 7:24:55 PM

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To: Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Dear Minister,

On behalf of Ark Aid Inc., we commend the Northern Territory Government for its continued commitment to strengthening animal welfare through the Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. We appreciate the reforms proposed and welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on several key areas where the Bill could be further enhanced to reflect contemporary animal welfare science and community expectations.

We respectfully submit the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Minimum Care Obligations – Enrichment and Social Needs

We recommend the inclusion of a clause requiring species-appropriate enrichment and social interaction for animals such as dogs, parrots, and pigs. These elements are essential to mental and emotional well-being and are widely recognized in modern welfare standards.

2. Mandatory Reporting of Abuse

To improve early intervention and accountability, we propose a mandatory reporting requirement for veterinarians, animal carers, and shelter staff. This should be accompanied by legal protections for whistleblowers to ensure safe and responsible reporting of suspected abuse or neglect.

3. Clearer Standards for Rodeos and Campdrafts

While we acknowledge the cultural significance of these events, we urge the inclusion of minimum welfare standards for participating animals. These should include:

- Mandatory rest periods
- On-site veterinary oversight
- Prohibition of excessive force or harmful equipment

4. Clarify Confinement Standards (Section 23D)

The current clause references age, size, and condition but lacks measurable criteria. We recommend:

- Defining minimum space requirements

- Establishing time-based thresholds for confinement
- Ensuring tethering allows freedom of movement and access to shelter, food, and water

5. Strengthen Abandonment Clause

To ensure clarity and enforceability, we propose:

- A legal definition of “abandonment” including duration and intent
- A duty to rehome or surrender animals when owners are unable to provide care
- Escalating penalties for abandonment resulting in harm or death

6. Expand Cruelty Definition (Section 24)

We support the inclusion of “suffering” but recommend further expansion to include:

- Psychological suffering (e.g. prolonged isolation, fear-based training)
- Specific cruelty methods such as starvation, forced fighting, and medical neglect

7. Penalty Escalation for Repeat and Prolonged Offences

We suggest increasing penalties for repeat offences and prolonged neglect to reflect the severity and impact on animal welfare.

8. Prohibited activities

Section 32 makes it an offense to intentionally attend a prohibited activity – we would also recommend that promoting or betting on a prohibited activities should also be an offense.

9. Clause 16

While we approve of tightening measures to better protect animals in boarding kennels/catteries, and doggy day care we believe that could be better achieved through companion animal legislation (as does every other jurisdiction besides NT) and strongly reinforce our support for creating such legislation.

We believe these additions will strengthen the Bill’s effectiveness and ensure that the Northern Territory meets community expectations in regards to animal welfare legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

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