

Thursday, 5th March, 2019

Vice Chancellor and Dean of Law
Monash University
via email

RE: Monash University Animal Law Course

To the Vice Chancellor Margaret Gardinor and Dean of Law Bryan Horrigan,

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to lobby for real animal welfare. Our objectives include promoting higher standards in all interactions with the animals in our community, and educating the public on the important differences between animal rights and animal welfare.

ACA was recently made aware of Monash University’s Animal Law Course on offer to undergraduates (LAW4230). We commend Monash University for introducing material specifically related to animals, however we have concerns due to the influence of Voiceless, who are known as Animal Rights extremists. Furthermore, we understand lecturer Dr Joanna Kyriakakis, is a Voiceless Legal Advisory Council member supporting animal rights activism.

Recent media and Voiceless publications indicate a heavy bias is presented in the course, to indoctrinate students into animal rights causes, which we find unbecoming of a credible University Law Course, particularly at a university as prestigious as Monash. Upon reviewing the Course Outline, we feel that the course title and listed Learning Outcomes are misleading.

Animal Welfare and Animal Rights are not the same thing, and are often in conflict when applied to laws that affect individual animals or certain industries. Animal Welfare Laws are well ingrained into our society, at all levels, and laws affecting animals are spread out across many sectors, from planning laws, agriculture, prevention of cruelty, transport and specific animal industries, such as the horse industry and circuses. Animal Rights are not, and are presently regarded as an extremist viewpoint.

ACA believes that this matter deserves your investigation and scrutiny.

We ask Monash University to consider 3 alternative actions on this course:

- 1) The course could be restructured and be offered as a genuine Animal Welfare Law course. We feel that potential students would benefit from learning more content on reality based welfare laws, the unusual national structure of Australian cruelty laws, and who can enforce them. This could replace the Animal Rights content.
or,
- 2) Due to the minimal law content offered in this course, and the overwhelming Animal Rights content, this subject would be more appropriately offered as it is, as part of an ethics

course or philosophy degree, and removed from the law department altogether.

or,

- 3) The course could be unchanged and simply be renamed “Animal Rights and Ethics” to not mislead students. The current structure appears to be missing critical discussion of most aspects of actual Animal Law for the current name to be appropriate.

With the growing acknowledgement within society that there is a need to institute changes to improve welfare for our animals, it is vital the boundaries and differences between animal rights and animal welfare are clearly maintained and this starts with education at universities such as Monash University.

ACA believes clear course titles will lead students to the appropriate courses and in doing so will continue to define the boundaries resulting in better real world welfare outcome for the animals in our communities.

We look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,

K Nadazdy

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Mission Statement

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of animals in Australia as pets and companions.

Objects

1. To represent Animal Care Groups as the peak animal welfare body
2. To engage and advise Government and legislators on welfare issues relating to pets and companion animals.
3. To protect the rights of ethical hobbyists & animal keepers to breed and keep pets and companion animals.
4. To clarify the difference between animal rights and animal welfare
5. To promote higher Animal welfare outcomes