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## **BASIC ANIMAL HEALTH PRACTICES SOON TO BE BANNED IN S.A.**

***Australia's Peak Animal Welfare Body says South Australian Draft Veterinary Services Bill overreaches with serious consequences.***

“Australia’s peak animal welfare body, Animal Care Australia, has revealed a concerning amendment to the Draft Veterinary Services Bill. The new definition of a **Veterinary Service** now includes, among other items, “the performance of an invasive or surgical procedure on an animal”. The reason offered is to “limit the treatment of animals considered to be a veterinary service to medical, surgical or other invasive treatment”.

Animal Care Australia has several concerns with this description.

One is that the term ***invasive procedure*** has not appeared in previous versions of the Act, has not been defined within the Act (old or new) and is not a universally recognised medical or veterinary term. Using such a term to define Veterinary Services is clearly out of place in South Australia’s Veterinary Services Bill.

Secondly, with no clear medical definition, the term only has a colloquial meaning: which is to purposefully insert something into the body. It does not mean the procedure is cruel, difficult or unnecessary nor must it be surgical to be an invasive procedure, although all surgical procedures would be classed as invasive.

In its simplest form, an invasive procedure includes many common practices an animal owner must do to maintain the health of their pets, such as, taking a pet’s temperature, injecting antibiotics or hormonal treatments, tube-feeding young puppies and kittens, and for some owners, non-surgical artificial insemination. Those who keep livestock can not carry out worm drenching, tube feeding foals, flushing wounds, or injecting microchips.

“These changes would make those basic actions illegal and owners open to prosecution for animal cruelty and breaches of the Act” said Michael Donnelly, President of Animal Care Australia. “Animal Cruelty Enforcement Officers already abuse their powers. We shouldn’t be giving them more grounds to prosecute.”

“This would require every step of the treatment of a pet to be carried out by a veterinary practitioner. Most Veterinarians are not equipped to meet the immediate increase in demand this would cause,” said Mr Donnelly. “Our vets are already being pushed to breaking point.” The Veterinary Sector is already facing a crisis with a severe shortage of vets and support staff. Vet clinics do not have the time, space or manpower to take on all of these additional duties, when they are currently underpaid for the essential services they already provide.

Regional owners, in particular, may not have easy access to vets for simple procedures such as dosing a course of daily antibiotics. Owners that are hours away from the closest vet would be forced to pay for an extended hospital stay to receive that daily injection, or the travel costs for the vet to attend daily. To perform a simple procedure most owners are comfortable and experienced in administering themselves.

This would also create additional welfare issues for animals, with added stress, unnecessary travel, and a stranger handling them.

*“Animal Welfare by the experts – those who keep, care for and breed animals”*

The costs alone would push some people to having to abandon or surrender an ill pet. “I do not want to imagine what this will do to pet rescues and shelters, or Council Pounds,” said Mr Donnelly.

“One incoherent word choice in the Veterinary Services Bill could lead to a substantial decline in animal welfare,” said Mr Donnelly. “We want to support our veterinarians, and ease the burdens they are currently facing. But preventing owners from performing simple animal husbandry procedures and taking good care of their animals is not the answer.”

Write to the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) and tell them that the word “invasive” MUST be removed from the definition of a veterinary service in the Veterinary Services Bill.

Submissions close 19 February 2023. You can complete the public survey on the PIRSA website: <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/veterinaryservicesact?>

Animal Care Australia is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals in Australia.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please call Michael Donnelly on 0400 323 843 or email [president@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:president@animalcareaustralia.org.au)

## About Animal Care Australia

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to advocate for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

ACA was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare. We estimate our foundation ACA clubs currently represent well over 150,000 members and that is just in NSW alone!

By educating our members and the general public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs, and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of collaborating, consulting and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- consulting with government for stronger welfare outcomes
- encouraging government to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educating the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educating the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights

Photo: ACA President, Michael Donnelly

