



Animal Care Australia

2023

# Miscellaneous Policies



**Animal Welfare Policy & Position Statement**

*Version 3 — July 2023*

***Animal Welfare is Animal Care***

# Animal Welfare Policy & Position Statement

This document sets out the policies and position statements of Animal Care Australia Incorporated. It is intended that this document will operate as a living document, which will be improved upon as policy is updated.

We encourage all members to suggest edits and additions, with a view to clarifying policy and to improve the administration of the organisation.

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“Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.”

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# Definitions

For the purpose of this document, Animal Care Australia utilises the following definitions:

**Animal welfare** means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

An animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state.

**Animal Rights** means humans should not make use of, own or benefit from animals in any manner, and the immediate abolition of animal ownership in any form.

Historically this has taken the form of animal rights, animal liberation, animal justice and animal protection.

**Animal Rights Extremists/activists** are political parties, associations/organisations, and individuals that will go to any length to manipulate societal understanding and legislative reform to achieve the abolition of animal ownership. Throughout this document referred to as ARE's.

**Commercial Pet Industry** means businesses or other services where the aim is to make a profit from selling animals, products or services directly relating to the keeping of pets and animals.

This includes entities such as pet shops, grooming services, agistment providers, etc

**Commercial Shelter Industry** means the commercialisation of shelter/rescue services that are operated under a profit-driven model and/or placing the existence of the service as a priority over the welfare of the animals. The Shelter industry has existed for years. The commercialised shelter industry is relatively new and is a concept driven by animal rights ideologies and a lack of government commitment to resolving the issue of abandoned animals.

**'personhood' rights** means the legislated removal of the property status of animals from being owned by a person/s resulting in the animal acquiring its own 'rights'.

**Pet and Companion Animal Community** means the collective of community-based associations, groups, and individuals (both keepers and breeders) who share the common interest of the caring for and keeping of pets and companion animals.

**Pet Factory, Puppy Factory/Farm** is any unethical operator/breeder is any person/entity who is breeding an animal with poor welfare outcomes in defiance of the animal welfare standards.

**(Animal) Sporting Industry** means the collective of events and activities in which people, business/enterprises, and organisations are involved in the producing, facilitating, promoting, or organising of activities involving the inclusion of animals in a sporting capacity (such as racing).



# Introduction

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to represent the interests of animal keepers and breeders throughout Australia. Animal Care Australia was established as an organisation where the real animal welfare experts, those who keep, care for and breed animals would advocate for real and improved animal welfare.

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.

Just over 60% of Australian households own pets. It is estimated more than 24 million pets are kept in the care of our community. Pet/animal ownership provides companionship for many within our society including, the elderly, the lonely, and our young generations.

The keeping of pets and animals teaches a sense of responsibility, an awareness of the importance of animals to exist and to co-exist with us. Animals provide us with an understanding of life, love, loss, and a sense of belonging. The continued keeping of animals as we grow from youngsters into adults allows us to improve our skills in animal husbandry, and leads to advancements in animal welfare.

Originally founded to speak on behalf of owners of pet and companion animals, Animal Care Australia quickly recognised there is a need to expand our purview to include all animals held in 'captive' care with the exception of commercial livestock and it's directly associated activities, such as live export etc.

The Association has a strong committee composed of representatives for each major animal group – dogs, cats, birds, horses, fish, insects, reptiles, hobby farm animals, small mammals, (pet) native mammals and exhibited animals.

Animal Care Australia's membership base is comprised of animal keeping associations (members) and individual pet owners (supporters). We recognise the role played by animal keeping organisations in educating their members, and we call upon government to fund educational initiatives for the general public.



Animal Care Australia's position is to promote welfare education over regulation. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care, to encourage responsible pet ownership, and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community.

We support and consult in the continued development of animal welfare law at all levels of government, including federal, state and local government. ACA will consult on all relevant legislation to protect your rights as an animal owner. We will continue to defend against changes that could impair your ability to keep, show, compete or work with, and to engage in all lawful activities with your animals and pets.

Animal Care Australia acknowledges the requirement under legislation to ensure minimum animal care standards can be enforced. We support mandatory minimum standards and codes of practice designed to encourage the improvement of higher animal welfare. Animal Care Australia recognises animal keeping organisations are well placed as experts in their specific species and we strongly encourage their inclusion in the development and review of both minimum standards and codes of practice.

As a society we have a responsibility to provide 'whole of life' welfare and protection for all animals living within our care, and accordingly Animal Care Australia will continue to advocate for the rights to ethically breed animals, and promote responsible breeding activities that are designed to ensure the highest welfare outcomes, thereby protecting the continued existence of each species and breed. Animal Care Australia does not discriminate against species or breeds where the appropriate care for the health and welfare, in compliance with all state/territory laws that govern the keeping of those animals, is being met.

*For the purpose of this document all legislated Acts of federal and state parliament, associated regulations, policies, standards and guidelines, codes of practice, local government laws, etc. that influence or deal directly with matters of animal care and welfare will be referred to hereafter as "animal welfare laws".*



# What is Animal Welfare?

Animal Care Australia's definition of Animal Welfare recognises the **World Organization for Animal Health's** definition\*, with a few minor adjustments.

## Definition:

Animal welfare means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

An animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state.

## How it is achieved:

Good animal welfare is achieved by following the **Five Domains**. This requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management, nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling, and a stable mental health outcome. Good animal welfare also requires humane end of life at the appropriate time. While animal welfare refers to the state of the animal, the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Ideas about animal welfare began in ancient civilisations and exist in many religions and cultures today. Many countries incorporate some elements of animal care in their laws.

The **Five Domains** is a science-based structure for assessing animal welfare, which recognises that animals can experience feelings, ranging from negative to positive. It provides a best-practice framework to assess welfare in animals of all species.

The first four domains:

- ⇒ **Nutrition**
- ⇒ **Environment**
- ⇒ **Health and**
- ⇒ **Behaviour**

all help inform us about the animal's various experiences, which make up the fifth domain:

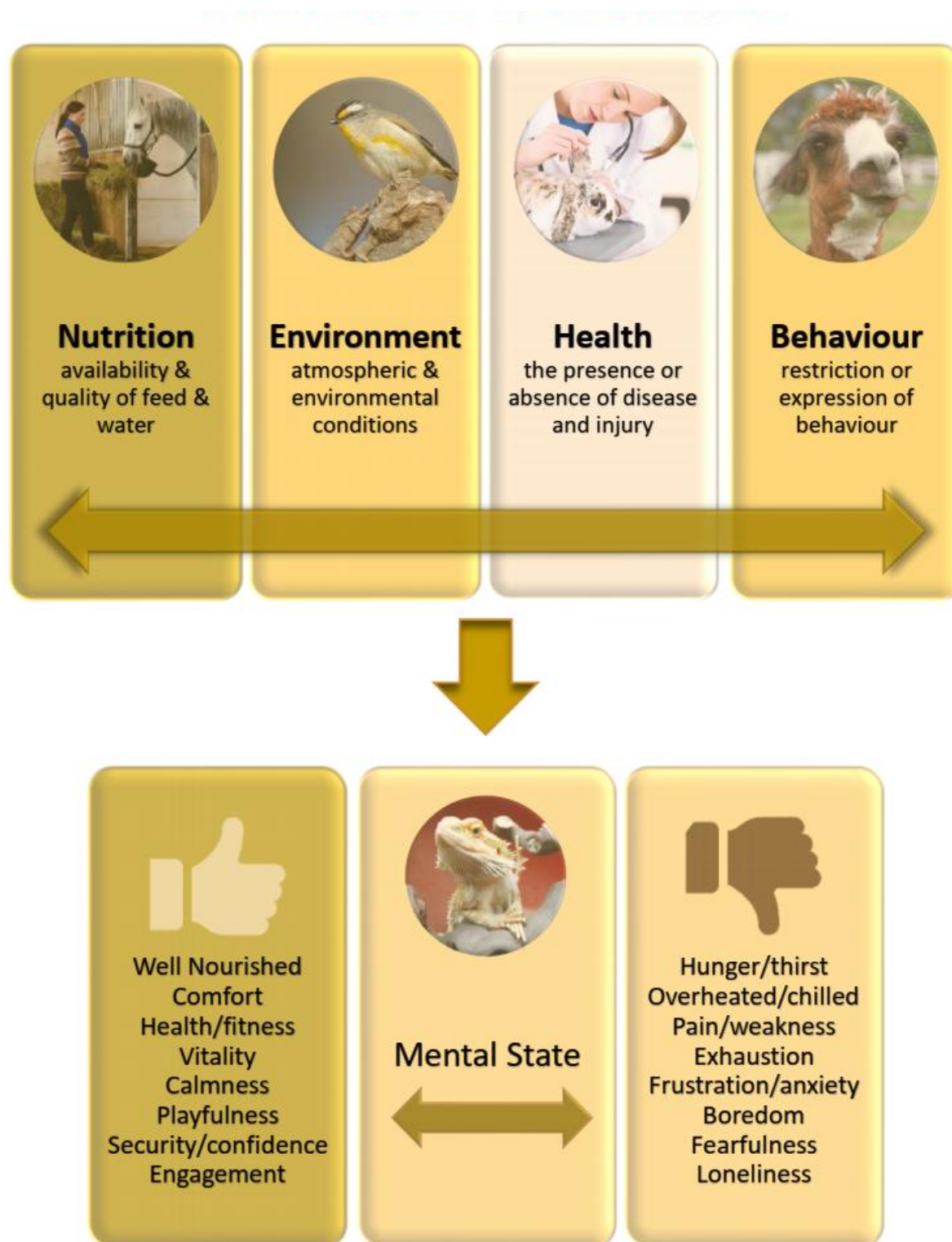
- ⇒ **Mental.**

The Five Domains, developed by Professor David Mellor, former Director of the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre at Massey University, is considered more contemporary in the field of animal welfare science and is a refinement of the **Five Freedoms** and a framework for overall assessment of quality of life.

\* **World Organization for Animal Health:** [https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health\\_standards/tahc/2016/en\\_chapitre\\_aw\\_introduction.htm](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahc/2016/en_chapitre_aw_introduction.htm)

## The Five Domains Model:

This approach allows for a distinction between the physical and functional factors that affect an animal's welfare and the overall mental state of the animal arising from these factors. Since its inception this model has been widely adopted as a tool for assessing the welfare impacts of research procedures, pest animal control methods and other interventions in animals' lives.



Based on the infographic from Animal Health Australia 2022



## Five Freedoms vs. Five Domains

Whilst many still recognise the value of using the Five Freedoms for maintaining the prevention of negative welfare in animals, the Five Domains are applied for animal welfare assessment as they allow progression beyond preventing bad animal welfare to include actively promoting positive animal welfare. The promotion of positive animal welfare is strongly supported by Animal Care Australia.

Signs that an animal has a good state of welfare can include longevity, having low levels of disease, displaying normal behaviour, and reproducing normally.

Concerns about animal welfare are normally based on the idea that we should take steps to maximise the well-being of animals whenever and however we interact with them. This includes those we keep as pets, all animals in the wild, those we include for entertainment or research, and those that we breed for food. Animal Care Australia recognises there are circumstances where the best welfare outcome for an animal is death. Animal Care Australia supports the use of humane euthanasia where it is deemed an animal should no longer be made to suffer, or where it is impossible to secure a responsible and healthy living outcome.

### Five Freedoms

1. From hunger and thirst
2. From discomfort
3. From pain, injury and disease
4. To express normal behaviour
5. From fear and distress

### Five Domains

1. Nutrition
2. Environment
3. Health
4. Behaviour
5. Mental state

# What is Animal Rights?

It is Peter Singer's work that has underpinned the Animal Rights movement since the 1970s. Singer, a professor of bioethics at Princeton and the University of Melbourne, is the author of the controversial book *Animal Liberation*, which asserts that animals' interests should be given equal weight to those of humans. The book drew criticism upon its release in 1975 and remains controversial to this day.

Animal rights advocates believe humans should not make use of, own or benefit from animals. They strive for the immediate abolition of animal ownership in any form.

Advocates of animal rights oppose the owning or keeping of all animals in captivity, including for food, entertainment, research, companionship, conservation or any other reason.

Some Animal Rights advocates, such as Ingrid Newkirk of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) believe immediate abolition is needed but is simply unrealistic. Instead, these advocates support the pursuit of incremental welfare reform as a means to eventually abolishing all animals in captivity. They endorse animal welfare because it facilitates a "springboard into animal rights."

Animal Rights advocates use Animal Welfare to garner support for their beliefs. Their aim is to end the ownership and keeping of all animals in captivity.

Consequences of an Animal Rights philosophy include:

- × No breeding and killing animals for food, clothes or medicine.
- × No use of working animals – no guide dogs, no police horses, etc
- × No selective breeding for specific traits/features, other than the benefit of the animal.
- × No hunting.
- × No zoos, or use of animals in entertainment.
- × No pets or companion animals.
- × No sport involving animals.
- × No competitive animal competitions.
- × No research involving animals (now re-framed as no experiments on animals)

*Over the years these organisations have adjusted the terminologies used when promoting their goals. First they used animal liberation and then animal rights, with some even adopting animal justice and animal defenders.*

*Today they attempt to justify their ideologies under Animal Protection.*

*Animal Protection is the new catch cry for the animal rights movement because it isn't viewed as being extreme.*

*Why does ACA not support animal protection in its current use?*

**Why does ACA not support animal protection in its current use?**

Because animal protection is generally seen to be the combination of both animal welfare and animal rights.

### Why is that a problem?

Because the two are like oil and water – they don't mix. You cannot have legislation that continues to allow animals under human care/ownership while the animal rights advocates to liberate animals from being used by humans at all.

The term, 'Animal Protection' on its own is oxymoronic.

Regardless of the term or marketing spin, they are still striving for the same ideological outcomes.

## Animal Care Australia supports animal welfare and opposes animal rights





A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a horse's face, focusing on the eye and muzzle area. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong highlight running down the center of the horse's face, creating a deep shadow on the right side. The texture of the horse's coat is visible, showing a mix of dark brown and lighter, golden-brown tones where the light hits.

# Animals in Research & Scientific Use



# Animals In Research and Scientific Use

Animals used in research and for scientific use are governed by laws which oversee the use of animals in research, teaching and product testing in each Australian state. Although there is some variation in the statutory requirements of each state, the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, sets out the common framework of guiding principles.

Animal Care Australia believes the current framework and guidelines is effective in supporting establishments, individuals, as well as re-homing facilities to re-home animals after their use in research.

Animal Care Australia makes the following recommendations and encourages the adoption of these recommendations throughout Australia.

These are:

- Animal Care Australia recommends researchers consider rehoming during the planning stages so that animal husbandry throughout the research project prepares animals in advance.
- When rehoming is a likely option then rehoming organisations such as animal keepers associations should be forewarned so they can prepare.
- It is acknowledged that some animals cannot be rehomed as pets however these animals may be better suited to be homed in an exhibition or display environment where they can live and be cared for ethically as well as providing an ongoing educational benefit.
- Animal Welfare Acts for exhibited animals provide the appropriate regulations to ensure their ongoing welfare needs are met. Animals used for exhibition and display play a pivotal role in education and creating awareness.
- Animal Care Australia would like to see requirements implemented to ensure the behaviour assessments are completed by individuals skilled with the understanding of and knowledge of the particular individual species of animals being assessed. Assurances need to be provided that the assessors have an intimate knowledge of the criteria used as part of the assessment process. This should include expert knowledge of individual species' natural behaviour in all aspects, including breed specific behavioural traits of each species.
- Behaviour assessments that have been left to some rescue organisations, have to date utilised unrealistic "behaviour testing" methods which in themselves may cause psychological trauma ultimately resulting in the animals requiring to be euthanised. This must change through regulation
- Regulations that mandate appropriate mechanisms to ensure a blanket rehabilitation and behaviour assessment method for all re-homing organisations involved is introduced and assessed by the relevant state departments.

- Assessment methods that do not inflict psychological harm on the animals and the animals are evaluated according to their species and breed specific behaviour traits are a necessary requirement – which is NOT currently being met by all rescue organisations.
- Animal Care Australia recommends forms of positive reinforcement are adopted where animals are to be rehomed.
- Animal Care Australia strongly encourages all governments and research organisations to investigate and implement alternative methods of research so as to phase out all unnecessary use of animals.
- Animal Care Australia encourages government to review the use of animals in research, ensuring measures of accountability and appropriate transparency, as well increase funding to develop new technology that would no longer require the use of animals in research unless it can be demonstrated that the research will not harm the animal and will benefit research and the individual animals involved.

**Animal Care Australia supports transparency  
and regulatory measures for institutions  
utilising animals in research and for scientific  
use**

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a dark-furred animal's face, possibly a horse or dog. The fur is dark brown to black, with fine texture visible. A bright, golden-yellow light source, likely the sun, creates a strong, diagonal beam of light across the face, highlighting the texture of the fur and the shape of the eye and muzzle. The light creates a warm, ethereal glow against the dark background.

# Animals and Environmental Impacts



# Animals and Environmental Impacts

To progress conservation objectives, Animal Care Australia supports humane management of endemic and introduced species, appropriate for the area concerned. Animal Care Australia recognises that the management plan will need to vary based on local needs and species. Animal Care Australia supports removal of animals when conducted by best practice and the most humane methods. Animal welfare must be prioritised.

Animal Care Australia strongly encourages government and private research institutes to continue researching more humane methods for the control of exotic invasives and feral species with the goal of implementing those methods in the near future.

## TNR – Trap, Neuter & Release

In reference to the use of the ‘TNR’ program for control of ‘cat communities’ and feral cats, Animal Care Australia is awaiting further peer-reviewed Australian-based scientific data/studies before drawing any policy position. More conversations and studies also need to be had regarding TNAR (Trap, Neuter and Adopt/Rehome)

The Australian environment and surrounds are greatly different to those in other parts of the world where the current data is sourced.

Overseas data from Europe, appears to indicate cat communities maintained by local residents do provide some limit of excess breeding. While in outer regions (outer-urban, rural, and native bushland) where regular feeding and control cannot be maintained, populations are out of control, indicating no claim can be confidently made as to its success or failure as a method of control. Studies from the United States indicate the opposite and saw a rise in the number of cats in each ‘cat community’.

Animal Care Australia is consciously aware that a cat will always be a cat regardless of whether it is neutered/spayed and well fed. In most States the legislation dictates a cat ‘free-roaming’ and not owned (microchipped) can instantly be labelled a feral animal. Subsequently any conscious release of that animal into the environment (un-owned) is illegal. Any cat deemed feral can be euthanised. Animal Care Australia calls upon this legislation to be reviewed in order to ensure an appropriate amount of time is provided for the assessing of behaviour exhibited by a newly caught cat, to ensure the cat is feral and not reacting to its current situation and under duress due to the stressful and restrictive circumstances it is experiencing.

Animal Care Australia acknowledges the hypocrisy of supporting ‘cat curfews’ and policies designed to reduce cats free-roaming while also considering leaving ‘free-roaming cat colonies’ to be a method of feral cat control.

Animal Care Australia calls on Australian governments to initiate and fund the appropriate research into



effective methods of feral cat control and rebated or free desexing programs by local councils.

## Cat-containment

Being in the best interests of animal welfare, Animal Care Australia supports the need for cat containment, including curfews, and education on how it actually benefits the cats.

Cat containment does not equal keeping your cat indoors 24/7—it means keeping your cat only roaming on your property — whatever that may be. It also includes taking your cat for walks on a leash. In other words it means the restriction of ‘free-roaming’ cats.

Cats that are not confined to your property risk:

- ⇒ Being hit by a car
- ⇒ Being trapped or poisoned
- ⇒ Becoming the victim of another animal (eg: dogs)
- ⇒ Complaints & threats from neighbours
- ⇒ Being stolen
- ⇒ Being injured
- ⇒ Killing native wildlife
- ⇒ Confrontations with other territorial cats
- ⇒ Catching transmissible diseases
- ⇒ Infestations of fleas/ticks/parasites

You can achieve this safely through an outdoor escape-proof cat enclosure, a specialised escape-proof fence or supervised access in the yard. Remember, walking with your cat outside of your property gives you the ability to protect them from all of the above risks, and the inevitable high veterinary expenses that come with the risks.

## Biological control

Animal Care Australia supports the use of biological control where there are no other effective alternatives, however Animal Care Australia does not believe Federal and State governments provide sufficient incentive, funding or support in securing alternative methods, vaccines against currently used methods, and up to date scientific reviews of those current methods.

Many biological methods still used are continually being justified citing research/studies completed well over a decade ago, some with dubious incentives or sources.

Technologies have sufficiently continued to expand thereby justifying the need for up to date research

to be initiated on all methods of biological control.

Vaccines for pets and breeding stock must be approved and made available in advance of the bio-control agent being released. This will ensure pets and breeding stock animals are safe guarded against the effects of the control method and avoid unnecessary illness and deaths. This is not currently occurring – with several vaccine options being stalemated by red-tape and a lack of priority by government departments.

Animal Care Australia strongly supports greater government funding for research into alternative methods for biological control of feral animals, including the use of 1080 and rodenticides that are responsible for secondary or indiscriminate poisoning/victimisation. The continued use of 1080 and some rodenticides can no longer be justified based on the age of the studies being used as justification for their use.

Domestic, companion, stock and native animals are suffering due to the delay in ensuring appropriate vaccines or alternative methods are being implemented.

**Immuno-contraception** is being touted by activist organisations as a means of controlling the numbers of feral animals. Animal Care Australia does not find justification in the use of this biological control method as a long term method, given research indicates, the contraceptive intervention is short lived and requires regular updating; feral animals are too abundant to be effectively controlled; the contraceptive is not guaranteed to prevent contraception, and the excessive numbers of animals not able to receive contraception in each contraceptive cycle (recorded to be an average of 3-5 years in horses and other larger mammals) still maintaining breeding numbers that would out-number those that are not breeding.

**The continued existence of non-native and feral animals in our environment provides a greater animal welfare concern than the controlled humane management of endemic and introduced species**

## Hunting

Animal Care Australia supports ethical and sustainable hunting where high animal welfare standards are practiced, reviewed and regulated.

Animal Care Australia supports the use of licensed, professionally trained and regulated hunting as a method of feral animal control.

All regulatory measures must ensure the highest animal welfare standards are adhered to.



Position on veganism  
and it's misuse by  
animal rights  
extremists



# Position on veganism and it's misuse by animal rights extremists

Why are Vegans so universally maligned and ridiculed? Why do we not see their efforts as commendable, and even aspirational? Surely the diet someone chooses is not worthy of such contempt, whether or not we choose to follow it as well?

The simple answer is that veganism isn't the issue, nor is the need to be omnivores. The hatred has been directly driven by the ARE movement with their public use of veganism as a form of totalitarian control via social media promotion and policies aimed at changing government policy and legislation. This abuse has led to those within society that eat meat, to use their liking for meat to discredit vegans and they unjustly assimilate them into the world of ARE's. This assimilation is not really about veganism at all, but the sub culture of vegans who are ARE's. Most are just noisy keyboard warriors, but some do utilise terrorist style tactics to intimidate others to force societal change.

The hate directed at ARE's is often quite justified. Their methods that usually include trespassing and stealing people's animals, or paying fake whistle-blowers to falsify footage of animal cruelty in order to close down industries. Trying to close animal events and exhibits by trying to frighten the animals is not supported by general society. The ends do not justify the means, and the police and courts get involved in these incidences, and continually parliaments, needing to introduce anti-trespass legislation (Ag-gag Laws).

But that is not what veganism is about, and its unfortunate that the average vegan is being attacked in the process, when they are not the problem, but the scapegoat. Veganism is a diet. Its a diet devoid of animal products, and a Vegan Lifestyle extends to exclude all animal products in the person's life and environment where possible. Many people are vegan for purely dietary reasons, sometimes involuntarily for health conditions, or for animal welfare reasons, or for weight loss, and sometimes in the pursuit of living a more sustainable lifestyle. Most vegans who do it do so for their own peace of mind, to resolve their own cognitive dissonance, not to force it onto others.

While it is true Animal Rights Extremists are vegans, not all vegans are Animal Rights Extremists.

Animal Care Australia supports your right to be vegan or omnivore and encourages everyone to stop maligning vegans, and call out this abuse when we see it. Not just because the behaviour is cyber-bullying and discrimination but because we SHOULD make a clear distinction between vegans and ARE's. If we don't, we are actually helping ARE win.

## The truth behind the misuse:

Have you ever wondered why ARE want to be called Vegans? By mislabelling someone a 'Vegan' instead of an 'Animal Rights Extremist' we artificially increase their numbers.

ARE's have hijacked the term Vegan for too long already in their attempts to appear more credible and numerous than they actually are. The smaller a group they are, the less significant they are, and the less

power they have.

We should not allow the small, but loud, handfuls of ARE's to hijack statistics to artificially inflate the validity of their cause, and they absolutely will if we continue to let them. They are already do this now. We are already seeing the number of Vegans in Australia being used as support for ARE views to push for societal change and laws.

Animal Care Australia calls on all the people who care about the good welfare of animals in our community: animal owners, keepers, breeders, exhibitors, and farmers, to get on board, and stop calling ARE 'Vegans'. Stop helping them when you really mean ARE. Strip them of their hijacked title, even while they squeal louder.

**Animal Care Australia supports your right to be  
vegan or omnivore.**



# Animal Care Australia