

Friday, 5th July 2024

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 Opening Statement

Good morning,

Chair – I ask that this statement be tabled.

Today we are here to discuss the advantages of virtual fencing as they relate to horses and livestock kept on hobby farms, recreationally and as pets, but also for wildlife. We support responsible animal ownership, and keeping animals contained to our own property is one way animal owners can act responsibly.

Claims that electric or virtual fencing is cruel solely because it is aversive come exclusively from Animal Rights groups, who lack experience or knowledge of the products, learning theory, or animal training. This is anthropomorphizing at its best.

Electric fencing has been in use since the 1930’s and virtual fencing is the exact same experience for the animal but with huge technological advances that benefit animal welfare, safety for the animals as well as the community and added convenience for owners.

We should never make it harder or more expensive to be responsible animal owners and carers.

Electric and virtual fencing is a very effective deterrent and Animal Care Australia has no animal welfare concerns with the use of these devices, as long as they are sized correctly for the species, or to the need. Why would we force owners to buy duplicate systems for each species, when the virtual fence could simply have different collars for different species? This technology is inevitable and not far away but will remain illegal in NSW under this amendment.

Animal Care Australia believes that limiting the permitted use of virtual fencing to only livestock will create unintended consequences. We need these options available to us as soon as the manufacturers release them.

We must stay focused on improving animal welfare and avoid distractions from the animal rights lobby’s ongoing efforts to complicate and increase the cost of animal ownership.

We would like to thank the Chair and the Committee for inviting us to appear today and we welcome your questions.