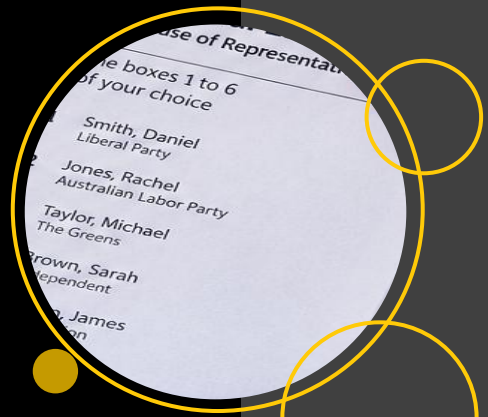
State Election Statement of Key Priorities



Animal Care Australia

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Better Animal Welfare Through Education, Accountability and Evidence-Based Policy

Animal Care Australia calls on all political parties and candidates contesting state elections to commit to practical, measurable reforms that improve animal welfare, strengthen government accountability and support responsible animal ownership.

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association representing the interests of people who keep, care for and breed animals, including companion animals, and the community-based organisations that support them.

Our primary purpose is preventing or relieving the suffering of animals through education and advocacy.

Animal Care Australia believes that meaningful improvements in animal welfare are achieved through evidence-based policy, effective education, responsible animal care, appropriate legislation and accountable enforcement.

We seek a balanced approach that places animal welfare at the forefront while recognising the importance of the human–animal bond, the expertise of animal-keeping communities and the rights of responsible people to keep, care for, ethically breed and participate in lawful activities with their animals.

We call on all parties and candidates to consider the following key priorities and outline how they would implement them if elected.

Our Key Priorities

Establish an Animal Welfare Commission



A single, accountable authority to coordinate and improve animal welfare outcomes.

Animal welfare responsibilities are frequently fragmented across multiple government departments and ministerial portfolios, resulting in inconsistent approaches, divided responsibilities and inadequate accountability.

Animal Care Australia calls for the establishment of an independent Animal Welfare Commission and Commissioner in each state, providing centralised oversight, coordination and strategic leadership across animal welfare matters.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Establishing an appropriately resourced Animal Welfare Commission with a clearly defined legislative mandate.
- Appointing a Commissioner responsible for coordinating animal welfare policy, strategic direction, education, compliance and enforcement oversight.
- Bringing together relevant animal welfare functions currently dispersed across government departments under a coherent, coordinated framework.

- Ensuring decisions are informed by animal welfare science, veterinary expertise, practical animal husbandry knowledge and meaningful stakeholder consultation.
- Providing independent oversight of animal welfare administration, with transparent reporting and clear lines of accountability to Parliament.
- Establishing an expert advisory committee, including appropriate representation from veterinary medicine, animal welfare science, species-specific organisations, animal industries and community-based animal care groups.

Animal Care Australia believes animal welfare must be a clearly defined government priority rather than a responsibility that can be overlooked, diluted or displaced by competing departmental interests.

The Commission must be focused on improving animal welfare outcomes, with independence from day-to-day political influence while remaining accountable to Parliament and the public.

Preferred outcome: One accountable framework for animal welfare policy, coordination and oversight.

Strengthen Animal Welfare Education and Prevention



Preventing suffering before it occurs.

Animal Care Australia 's position is that education must be central to animal welfare policy. Legislation and enforcement have an important role, but lasting improvements also require people to understand and meet the needs of the animals in their care.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Funding and expanding practical animal welfare education for current and prospective animal owners.
- Supporting public education on responsible pet ownership, appropriate husbandry, animal behaviour, health, welfare and humane care.
- Recognising and supporting the role of established community-based animal organisations in educating owners and promoting species-specific welfare standards.
- Developing targeted education initiatives to address preventable cruelty, neglect, abandonment and irresponsible breeding.
- Improving access to reliable information about animal welfare requirements and legal responsibilities.

- Incorporating contemporary animal welfare science into government education programs and public information campaigns.
- Supporting practical preventative initiatives that help people maintain appropriate care for their animals, including during emergencies and periods of hardship.

Education should be an ongoing investment, not an afterthought when new legislation is introduced.

Animal Care Australia encourages governments to work with established animal organisations and experienced animal keepers to deliver education that is practical, accessible and effective.

PREFERRED OUTCOME: FEWER PREVENTABLE CASES OF ANIMAL SUFFERING THROUGH BETTER-INFORMED AND MORE RESPONSIBLE ANIMAL CARE.

Deliver Transparent, Effective and Accountable Enforcement



Animal welfare laws must be properly implemented and enforced.

Legislation alone cannot deliver improved animal welfare if compliance is inadequate, enforcement responsibilities are unclear or the agencies responsible are not held accountable.

Animal Care Australia supports appropriate minimum animal care standards and enforceable laws that protect animals from cruelty and neglect.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Providing adequate government funding for appropriately trained animal welfare compliance and enforcement officers.
- Ensuring enforcement officers operate within a clear statutory framework and are accountable to government through the proposed Animal Welfare Commission or an appropriately designated government authority.
- Establishing transparent procedures for investigating alleged breaches of animal welfare legislation.
- Ensuring decisions about prosecutions are made through appropriate, accountable legal and government processes.

- Publishing regular reports on enforcement activity, compliance outcomes, prosecution decisions and measurable animal welfare improvements, while protecting legitimate privacy and investigative requirements.
- Reviewing existing enforcement arrangements to identify gaps, duplication, inconsistent decision-making and opportunities for improvement.
- Ensuring that animal welfare enforcement is proportionate, consistent, evidence-based and directed towards genuine welfare concerns.

Animal Care Australia believes enforcement agencies must be adequately resourced and subject to meaningful oversight.

Accountability must extend to the administration and enforcement of animal welfare laws, not just to the people and organisations regulated by them.

PREFERRED OUTCOME: CONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT, TRANSPARENT DECISION-MAKING AND DEMONSTRABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE.

Recognise and Protect Companion Animals and Responsible Animal Ownership



Better welfare outcomes must include the needs of pets and the people who care for them.

Companion animals make a substantial contribution to individual wellbeing, family life and the wider community. Their welfare must be properly recognised in legislation, government policy and public services.

Animal Care Australia seeks reforms that improve animal welfare while supporting responsible ownership and the human–animal bond.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Reviewing companion animal legislation to ensure it reflects contemporary animal welfare science, practical experience and the needs of animals and their carers.
- Ensuring companion animals are properly represented in state animal welfare strategies, legislation and associated standards.
- Supporting responsible animal ownership, including the ability to keep, care for and ethically breed animals in accordance with appropriate welfare requirements.
- Reviewing restrictions imposed by local councils to ensure animal management policies are evidence-based,

proportionate and genuinely directed towards welfare, safety and community needs.

- Supporting appropriate access for pets in rental housing and strata schemes, with practical arrangements that balance responsible pet ownership, animal welfare and legitimate property interests.
- Improving arrangements for people experiencing domestic violence or other personal crises to access safe accommodation that enables them to remain with their animals wherever practicable.
- Reviewing relevant laws and policies to better protect the welfare of animals when their owners experience family breakdown, incapacity or other significant life changes.

Animal Care Australia also calls for consultation with the organisation and relevant animal-keeping stakeholders before governments introduce significant changes affecting companion animals.

PREFERRED OUTCOME: A COMMUNITY IN WHICH RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE CAN KEEP THEIR ANIMALS AND ANIMALS RECEIVE APPROPRIATE CARE, PROTECTION AND RECOGNITION.

Reform Animal Breeding Laws Through Welfare Standards, Not Arbitrary Restrictions



Address irresponsible breeding without penalising responsible breeders.

Animal Care Australia supports ethical breeding practices, appropriate minimum standards and effective action against people who disregard their animals' welfare.

The focus of government reform should be on improving breeding practices and holding non-compliant operators accountable, rather than introducing blanket restrictions that do not necessarily improve animal welfare.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Establishing clear, practical and enforceable minimum standards for the breeding and sale of companion animals.
- Developing legislation informed by contemporary animal welfare science, veterinary expertise and the experience of responsible breeders and relevant animal organisations.
- Defining terms such as *puppy farm* in legislation where they are used, ensuring definitions are clear, objective and connected to identifiable welfare concerns.
- Targeting deliberate or repeated non-compliance, cruelty, neglect and unethical breeding practices through appropriate investigation and enforcement.

- Supporting responsible breeders who meet applicable welfare standards and maintain appropriate care throughout the animals' lives.
- Ensuring proposed restrictions on breeding, animal numbers or particular breeds are supported by credible evidence demonstrating their likely welfare benefits and consideration of unintended consequences.
- Consulting with relevant species-specific organisations and experienced animal-care stakeholders when developing or reviewing breeding legislation.

Animal Care Australia does not support the assumption that restricting the number of animals a person may keep or breed automatically improves animal welfare.

Reform should focus on the welfare and care of individual animals, compliance with appropriate standards and effective action against those who fail to meet their obligations.

PREFERRED OUTCOME: HIGHER ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS, RESPONSIBLE BREEDING AND EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST UNETHICAL OPERATORS.

Require Meaningful Consultation and Evidence-Based Law Reform



Animal welfare policy must be informed by science, expertise and practical experience.

Poorly designed legislation can create unintended consequences, impose unnecessary burdens on responsible animal keepers and fail to deliver the welfare improvements it promises.

Animal Care Australia believes governments should consult meaningfully with the people and organisations who understand the practical realities of keeping, caring for and breeding animals.

We ask all parties to commit to:

- Consulting with Animal Care Australia and relevant animal-keeping organisations before introducing significant legislation or policy affecting companion animals and other animals within Animal Care Australia 's areas of expertise.
- Recognising the specialised knowledge of community-based animal organisations, experienced animal keepers, responsible breeders and relevant industry participants.
- Requiring proposed reforms to be supported by credible evidence and contemporary animal welfare science.
- Assessing the likely animal welfare benefits, implementation costs, enforceability and unintended consequences of proposed legislative changes.

- Publishing clear explanations of the evidence and reasoning underpinning significant animal welfare reforms.
- Reviewing existing laws to determine whether they are achieving their intended welfare outcomes.
- Ensuring that changes to legislation do not unnecessarily prevent responsible people from keeping, breeding, exhibiting, training or participating in lawful activities with their animals.

Animal Care Australia supports the continued development of animal welfare legislation and appropriate minimum standards. We also believe those measures must be practical, proportionate and capable of delivering genuine improvements.

Animal welfare policy should be driven by demonstrable welfare outcomes, not political expediency or ideology.

Preferred outcome: Better-informed legislation that delivers practical and measurable animal welfare improvements.

Improve Government Transparency, Performance Reporting and Accountability



Governments must demonstrate that their animal welfare policies are working.

Communities should be able to understand how their governments administer animal welfare laws, allocate resources and measure improvements in animal welfare.

Animal Care Australia calls on all parties to commit to:

- Publishing a state animal welfare strategy with clear priorities, measurable objectives and implementation timeframes.
- Establishing public performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of animal welfare education, compliance, enforcement and prevention programs.
- Requiring regular public reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of animal welfare legislation and policies.
- Ensuring the proposed Animal Welfare Commission and Commissioner are accountable to Parliament through formal reporting and appropriate parliamentary scrutiny.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of government-funded animal welfare programs and enforcement arrangements.
- Consulting with relevant stakeholders when assessing outcomes and identifying areas requiring reform.

- Ensuring government decisions affecting animal welfare are transparent, evidence-based and open to appropriate public scrutiny.

Animal Care Australia believes governments should be able to demonstrate not merely that they have introduced new animal welfare laws, but that those laws and associated programs are achieving meaningful results.

PREFERRED OUTCOME: TRANSPARENT ADMINISTRATION, MEASURABLE PROGRESS AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN ANIMAL WELFARE GOVERNANCE.

Animal Care Australia's Commitment to Constructive Reform

Animal Care Australia is committed to working constructively with governments, parliamentarians, political parties, regulators, animal organisations and the broader community to improve animal welfare.

We recognise that effective animal welfare policy requires a balance of scientific knowledge, practical experience, appropriate legislation, education and accountable enforcement.

Animal Care Australia supports the continued improvement of minimum animal care standards and the effective enforcement of laws designed to prevent cruelty and neglect. We also advocate for responsible ownership, ethical breeding and the continued ability of people to participate in lawful activities with their animals.

Our approach is grounded in the principle that animal welfare and animal care must remain the central focus of government policy.

We encourage all parties to engage with Animal Care Australia

before and after the election to discuss these priorities and identify practical reforms that can be implemented during the next parliamentary term.

We welcome the opportunity to provide policy advice, contribute to legislative reviews and assist in developing initiatives that deliver demonstrable improvements in animal welfare.

Our message to Candidates

Animal Care Australia asks every candidate contesting this election to consider the following commitments:

1. Will you support the establishment of an appropriately resourced Animal Welfare Commission and Commissioner?
2. Will you commit to strengthening animal welfare education, prevention and responsible animal care?
3. Will you ensure animal welfare enforcement is properly resourced, transparent and accountable?
4. Will you support practical reforms that protect companion animal welfare and responsible ownership?
5. Will you support evidence-based breeding reforms that target genuine welfare failures rather than imposing arbitrary restrictions?
6. Will you commit to meaningful consultation with Animal Care Australia and relevant animal-keeping organisations?
7. Will you support transparent reporting and measurable outcomes for government animal welfare policies and programs?

We encourage candidates to provide a written response outlining their position on these priorities and the actions they would take if elected.

ANIMAL WELFARE IS ANIMAL CARE.

Contacting Animal Care Australia

Document development:

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