

Tasmanian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council

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The TWRC does not support any amendment, or indeed the current exemptions in the Act, which facilitate the use of dogs or other animals to worry, harass, pursue or injure another animal, whatever the reason. The regulations pertaining to animals in research are already comprehensive and very detailed as is the process which oversees research activities in Tasmania. There is no need to widen the legislative boundaries further to accommodate activities which we firmly believe are neither ethical nor acceptable under any circumstances.

While this amendment may facilitate a conviction albeit on a lesser charge, there is currently a considerable disparity between the penalties for s8 and s9. Therefore while a criminal conviction may be achieved by pursuing the lesser charge, the outcome is far less punitive than if a successful prosecution of aggravated cruelty was achieved. In order to make this more equitable, a review of the penalties for these sections is recommended.

Due to the unique inclusions detailed in s9(2) which are not found in s7 or s8, the TWRC recommends that s9 be included in s17(1A).

Removing the requirement for individuals to be associated with an institution, and the absence of reference to any other forms of permit in this section potentially increases risks of mismanagement of native species by unqualified, inexperienced people.

The TWRC advocates removing the exemption to s10 afforded to hunting in the existing Act. The notion that dogs are legally able to be used to pursue and terrorise native animals is, to us, utterly abhorrent. There is extensive anecdotal evidence that abuse, and what can only be described as torture, occurs on a regular basis by permitting this activity to continue, and indeed, condoning it. The very nature of this process is guaranteed to cause excess suffering, and must be viewed as such from a legal perspective. In addition, while the Act by its own definition applies to all living vertebrates, there is often a hesitancy to include wildlife within its parameters, thus allowing cruelty to occur unacknowledged and unchecked. We would encourage a wider application and interpretation of this Act by relevant agencies, allowing for a more proactive approach to protecting wildlife in Tasmania.