

Ten Lives supports the Draft Animal Welfare Act Amendment Bill 2022.

Any improvements that assist the Department, RSPCA and others involved in animal welfare are welcomed.

I note that the department is aware that there is support for the concept of 'sentience' for animal welfare.

I also note that the department have stated -

'Inclusion of 'sentience' in New Zealand and the ACT in the title or the objects of their animal welfare acts is largely symbolic and not enforceable. Tasmania intends to include the concept in the animal welfare guidelines.'

Ten Lives supports the concept of sentience in animals. Symbolic action is one step, but it is important that it is considered how this will be applied to the Tasmanian Animal Welfare Legislation, Standards and Guidelines.

The definition of sentience and what it applies to is important and needs to be considered and defined.

The extent to which animals live in the present is another consideration. Sentience may mean that an animal can react due to experience.

Much is done in the name of animal welfare that could be considered cruel and the concept of sentience may help address this.

The UK has recently passed a Bill to formally recognise animals as sentient beings.

They have established an Animal Sentience Committee tasked to put animal sentience at the heart of their government's policy.

It apparently is a result of their Action Plan for Animal Welfare which they say encompasses 5 key areas:

- sentience and enforcement
- international trade and advocacy
- farm animals
- pets and sporting animals
- wild animals

Perhaps Tasmania could adopt a similar approach where:

- Tasmania's animal welfare strategy is well defined with goals.
- There is an appropriate advisory committee tasked to consider the impact of animal Sentience to our Acts, Standards, and Guidelines. (AWAC?)
- Impacts on, and actions required, in animal related industry, Vet industry, Animal Welfare organisations, and the general public.

Perhaps with this sort of approach we can ensure the inclusion of the concept of animal sentience in Tasmanian legislation and guidelines is not only symbolic, but a path to definite actions to improve animal welfare.