



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

Animal Care Australia Inc

[www.animalcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au)

[president@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:president@animalcareaustralia.org.au)

Phone: 0400 323 843

## **STOP. THINK. VOTE!**

### ***Australia's Peak Animal Welfare Body says Victorian Politics needs your vote to count***

**Sydney, NEW SOUTH WALES, (18 November 2022)** Australia's peak animal welfare body, Animal Care Australia, has published a score card of how each Victorian Political Party performed in supporting or opposing sound Animal Welfare initiatives for companion animals in this last term.

Animal Care Australia painstakingly trawled through the last 3 years of Hansard (the official record of the Minutes of Victoria's Parliament) to find how often each party spoke in favour of improving animal welfare and supporting companion animals, and those who blocked, or spoke against, those motions. The topics measured were those that directly affect pet owners and companion animals. With two thirds of Australian households owning pets and companion animals, many of these issues have a direct impact on the day to day lives of a majority of voters.

"This is not just about cats and dogs. Many of us keep all sorts of animals including birds, rabbits, rats, reptiles, horses, domesticated native animals, goldfish, and everything in between." said Michael Donnelly, Animal Care Australia President. "The current government has introduced Policies that negatively impacted pet owners and set Animal Welfare back by years and that cannot continue."

Regardless of whether a Party has written animal policies or not, once elected, they have the opportunity to speak on the record on all the issues that arise, and have the choice to speak positively, negatively, or not at all on issues that affect our animals. ACA's score card lists the issues that were debated in Parliament in the last term, and which way the parties spoke on those issues. Unlike published Party Policies, which are often changed or altered, even after a party is elected, the record in Hansard is permanent and demonstrates the party's actions, not just their promises.

Parties not currently in power were assessed on their policies and whether they make statements on any of the topics debated in the last term.

“ACA supports good animal welfare science to continually improve welfare standards in legislation,” said Mr Donnelly. “Animal Welfare needs to be protected from, and held independently outside of political agendas, especially extreme animal rights ideologies parading as welfare advocates.”

ACA identified a concerning trend. An increasing number of Animal Rights Extremists, representing less than 1% of Australians, are having an undue influence, removing Animal Welfare from legislation, and restricting and over regulating companion animal ownership and activities. It appears that the Andrews Government has sacrificed animal welfare in exchange for favours to progress less popular policies, deemed more important.

In 2019, an amendment to Victoria’s Planning Provisions called VC159, passed through both Houses unnoticed. A change in permitted land uses limited the number of animals any household on less than 20 acres can own to a maximum of just five. No more than 2 of any individual species can be kept without a permit. This affects everyone from keepers of large herd animals such as horses, to their small pets like rats and guinea pigs. The latter, normally live in large family groups, and are usually kept indoors. No consultation with stakeholders or the public occurred. It wasn’t until Councils updated their Domestic Animal Welfare Plans that this change was enacted and enforced, with some dog owners being ordered to euthanize their pets registered with council if they couldn’t rehome them.

“People who are responsible pet owners, and have done the right thing by registering their pets with council became easy targets for fines or demands to euthanize excess numbers of loved family members,” said Mr Donnelly. “Human and animal victims - all simply at the whim of a government negotiating with minor parties to get the votes they needed elsewhere.”

Reversing this will clearly require a change of government, or ensuring parties who have promised to address this issue (at this stage that’s only the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party) and others with mostly green ticks on Animal Care Australia’s score card, to be elected. Then we can get to righting these wrongs.

Animal Care Australia strongly recommends voting below the line, taking the time to number your preferences to prevent your vote being overridden by closed door preference deals. Animal Care Australia’s Score card will help you decide what order to place those parties in.

Find the score card at <https://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/victorian-election-2022>

Animal Care Australia is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals in Australia.

**-ends-**

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Michael Donnelly on 0400 323 843 or email [president@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:president@animalcareaustralia.org.au)

## About Animal Care Australia

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to advocate for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

ACA was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers to lobby for real 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.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare. We estimate our foundation ACA clubs currently represent well over 150,000 members and that is just in NSW alone!

By educating our members and the general public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs, and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of collaborating, consulting and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- lobbying government for stronger welfare outcomes
- lobbying government to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educate the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educate the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights

Photo: ACA President, Michael Donnelly

