



## **ANIMAL POLICY STATEMENTS**

1 November 2010

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### **General Principles:**

1. The League places great value on the human-animal bond and all the different human-animal relationships and believes that all the animal lifeforms sharing the planet with humanity have value in themselves and deserve to be treated with respect and care.
2. The League's core emphasis is on the overall welfare of the animal, not just the avoidance of cruelty by humans. With regard to companion animals, domestic livestock and animals in human care, the League believes that owner education is a core part of our operation, as is education of the general public.
3. The League discourages the keeping of native animals as pets, especially rare and endangered species, unless by those with expertise in their welfare and with a permit where required. Native fauna are wild animals, mostly not suited to domestication and even less to urban conditions.
4. The League is always prepared to offer assistance to communities and groups with special needs in the management and care of their animals.

### **Companion Animals:**

5. The League strongly encourages puppy training and more advanced obedience training for all dogs, both for the welfare of the dog and the improvement of the human-animal relationship.
6. The League strongly encourages the development of a lifestyle for all cats which has them contained within a residence but with access to a secure outdoor exercise space. No cat should be roaming free, for the protection of both cat and wildlife.
7. No dog should be roaming free.
8. The League strongly supports the NSW Companion Animals Act, with special emphasis on the compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats.
9. The League strongly supports desexing of all companion cats and dogs unless they are involved in showing, breeding or other programs for breed improvement. The League is prepared to subsidise desexing of animals where the owners cannot afford the cost.
10. The League strongly encourages close contact and bonding between owners and their companion animals, whether through the animals living in the house or in close proximity to their owners, with significant time spent together. Broader socialisation with other people and animals throughout the animal's life is of great importance for the welfare of the animal and fulfilment of its potential.



11. Those who own or are considering the ownership of companion animals need to be educated in the particular needs of those species and their care. Included would be mice and guinea-pigs, ferrets and rabbits as pets. Just because they are small does not justify cruel or careless treatment.
12. The keeping of birds and fish poses welfare issues. For birds, issues such as cage size and appropriate diet; for fish, care with water temperatures and salinity are important. The keeping of an individual fish or bird in isolation should be considered cruel treatment. Owners need education. In particular, small children should not care for birds or fish unsupervised. The death of such a pet, if caused by careless treatment, should not be considered trivial.
13. The League prefers that companion animals be sold directly by accredited breeders and by Animal Shelters to the public. The League supports the roles of pet shops as suppliers of pet equipment and advice on basic animal care. However, since pet shops will continue to be involved in the sale of animals, it is vital that the Code of Practice for Pet Shops be enforced. The League urges pet shops to continue to improve the conditions under which animals are kept, to train their staff in safe and humane animal handling and to work towards the socialisation of the animals in their care.
14. The breeding of companion animals should only be done by accredited breeders. “Puppy Mills”, “Puppy Farms” and equivalent industrial-scale breeding and raising of companion animals must be banned. Codes of Practice and Ethics of various companion animal organisations which ban the overuse of queens and bitches by breeding in every (or even most) season, should be applied across the industry.
15. The League is strongly opposed to breed-specific legislation aimed at stopping dog attacks. Such legislation is wrong-headed in principle and does not work. The League encourages the breeding only of behaviourally sound animals, careful socialising and training of puppies and kittens and ownership of behaviourally sound animals, regardless of their breed.
16. The League acknowledges that semi-owned dogs and cats pose problems in several dimensions, especially in rural areas and regional centres. Public education needs to stress that leaving such animals loose (particularly at night) is harmful. Where they pose a threat to livestock or native species they should be trapped (preferably) or culled humanely. In particular, packs of feral or semi-owned dogs must be culled humanely.
17. Urban and suburban colonies of feral cats must be monitored and managed closely and new additions to the colony trapped and euthanased. This will ensure that within a (cat) generation the colony will become extinct. The reasons for this policy are threefold:
  - research does not validate the supposition that such colonies perform useful tasks in pest suppression,



- the effect of the colony's predatory behaviour on native animal and birdlife in the area is devastating,
  - many such colonies are not well-managed, so that failures to trap and desex all breeding females mean that the colony has indefinite life and irregularities in feeding encourage the decimation of local wildlife.
18. Well-managed cat colonies, where members have been desexed, fed, monitored and given veterinary care whenever needed and who are actively supervised can over time be considered as semi-owned. Their carers are to be encouraged to be vigilant in the colony's management and to collaborate in the natural attrition of the colony.
19. Euthanasia is an instrument of last resort. Its veterinary use in circumstances where all other treatments have failed or where pain, injury, illness and old age cannot be ameliorated, is considered acceptable. Regrettably, where domestic or companion animals are a danger to people or other animals, are vicious or unmanageable, they must be euthanased. Wherever possible, surrender and rehoming should be considered first. The League is opposed to euthanasia being used in any other circumstances. Euthanasia must be carried out by a trained and certified lethalist or a person competent in the humane destruction of animals and must always be done as painlessly as possible.

#### **Animals in the Wild:**

20. The League opposes recreational hunting. The League is opposed to the licensing of hunters to hunt feral animals on public land. It opposes the sale of zoo animals to shooters, whether for hunting directly or for breeding to provide a pool of animals for hunting.
21. The League is strongly opposed to the use of steel-jawed traps for the extermination of "pest animals" under any circumstances.
22. The League urges of all Australian Governments the adoption of a code for the use of chemical pest-killers which precludes the use of any chemical agents which cause animal suffering. In particular, the League urges the banning of chloropicrin.
23. The League urges limitation on the use of 1080 to circumstances where it is certain that only the targeted species will be victims. The League would prefer its total ban but recognises that is unlikely to be achieved.
24. The League acknowledges with regret that there are circumstances in which kangaroo mobs, brumby and camel herds may need to be culled especially when their numbers have grown to the point where they are destroying the country or are in imminent danger of starvation. Such culls need to be conducted humanely.



25. The League is opposed to pig-hunting. Apart from the danger to both humans and dogs, the cruelty of the “sport” to both dogs and pigs should not be countenanced. The League urges that it be banned.
26. The League supports the continuation of the ban on duck shooting.
27. The League recognises that in some circumstances culling of both native and introduced species may be necessary. This must be done in ways that minimise the possibility of wounded animals left to suffer. Methods such as helicopter shooting which make wounding rather than outright kills more likely should not be used unless there is no alternative.
28. The League recognises that in some situations an introduced species competing with a native species may threaten the survival of that species. In those circumstances, the League acknowledges that the introduced species may need to be humanely culled. The mere existence of an introduced species should not lead automatically to the idea that they should be culled.

#### **Animals Kept for Human Purposes and Entertainment:**

29. The League recognises the major changes which have taken place in the management of animals within zoos and some wildlife parks, especially their work in research and breeding programs for rare and endangered species. The League endorses and encourages such efforts in the further development of the conditions in which animals are kept, to allow the closest reasonable approximation to the lifestyle they would live in the wild.
30. The League recommends close supervision of circuses and the minimising of the employment of animals in their acts. Close supervision of the racing of horses, dogs and camels to ensure the elimination of training methods and actual exhibitions which are cruel to the animals involved especially when they are against the nature of the animals involved, is also demanded. In particular, whips should not be employed in racing or training and if they are needed, must be padded and used to the minimum extent possible. Close attention must be paid to the conditions in which they live and are transported. There should be frequent inspections of these premises and entertainments. Appropriate Codes of Practice must be enforced.
31. The League urges a ban on rodeos.
32. The League abhors bloodsports, including dog fighting, cock-fighting, and fox hunting, in all their forms. Criminal penalties apply.



33. The League is concerned for the welfare of all animals involved in dog and cat shows, horse, cattle and poultry shows, in agility, obedience and flyball competition, show-jumping, dressage and three-day eventing, in agricultural shows and exhibitions and all such animal entertainments. Special care is urged for the conditions under which they are kept during such events and for their protection from careless or ignorant spectators.
34. The Code of Practice covering the use of animals in film and theatrical performances must be followed strictly.
35. The League abhors the practice of “bleeding” young greyhounds by allowing them to chase and kill rabbits and possums. The League supports those in the industry who have realised that this practice does not increase the dog’s desire to race and that it is purely an exercise in cruelty.
36. The League has particular concern for the welfare of animals bred and/or kept specifically for research purposes. The League supports the work of Ethics Committees which supervise the employment of such animals, urge the further strengthening of Codes of Conduct for such work and believes in stringent policing of the conditions in which such animals are kept and employed.
37. The League urges the minimising of the number and range of experiments which actually employ live animals of any species. This applies especially to the use of animals in commercial experimentation for product development. Specifically, the unnecessary repetition of basic experiments must stop. It applies equally to the minimisation of dissection of animals as part of education.

**Farming, Grazing and Commercial Animal Production:**

38. The League supports gradual movement towards more humane processes for the operation of abattoirs. The work of Temple Grandin ([Animals in Translation](#)) in the USA in this area will be incorporated into League policy.
38. The slaughter of meat animals must be carried out humanely. All animals for slaughter must first be stunned or otherwise rendered unconscious. The League calls for the abolition of exemptions which allow any butchering to kill without first stunning the beast.
39. The League is strongly opposed to the export trade in live meat animals, especially cattle and sheep. Furthermore, the League is especially opposed to their sale, live, to countries where the conditions under which they are kept and slaughtered are cruel and inhumane. The League unequivocally presses for the banning of this trade. Until this trade can be prohibited, the League presses for continuing significant improvement in the conditions under which these animals are transported, both before and during shipping.



40. The League acknowledges that considerable progress has been made to ameliorate travel conditions for livestock and poultry but urges further effort. This should include the use of Highway Patrol Police to investigate suspect vehicles and call in the Inspectorate when necessary. Many animal transport operators are small businesses with marginal vehicles for the purpose and overcrowding, avoidance of rest-stop regulations and excessive times spent in the vehicle in the sun without water are common. Ongoing pressure is needed to improve this situation. Livestock need to be able to stand and move while in the transit and must not be left confined over long periods. Since drivers should take the required rest-breaks, the use of a second driver on long-haul transport is encouraged to keep the travel time as short as practicable. During summer, night travel is strongly encouraged.
41. Farmers and graziers have as one of their basic obligations, the preservation of health and life of their livestock, including the horses and dogs who work with them to manage their stock. When faced with natural disasters like drought, bushfire and flood, they face massive difficulties in meeting that obligation. The League encourages the development of drought-proofing and threat-reduction planning and the development of hazard-management strategies to minimise the risks to livestock.
42. Overstocking is always risky to animal health. Farmers and graziers are urged to closely monitor conditions on their properties and to adjust stock numbers in accord with their ability to feed the stock. Local Government bodies and Livestock Health and Pest Authorities are urged to cooperate in preserving the lives and health of livestock and native species.
43. Local Governments are urged to closely monitor conditions on acreage properties, especially on the fringes of cities and larger towns. Sometimes the owners of such acreage have livestock on their property and lack the knowledge to manage and care for them appropriately. Local Government needs to take responsibility for stocking densities in such circumstances and if the current legislation does not allow for that, the League urges an amendment to the Act.
44. In any livestock operation, accident and disease endanger the lives and health of stock. Close monitoring, reporting and rapid and appropriate reaction to minimise illness, pain and damage are strongly encouraged.
45. The League is opposed to any factory-style or industrial-scale production of livestock, especially methods which damage, cripple or otherwise truncate the lives of the animals they are breeding or raising.



46. The League accepts Government-mandated conditions for the keeping of specific kinds of livestock only as the bare minimum for healthy livestock. The keeping of animals in conditions basically contrary to the animal's nature, is essentially unnatural and not to be encouraged. So the use of sow-stalls in the breeding of pigs, which prohibit natural movement, must be banned. The use of cages for hens as their permanent containers is inherently contrary to their nature. Barn-raising or free-range raising of poultry is much to be preferred and where cages continue to be used, they must allow for natural movement and resting by the birds and population density must remain below levels at which it damages the birds. The use of antibiotics except in case of the presence of disease, of steroids and of growth hormones, is unacceptable.
47. The use of feedlots for the fattening of sheep and cattle is only acceptable where natural movement is possible and the stock have access to shade and water is always available. Population density must be low enough to allow for healthy living conditions.
48. The League believes that all treatment of livestock must be humane and as painless as possible, so mulesing must be replaced by more humane practices, which will achieve protection from flystrike for the sheep concerned. The development by selective breeding of bare-breech stock is to be encouraged as are other practices such as crutching twice yearly. The League encourages further research to develop as many options as possible. In particular, the League urges research into pain management in circumstances where mulesing is still being done. At the same time, the League discourages the use of excessively coercive methods such as trade boycotts to attempt to compel changes in behaviour.
49. The League encourages large-scale and national retailers to promote more humane conditions for the raising, keeping and transport of livestock which they will purchase and make clear to potential vendors that animal welfare is a priority. In particular, with poultry, the League urges retailers to insist on significantly larger cage sizes and lower population densities, so that birds are not crowded, can move freely and comfortably and do not need beak-clipping.
50. The League considers that as a principle, farmers and graziers, and society in general, must accept that livestock production differs from many other industries. Profit margin and "the bottom line" cannot be the sole operating principle. Healthy life which is as balanced as possible for the animals involved, must be the first principle.
51. The League supports only the humane training and use of guard dogs and security dogs. Trainers, employers and handlers of security dogs should be licensed and the use of cruel or harsh training methods designed to induce savagery in the dog must be punished severely. Inadequacy in diet designed to induce "edginess" and alertness in the dog is condemned. The Code of Practice must include standards for the humane training of such dogs.



**Fishing:**

52. The League supports research in the fishing industry to further minimise and then prevent the unnecessary and often wasteful killing of “bycatch” and education within the industry to ensure that best practice is widely known and used.
53. The League urges the banning of longline and driftnet fishing because of the cruelty implicit in their use.
54. The League deplores the loss overboard, the abandonment and the cutting loose of nets, wire and other fishing equipment which kill and injure vast numbers of birds, fish and aquatic life, as well as the use of trawl fishing methods which wipe out bottom-growing plant life on which so much marine life depend.
55. The League supports Australian Government policy aimed at protecting whales and dolphins and urges further strengthening of protection for those animals in our region, not just within our territorial limits.
56. The League deplores the cruel mutilation of sharks to remove their fins and the abandonment of the rest of the animal to a cruel death.

**For more information on AWL Policy**  
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