

Policy Summaries 2016



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Introduction This is a compendium of new policy *Summaries* flowing out of the work of various policy committees during 2016.

Editing has been made in an attempt to ensure consistency of style and to remove detail which is considered unnecessary at this stage of our development as a political party.

Policy development is an on-going process. If you have comments, criticisms or suggestions on policy please email policy@animaljusticeparty.org.

1 Vision The Animal Justice Party has a long term vision for a kinder Australia but recognises that change will proceed in stages. Many of our policies recognise this and don't simply describe our vision of the future, but the steps required to get there.

2 Animals

2.1 Farming

Farming and food choices are intimately connected and so are the corresponding AJP policies. We advocate a plant based diet but recognise that animal industries are not all the same.

We recognise that some animal industries inflict less pain than others however all involve significant suffering and ultimately the taking of life. The AJP understands that widespread dietary change will be a lengthy process and that animal production methods must be improved urgently as an interim measure; so we will prioritise the phase out of factory farming.

It is the aim of our **dietary policy** to provide programs that inspire people to change. Changes in diets will prompt changes in what and how we farm. Some farmers will have to change their production methods and others will shift from producing animals to producing plant foods. We expect a significant drop in the number of farm animals, an increase in new plant-based industries, and an improvement in human health.

However, whilst the Animal Justice Party will advocate for incomplete reform when the immediate suffering of animals is involved, it will always recognise that such reforms are not enough in isolation and must occur in tandem with a long-term, total transition to plant-based agriculture.

Related policies:

1. **Human diet**
2. **Climate change**
3. **Marine animals**

2.2 Companion Animals

The AJP encourages people and animals to share their lives in ways that enrich both. But there is a difference between wild and domestic species.

Companion animals are recognised and cherished by the majority of Australians for their friendship, comfort and devotion. Some 60 percent of Australian households include a companion animal. Companion animals can be pets that share our house, perhaps sit on our laps but they can also be animals that are companions from a distance, such as free-living cats, and birds. All these animals deserve consideration and respect, they provide us with many benefits, but also with obligations. They are not resources.

The Animal Justice Party believes that the requirements of companion animals are inadequately understood. Nationally over 250,000 mostly healthy dogs and cats are put to death each year in pounds and shelters. Around 50,000 cruelty complaints are lodged with only a few hundred successfully prosecuted. It is clear then, that existing acts, regulations, codes of practice, law enforcements, and educational initiatives are failing to protect these animals. The Animal Justice Party will promote reform to protect the best interests of companion animals with the aim of achieving consistency for all levels of government, state, territory, and federal.

Species that haven't been domesticated should be free from exploitation and are not suitable as companion animals.

2.3 Live Animal Exports

The AJP opposes the commercial export, whether by sea or air, of live animals; this includes but isn't limited to sheep, cattle, horses, donkeys, camels and goats.

2.4 Animal Experimentation

The Animal Justice Party will strive to put an end to the confinement, pain and distress inflicted on animals for scientific experimentation. We oppose the use of animals in experimentation unless it can be demonstrated that the experimentation will not harm the animal *and* will benefit research and the individual animals involved.

Animals as models for humans in medical science is frequently misleading and we support new technologies with improved predictive power. As an interim measure, Governments at all levels have a responsibility to prevent the suffering of animals of any species for research, whether it be for scientific, commercial or military purposes.

2.5 Bats And Flying Foxes

The AJP will offer a fresh approach that respects flying foxes and bats for their intrinsic worth and will help provide and maintain their basic needs, instead of seeing them as 'pests'.

2.6 Greyhound Racing

Greyhound racing and gambling are intimately connected. This inevitably leads to over breeding and the killing of healthy dogs. The industry has also demonstrated a level of mendacity and cruelty that indicates it is beyond any form of regulation. It must be abolished, just like dog fighting and bear baiting.

2.7 Wombats

The AJP recognises that wombats and their rights to protection, quality of life and habitat preservation are the responsibility of all Australians. We have a unique role in caring for this iconic marsupial and a duty to the rest of the world to do this.

Wombats as sentient beings should be able to safely roam throughout their habitat; free from human-mediated harm through shooting, poisoning, dog attack, road kill and culling.

2.8 Brumbies

A brumby is a wild horse. Early white arrivals bought horses and there have been wild populations in many parts of Australia ever since. The role of these horses in history, both during war and peace, has given them a special place in many Australian hearts.

But their rights are equal to any other introduced animals and are covered in [our Introduced Animals policy](#).

Where environmental degradation from brumbies is demonstrated then non-lethal control measures should be implemented if proven necessary.

The current killing campaigns in some states impose horrific suffering on these animals by using helicopter shooting; this impacts not only the animals shot, but those who may endure severe injuries during efforts to escape.

National legislative protection is required as a matter of urgency.

2.9 Dingo

The AJP sees dingos as a valuable part of the eco-system; being a native apex predator.

The economic impact of dingos on meat producers has driven their persecution since white arrival. The modern scientific view is that [increasing dingo numbers is essential](#) to protect what little biodiversity remains. This requires dingos be protected and have more habitat. At present there are only a few protected areas for dingoes; the Blue Mountains NSW World Heritage Area and habitat protection listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The World Heritage listed Fraser Island National Park also provides dingo habitat, but gives them inadequate protection from well meaning but ill-informed tourists.

2.10 Sharks

Sharks are an essential part of ocean eco-systems and the AJP advocates complete protection for them; from both culling and harvesting. We also call for a ban on the importation of all shark products.

2.11 Introduced Animals

This policy concerns free living introduced species, such as camels, rabbits, cats and foxes, and doesn't deal with exotic species currently found in pet shops; these are dealt with in our [companion animals policy](#).

The AJP supports the humane and non-lethal treatment of all animals regardless of where their species originated. We will support and develop programs that are in-line with this position and focus on restoring eco-systems via methods harmonious to nature such a rewilding.

2.12 Jumps Racing

Jumps racing is an inherently cruel and unsafe form of entertainment. The AJP opposes jumps racing and will work to achieve its abolition in Victoria and South Australia, the only two remaining states of Australia in which it is still allowed to occur.

2.13 Kangaroos

Legislation that protects kangaroos, wallabies and other macropods is urgently required. We must work to counter the misinformation from those with commercial interests so

that kangaroos are valued for their intrinsic worth. We must help maintain their basic needs, instead of seeing them as resources or pests.

2.14 Koalas

Koalas must not be judged on the basis of their impact on development or tourism. Their habitat must be protected, particularly given their current vulnerable status in Queensland, NSW and ACT. They deserve safety from harm by humans.

2.15 Native Birds

The AJP wants to increase biodiversity and to promote practices that enable a flourishing native bird population, coexisting with humans throughout Australia.

The AJP recognises the importance that biodiversity plays for birdlife (and all other life) on our planet. Australian ecosystems are vital for the survival of internationally significant migratory species. Many areas of wetland and coast provide key habitats for these migratory species, so loss of biodiversity in Australia has ramifications that extend beyond our borders.

The AJP supports maximal preservation of native bird habitat, including in residential areas.

The AJP doesn't see native birds as a resource. This implies an end to recreational duck and quail shooting.

Related policies

1. [Wildlife and Sustainability](#)

2.16 Marine Animals

Many marine animals, including fish, feel joy, suffering and pain just as land animals do. The Animal Justice Party believes their current treatment is inconsistent with these basic scientific facts and must change.

Some marine animals, like dugongs and turtles, are killed as part of indigenous tradition. Others are caught as part of an elaborate sport fishing culture; including marlin, swordfish and sharks. The AJP doesn't believe that a culture or tradition of any age or extent is a justification for killing; let alone killing using painful or drawn out methods.

Eating fish, whether farmed or wild, is incompatible with AJP's advocacy of a plant based diet.

2.17 Animals In Entertainment

Formidable animal welfare challenges exist around Australia with regard to the unnatural use of animals in commercially-operated entertainment enterprises. These enterprises include: performing animal circuses; rodeos; horse and greyhound racing; jumps racing; horse drawn carriage rides; marine parks; zoos and other exhibits such as travelling farm shows (with animals for petting). Broadly defined, *entertainment* also covers such pursuits as recreational hunting.

The Animal Justice Party believes that animals should be enjoyed, appreciated, respected and cared for in as close to their natural state as possible. They should never be terrified as they perform unnatural behaviours or goaded into violent action to provide opportunities for humans to demonstrate ‘skills’ in taunting and subduing them for audience amusement.

2.18 Zoos

The AJP only supports zoos, marine parks and aquariums where they function in the service of animals. Functions may include breeding of endangered animals, rescue and rehabilitation and serving as a permanent home for animals where release is impossible. Thus all zoos, marine parks and aquariums will join those already evolving to become even more like conservation parks and sanctuaries. Conservation should be carried out in the native land of the species in their natural environment or as closely to as possible.

Visitors, where allowed, shouldn’t adversely impact animals.

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3 Environment

3.1 Environment

The AJP believes humans can thrive while simultaneously reducing our adverse impacts on the natural environment, particularly wildlife.

The human activity which has the most adverse impacts on the most animals is food production. Changing the way we eat can dramatically reduce our impact on animals. The AJP advocacy for a plant based diet is therefore a key plank in our environment policy. No organisation or Government can have an effective environment policy without food policy being central.

In addition to food choices, we measure all resource choices by their impacts on animals. In general terms, this implies we favour recyclable and upcycled materials over those

which are consumed and thrown away. If two materials are interchangeable, we favour the one with the lowest land footprint, all other things being equal.

AJP favours sources of clean energy that minimise habitat destruction or other harmful impacts on animals and the environment.

These principles drive policy decisions in all of the following policies with an environmental component.

1. [Human diet](#)
2. [Climate change](#)
3. [Natural gas](#)
4. [Marine animals](#)

3.2 Climate Change

We are rapidly changing the climate. It isn't only getting warmer but less predictable. This is nothing short of a global emergency requiring immediate and substantial action. We must slow, stop and reverse the negative changes to the climate before 'tipping points' kick in to accelerate and take the process beyond our control.

The AJP is concerned about the impact of climate change on both humans and animals. Animals will succumb to extreme climatic events well before we do. A world that becomes 2-4 degrees warmer, or more, will kill billions of individual animals, and [could eliminate](#) a substantial proportion of existing animal species.

It is an AJP priority that urgent action be taken to address global climate destabilisation. Animal agriculture plays a major role as a cause of climate change, so a switch to a plant based diet would be a significant help in avoiding it. Globally, it is essential that we protect ocean life and marine eco-systems and decrease livestock numbers to both reduce methane and other greenhouse gas emissions and allow reforestation.

3.3 Natural Gas

Fossil fuels, including natural gas, will not be part of any final clean energy solution to climate change. It makes no sense to transition to natural gas, only to have to replace it with something better in the near future. As a technology, carbon capture and storage (CCS) attached to gas power plants is [unlikely \(see Table 1\)](#) to be clean enough for use in any solution.

3.4 Wildlife And Sustainability

The AJP aims to maximise wildlife habitat by minimising the land appropriated by people, while ensuring a high standard of health and wellbeing.

3.5 Great Barrier Reef

For thirty years the [biggest factor](#) affecting the Great Barrier Reef has been the increased sediment and fertiliser carried into reef waters by all the rivers flowing eastwards in far north Queensland. This sediment and fertiliser comes from pasture on land cleared for cattle.

Recent coral bleaching, exacerbated by climate change, is compounding the threats to the reef.

The AJP focus on plant based eating works like a swiss army knife in that it works on multiple environmental issues at the same time; in this case climate change and the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

As in other areas, AJP policies target major causes rather than easy targets of minor importance.

Related policies:

1. [Marine animals](#)
2. [Climate change](#)

4 Humans

4.1 Animal Law

We seek a new legal status for animals, acknowledging their right to live protected from human harm.

4.2 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is a word describing procedures to protect people from biological dangers such as infectious diseases. It includes measures designed to prevent new diseases evolving.

Factory farms pose significant biosecurity risks to all Australians. Phasing them out will prevent rather than manage, many infectious disease threats to humans and animals. It will also reduce the risks of new diseases emerging.

AJP advocates a reduction in the interference with wildlife and its habitat. This reduces conflict which risks spreading infectious diseases carried by wildlife.

4.3 Cultured Meat

Meat cultured from individual animal cells has the potential to replace meat produced from killing animals. But if cultured meat is identical to normal meat, it will cause the same health problems. If it is different, it may be better or worse; it is too early to say.

The AJP will judge such meat replacements on a case by case basis as the evidence emerges.

4.4 Economy

The Animal Justice Party believes that treating animals as resources is not only morally wrong but reduces human wellbeing. We believe compassion and fairness must be core economic principles. In the major political parties, these concepts run a distant second to productivity and growth.

Humans who are unhappy in their life have [lower productivity](#). They also see less opportunities for economic advancement and are conservative in their [economic behaviour](#). It's also true that positive human engagement with animals of any species makes humans [feel good](#) about themselves and more positive toward others. This is important in building an emotionally stronger, wiser, respectful, compassionate and healthier community.

4.5 Education

The AJP believes that the exploitation of animals is not only unnecessary but detrimental to education. Furthermore, whilst education is a right that should be respected, it should not come at the expense of the suffering of other species, particularly given that there are always alternatives.

Many aspects of our education system implicitly mold student values, starting at the canteen and extending into science classes. The AJP will formulate programs across all areas to foster kindness and non-violence towards all beings.

4.6 Employment

The AJP aims to maximise gainful employment while phasing out jobs that rely on exploitation of animals as commodities.

4.7 Family Violence

‘Domestic and family violence’ is defined as violence by a family member or current or former intimate partner. It may involve attempts to gain and/or maintain power and control over another through a range of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse.

Domestic violence is a significant issue in Australia. It is the most common factor contributing to homelessness among women and their children, and plays a major [role in the nation’s homicides](#).

The AJP believes that national and state policies addressing domestic and family violence should be well resourced and evidence based. This should include addressing intersections between family and domestic violence and animal justice issues.

4.8 Health

The AJP supports a universal publicly funded healthcare system.

We want to broaden the focus in health policy from just treating disease to also improving health. We believe the biggest gains in health, longevity and economy are to be gained by improving people’s knowledge and access to healthy diet and exercise opportunities.

Our key dietary goal is to shift Australia’s food focus towards healthy plant-based wholefoods. This will greatly reduce the rates of many illnesses.

Related policies:

1. [Human diet and animals](#)
2. [Education](#)
3. [Mental Health](#)

4.9 Human Diet And Animals

The AJP advocates a plant based diet free of all products derived from animals.

The current demand for animal products in Australia needs to shift to lessen the impacts on individual animals, human health and the planet; education and promotional action needs to occur to bring about a higher uptake of a plant based diet. Education can help people understand the true cost of an animal based diet and strive for individual change.

The AJP believes that many people already find modern animal agriculture unacceptable; and our proposals for reform are covered in our [farming](#) policy.

However, understanding a problem, knowing the solution, and effecting that solution are three separate activities. Our education policy focuses on teaching people to prepare delicious and healthy meals using only plant based ingredients.

Related policies:

1. [Education](#)
2. [Health](#)
3. [Farming](#)

4.10 International Affairs

The AJP wants Australia to be a good global citizen who can lead by example in transforming from a country heavily dependent on animal exploitation to one driven by empathy and compassion.

4.11 Law Social Justice

The Animal Justice Party believes animal rights is the biggest social justice issue of our time. Achieving animal rights will not only benefit non-human animals but immensely improve the lives of humans. A kinder world where respect and non-violence towards all beings is encouraged and nurtured will have benefits that flow through to the lives of all and the environment which we live.

4.12 Mental Health

AJP will work with existing mental health experts to integrate animal care and interaction with existing programs.

The AJP believes that just as diet and exercise are crucial for physical wellbeing, caring relationships are crucial for mental wellbeing. In particular, having an animal friend is

a great way to keep well adjusted. The challenge is to make the relationship beneficial for both parties.

Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation can also give people an avenue for selfless contribution that can enhance self image. But wildlife care also involves mental health risks. Animal rescuers are frequently under resourced and may be disturbed by the human cruelty whose consequences they may have to deal with.

4.13 Population

The AJP believes that our policies will enable Australia to reduce it's impact on wildlife and the rest of the natural environment while maintaining a compassionate approach to both migrants and refugees while keeping the home-grown component of our population growth at or below zero.