

Animal Justice Party Charter

November 2019

The Animal Justice Party was formed in response to public concern about political parties' failure to address the issues concerning animals and nature. Part of a worldwide sisterhood of animal rights parties, the Animal Justice Party is the political body advocating for the rights of animals and nature in Australia. We represent our fellow members of the Earth community who cannot vote or advocate on their own behalf within our human democratic institutions of government. Australians are frustrated by the lack of political action to assist the wellbeing of animals and protect our planet. We are the party to change that. Australia needs laws and processes which recognise animals' needs and capabilities and which protect their interests, whether they are domestic, farmed or wild. The Animal Justice Party will also ensure such laws and processes are properly enforced and implemented to achieve genuine justice for animals.

Our treatment of animals and the environments we share with them are often marred by a lack of understanding, leading to disrespect and cruelty. At a time when the planet's environment is being challenged on so many fronts, we must urgently act to ensure that all animals that both contribute to and depend on it are respected and valued for their intrinsic and fundamental roles. We reject anthropocentrism and speciesism among other forms of oppression and violence. We need to build a new relationship with the planet that is inclusive of all of its inhabitants. With a fresh approach towards animals and the ecological systems of Earth, humans can create more rewarding and ethical communities and relationships built on deeper understandings and firm principles of justice. Our species must become a caring and responsible member of the wider Earth community.

The Animal Justice Party seeks a restoration of the balance between animals, nature and the human world which acknowledges the interconnectedness and interdependence of these worlds, and respects the wellbeing of non-human animals alongside that of humans.

Vision

A planet on which animals and nature have the right to live and thrive free from negative human interference and a human society which functions with kindness and compassion within its ecological limits as a responsible member of the Earth community.

Mission

To secure the interests of animals and nature through Australia's democratic institutions of government.

Fundamental Factors

To implement its vision and give effect to its mission, the Animal Justice Party recognises the importance of the following:

1. An **education system** which fosters in its values an awareness of the natural and animal worlds, and of human responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of the Earth and its inhabitants.
2. A **political system** in which participatory, deliberative democracy can be exercised so that citizens have the ability to express their true concerns about the treatment of animals.
3. An **administrative system** in which governments and institutions deal with animal and environmental issues in a transparent, honourable and accountable manner.
4. An **economic system** in which ethics, the protection of the natural world and its inhabitants, and the realisation of capability of all beings are highly valued for their intrinsic role.
5. A **societal system** which promotes kindness and rejects violence oppression, and inequality.
6. A robust **legal system** that recognises and protects the interests and capabilities of animals, nature, and humans.
7. A **population settlement** and land use system that is truly sustainable for all its inhabitants and ecosystems, recognising that our species is but one member of a wider Earth community.

Principles

In all its actions, the Animal Justice Party will be guided by the following principles:

1. Each animal is the experiencing subject of a life. Animals and the natural environment should be respected for their own sake, not merely for their instrumental values
2. Animals have their own capabilities which they should be free to realise
3. Human interactions with all animals should be based on respect and compassion
4. Humans have the responsibility to avoid harm to animals and the environment through their lifestyles, diets and practices
5. Policies of other political parties, both nationally and internationally, that advance Animal Justice Party principles will be supported.

Key Goals

The Animal Justice Party seeks the following:

- A legal framework and an administrative system in which animals' status is based on their sentience and capabilities, not their instrumental value, and protected individually through legal rights and collectively through rights of nature laws
- International agreements which promote the interests and protection of animals and nature
- A political decision-making process that is more responsive to the needs and interests of all animals
- An end to human practices that cause pain and distress to animals
- An end to the exploitation and killing of animals for human benefit
- An end to the exploitation and destruction of the natural environment
- Assist Australian consumers and industry in adopting lifestyles, diets and practices that are more respectful towards animals and nature
- A society based on kindness, equality and rationality which opposes violence in all of its forms.

Key Strategies

The Animal Justice Party will:

- Develop a new legal status for animals which acknowledges their rights to live protected from human harm
- Ensure consistency in the protection of all animals – companion, farmed and wild – regardless of their commercial or instrumental value, or their geographic location
- Transition away from exploitative and harmful practices, providing Australians with kind and meaningful alternative employment where relevant

- Support laws, policies and practices that enhance the quality of life of animals and reduce animal suffering
- Oppose laws, policies and practices which harm animals and nature
- Support and promote lifestyles, practices and diets which maximise support for, and minimise harm to, animals and the environment
- Support the work of appropriately accredited volunteers who care for injured, orphaned and mistreated animals
- Support commercial and recreational ventures that provide opportunities for humans to spend time with animals on the animals' terms and in their worlds, and otherwise raise humans' awareness of animals, their needs, and their quality of life
- Support those who advocate for animals and nature while protecting whistleblowers who expose violence within our society
- Support greater transparency around decisions affecting animals and nature while opposing attempts to hide or entrench violent and exploitative practices.
- Promote values education that recognises the interests and dignity of animals as individual beings.