

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

This engaging and informative educational podcast discusses animal law and policy reform in Australia, with a diverse range of animal law experts and animal protection advocates.



Interviewees:

Nichola Donovan, President of Lawyers for Animals.
Ana Smietanka, Co-Founder of the Animal Law Institute.
Georgie Purcell, Vice-President of Oscar's Law.
Shatha Hamade, Legal Counsel at Animals Australia.
Tara Ward, Co-Founder of the Animal Defenders Office.
Nicky Neville-Jones, Chair of the Law Institute of Victoria's Animal Welfare Committee.

Daniel Cung, Chair of the NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee.
Dr Jed Goodfellow, Senior Policy Officer at RSPCA Australia.
The Hon. Mark Pearson, Member of the Legislative Council of NSW (Animal Justice Party).
Laurie Levy, Founder of the Coalition Against Duck Shooting.

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Introduction

Voiceless Animal Law Talk – a podcast by Voiceless, the animal protection institute.

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Dr Meg Good

Welcome to the second episode of Voiceless Animal Law Talk. I'm Meg and I'm the Animal Law & Education Manager at Voiceless.

In this episode, we'll be discussing animal law and policy reform in Australia, and trying to identify why achieving law reform in this context can be so challenging. Through discussions with a diverse range of animal law experts and animal protection advocates, we'll be exploring some of the major successes in the field, and possibilities for further reform.

Whilst some advocates and lawyers campaign solely for incremental law reform developments, some argue that there is also a need to advocate for reform to the fundamental legal status of animals in Australia.

We spoke to President of Lawyers for Animals, Nichola Donovan, about this idea. LFA has been operating since 2005, campaigning for various reforms, including recognising the sentience of animals under the law, and redefining their legal status.

We asked Nichola for her views on the first step that could be taken towards this reform.

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Nichola Donovan

The first is probably to change the notion of legal personhood, and to in fact codify that into a statute. We suggest perhaps even changing the language around this, because we think that it is too much of a leap, perhaps conceptual leap, to consider animals like fish, which do have sentience, and do feel pain and suffering – to consider them as legal persons.

And since also corporations, and churches, and other things, are already given legal personhood, this is also a bit conceptually confusing for the average layperson.

We think it might be time to change the language to something like 'legal entity'. To grant legal entity is to give an opportunity to these, not only beings, but also bodies like corporations, to access the courts and be recognised as having some legal standing in court.

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Dr Meg Good

We also discussed the idea of recognising animal sentience and changing the legal status of animals in Australia with Animal Law Institute Co-Founder, Ana Smietanka.

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Ana Smietanka

The difficulty we have in Australia is that we are a legislated country. And so, if the legislation doesn't recognise sentience for animals, we have no room under the doctrines of precedent and legislative interpretation to argue for that. We've come from the perspective of instead of trying to lobby for changes in laws, or make legal arguments that won't stick, we use the current framework, which is deficient, to our advantage.

So, the fact that animals are property, we've been using to our advantage by arguing that the consumer guarantees extend to reasonably foreseeable vet expenses.

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Dr Meg Good

As just touched on by Ana, the Animal Law Institute has adopted a novel and creative way of approaching reform in this area, working within the confines of the current property status of animals.

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Ana Smietanka

What we do focus on is choosing an area of the law that currently we can use that doesn't protect animals, and that might not be designed to protect animals, and using it to achieve a positive animal welfare outcome. So, for example, when people think of animal law in Australia, traditionally they think about animal protection law - animal cruelty and the RSPCA. The legal reality in Australia is that ALI (Animal Law Institute), for example, can't enforce that law, and I'll call that animal welfare law. But that body of law is really the only law that's specific to animals in Australia. That's enforced by governments and charities, and we have no standing under the law to enforce that.

In comparison, what we do is, what we're currently doing with puppy farms, is to use an area of the law, like the consumer law, which regulates the provision of goods and services, and apply that to dogs, cats, and any kind of domestic animal that you buy. And under our consumer law work, what we're currently doing is using the consumer guarantees, which are statutory guarantees implied into every contract of sale, which provide that any good that you buy has to be of an acceptable quality, for example that's one of the guarantees, and applying that to puppy farms. Under the consumer law in Australia, we've used the fact that animals are property to our benefit; because they are property, we can rely on the consumer law.

And under the consumer law, if any consumer buys a good, and then there's a defect in that good, and as a result of that defect, they incur consequential loss, you can claim that loss as against the person that created the good. So, the example that I would give, is if I bought an iPhone that was broken, and I had to go and return it, and it cost me a five-dollar bus ticket, I could not only ask for a new iPhone, but for that five-dollar bus ticket; because I've incurred that loss because of the fault.

In terms of dogs and cats, what we've been arguing is that when an animal is sold with, for example, hip dysplasia, or parvovirus, that animal is obviously not of an acceptable quality; because when you buy a cat or dog, you don't expect them to have such significant illnesses so early in their life. We have said that it's reasonably foreseeable, with sentient consumer goods, which is kind of a funny phrase to use, that people will not just want a refund or an exchange, but they will want to incur vet fees, and then get those vet fees repaid.

Dr Meg Good

Most animal lawyers in Australia work within the current system to achieve change, whilst acknowledging the significant deficiencies inherent within that system.

Sometimes this pragmatic approach is criticised on the grounds of not being reformist enough, and for being what some refer to as 'too welfarist'. We spoke to the Vice-President of Oscar's Law, Georgie Purcell, about this perception. Oscar's Law was formed to campaign for the abolishment of companion animal factory farming in Australia, especially 'puppy farms'.

Georgie Purcell

A word that comes up a lot in this space is that it's a 'welfarist' change, and I just think that any change for animals that can happen, any law reform for animals, is something that we should absolutely celebrate. We're not going to relieve animals from cruelty overnight, and these incremental changes create that ongoing discussion. That narrative that animals have their own experiences, and their own lives, and it really gives them that autonomy that they deserve.

And it can be frustrating when people don't understand that these changes — especially law reform, is hard. It's complicated, and if we wrote into a bill, "puppy farming is banned", it was going to be a lot harder to implement.

It can force industries underground. It can just make things a lot harder. Whereas, we know that people with ten dogs, it's not going to be worth it for them, they're probably going to stop it. Most puppy farmers have had time to close down. That was another really difficult thing, is that the law passed in 2017, and then we said: "Yay, the law has passed, and come 2020 these laws will be in effect", and people were so upset that it was going to take two and a half years. And it would have been terrible for dogs for them to have to shut down overnight. That was just something that we had to accept. That depopulating is going to mean that dogs get surrendered.

It means that puppy farms aren't going to be restocked with new breeding dogs when they retire them, and it means that there's not going to be a whole heap of dogs out there that could have been re-homed, and had lives knocked over the head because of a sudden change in industry.

Law reform, for a lot of people, it doesn't have that immediate outcome like people want and feel that they need. But we were really, really happy with the way that this went and we think it's the best possible way that puppy farms can be controlled in this state. But going back to what I said earlier on about it not being a federal issue, is that we were never quiet about the fact that these laws will not work until we have national consistency.

There is no reason why a puppy farmer in Victoria can't pack up their car, and their dogs, and move across the border. And we were never dishonest about that. We just said, straight up: "This just reinigorates our passion to getting it done everywhere else", because the fight's not done. It's not. But, the getting it done in one state, sets a really good precedent for it to be done elsewhere.

Dr Meg Good

As Georgie has highlighted, although sometimes achieving a ban on a practice or industry is not viable immediately, this doesn't mean that meaningful reforms are not possible. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Australian live export ban campaign. We spoke to the Legal Counsel at Animals Australia, Shatha Hamade, about this issue.

Shatha Hamade

I think a lot of people would know that before 2011, before Lyn White collaborated with Four Corners, and they exposed what was happening to Australian cattle in Indonesia, basically, as soon as those animals got off those vessels in importing countries, the law stopped. Until the exposé in Indonesia when they halted the trade for a few weeks, they then rolled out this ESCAS system which is a supply chain system. Now, on its face, it's no good because we're still getting cruelty.

However, it's a regulatory means by which we can now hold live export companies accountable. And so 'success' in the live export trade looks like this. We can now go into, and we have been, since they rolled out ESCAS in 2012, we go into importing countries, and we find where Australian animals are not remaining in supply chains, and where they are being bludgeoned to death in the streets, and going to horrible archaic slaughter houses. Not that by definition there are any lovely slaughterhouses.

Being able to obtain ear-tags and chains of evidence, and bring that back to Australia, and have them sanctioned in one way or another. These are all steps towards an outcome. It's been years of relentless investigating and frustration, but then it wasn't until a pinnacle, the 60 Minutes exposé on what happens in the ships, that licenses have started to be lost by major exporters and the industry is now being held accountable.

But it wasn't just about what was happening on the vessels. This is an ongoing systemic scorecard of these companies, that finally now has brought us to the crescendo. You can see that it's been long running, years of investigation, etc. But now, now there's a deterrence. Now they have to comply or lose their licenses, etc. Now the trade is largely becoming unviable because this particular industry cannot operate within the confines of the law and remain viable.

Because by definition it's cruel, and it's about numbers, a numbers game. Sometimes you look at it and you think: "At this point in time, I feel like I'm not going anywhere", but that's our job. We've got to plant the seeds, and in our lifetime we probably won't see the fruits of our labour, but the important thing is that you stay determined, and that you can see the endgame, and you know the role that you have to play in that. Not necessarily being there to celebrate at the end, but hopefully you will be, but, these are all, regulatory burdens, making it unviable, because we know that the law is window dressing. But if the law is strengthened, and then enforced, they are not viable, they actually can't operate.

Dr Meg Good

The example of live export highlights just how powerful the pursuit and utilisation of incremental reforms can be for improved animal welfare. However, interestingly and uniquely in one Australian jurisdiction a number of ban campaigns have been successful. We spoke to Tara Ward, Co-Founder of Australia's Animal Defenders Office about the various animal law reform successes in the ACT (Australian Capital Territory). In particular, the landmark ban on greyhound racing which came into force in April 2018 in the ACT, in the wake of the NSW Government reversing the ban they had introduced in 2016.

Tara Ward

When it comes to the greyhound racing ban in the ACT, it was never a given that it was going to happen, as we all know. Sadly, actually the first major reform on that front happened in New

South Wales, and the ACT was very much just following on the coat-tails of New South Wales. And so we sort of fell over backwards with the New South Wales back flip.

One of the main things that I would recommend, is to remind supporters of law reform to remain vocal in your support. Don't ever assume that is going to go ahead even when you get your policy and law makers committing to it. We've seen from New South Wales that so much can happen, even after the law reform is introduced, or, actually made into law.

We need to keep lobbying and raising awareness and supporting the political advocates, until not only is it law, but it's in effect. It's actually commenced. Which is what never happened in New South Wales, but has happened in the ACT, of course. That was definitely the case here in the ACT. We knew that there would be huge pressure. Even though it is a really small jurisdiction, we did have a greyhound racing track. It was definitely something that was happening here in the ACT. We had to keep that support up, supporting the main advocates for the change, who in the ACT happened to be our Attorney-General.

Keep supporting that all along the way, until it was in effect. And then even now, there is talk of: "Well, you know, if the government were to change and the other side were to get into power, they would undo it". So, really, you've got to be mindful that nothing is a given, and that there is always the slight possibility that things may be reversed. So, just bear that in mind. The other thing is that the ACT, on many animal welfare fronts, does, let's just say, lead the rest of the country.

In the ACT, we've banned sow stalls, we've banned farrowing crates, we've banned battery cages, we've banned rodeos and we've banned circuses using exotic animals. So the ACT does lead the way in animal welfare law reform. But the obvious criticism or comment is always: "Oh, but you're a small jurisdiction, and really, how useful is that in the sort of, the bigger picture".

Well, I would say that it is actually really useful even in just the symbolic sense. Well, more than symbolic. Having these precedents in the ACT means that it is just that much easier for other jurisdictions to point to the ACT and say: "It's happened there, we can do it here".

So, it's always much harder if you're trying to advocate for law reform where there isn't a precedent, and not only are you trying to convince the law makers to make the change, but to be the first to make the change is always that much harder.

When there is not just a jurisdiction somewhere that's done it, but a local jurisdiction, it just makes it that much easier to say: "It's happened there, we can do it here". Moreover, you have that concrete example of: "Well this is how we did it. We amended our animal welfare law, we put it in the object of the Act clause, etc". It just makes it that much easier. The ban on greyhound racing is very important, both because it has stopped that activity in the ACT, but it also means that a jurisdiction in Australia has done it, and therefore it raises the question of why can't other jurisdictions in Australia do it.

Dr Meg Good

There are a broad range of approaches for achieving law reform, including lobbying, protesting and so forth. However, a particularly popular approach amongst lawyers is submission writing. The ADO regularly makes law reform submissions, both in the ACT and nationally across Australia. We asked Tara about her views on the usefulness of devoting time and resources to submission writing, and whether there are any particular approaches the ADO has decided against adopting.

Tara Ward

We love submissions. They're very time consuming, but I would definitely not give up on writing those submissions. In terms of whether there are any approaches to law reform that we've decided against, I struggled in trying to think of any, actually. Despite our limited resources, we're all volunteers, we do try to adopt as many approaches as we can, whether it's lobbying politicians, or putting out election materials, or writing submissions.

We definitely like writing submissions. We do see it as a successful strategy. I've got a few examples of why we think it's successful. One of the campaigns that we were involved in was the

campaign to ban the domestic trade in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn. There was actually a Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into this, and we made a written submission. It was very complex. It was all to do with constitutional law, because it's about whether the Commonwealth can regulate internal trade, domestic trade, etc. Trade between states, or really even within states and territories.

We put a fairly detailed submission to the Inquiry, and then we were invited to give oral evidence to the Inquiry based on our submission. And then we were extremely chuffed to see, when the Final Report of the Committee came out, that it actually adopted our submissions in its recommendations. Its first recommendation was: "We agree with the Animal Defenders Office...", and then it pretty much adopted one of our submissions for its first recommendation.

That was all based on our submission, so I would very much encourage people to keep with the submissions. I know they can be time consuming. It is a great way to get into subject matter, to get to know it, to get that sort of increased expertise on your subject matter knowledge in that area. Even though they are time-consuming, I would say, stick with it.

Dr Meg Good

This is a great example of government responding to the views and expertise of animal lawyers. However, this is unfortunately not always the case. A key challenge for many animal law and animal protection groups and organisations is having their input genuinely taken into consideration during the law reform process. We spoke about this with Nicky Neville-Jones, Chair of the Law Institute of Victoria's Animal Welfare Committee.

Nicky Neville-Jones

I think one of the main challenges that we have experienced, particularly at the beginning, was cementing ourselves as a reform body within particularly the Victorian animal welfare environment, amongst all of the other reform bodies, and separating ourselves from them. And from that, therefore, growing a reputation that we should be recognised, and looked at, and considered when we draft submissions, and lodge them. I think we're certainly achieving that.

An example would be that we were called to speak at the inquiry into the RSPCA Victoria, and I felt that because we are a body within the Law Institute of Victoria, I think the government at that point, saw that we might have a more conservative approach to animal welfare, and being more advocate rather than activist. I think that's certainly helped us, but I think one of the main challenges for us, is actually to implement change. So, you can draft how many submissions that you want on any given policy, but the reality is actually seeing a change from that come through.

It's always going to be the challenge. Another example of that would be the Animal Welfare Action Plan, which came through at the end of 2016 when the group was formed. That's still going. The argument is that reform in that area to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in Victoria, that's a very slow process. So, again, the challenge will always continue to be actual reform, and seeing reform taking place.

Dr Meg Good

A similar group exists in NSW, the NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee. We spoke with the Committee's Chair, Daniel Cung, to discuss the challenges they have faced in this space.

Daniel Cung

In terms of challenges that we've experienced in achieving animal law reform, the main challenge I'd say is that very few of our members actually practice in the field. As you would know, animal law is quite small and quite emerging. But that actually makes us, as a Young Lawyers Committee, very unique, because a lot of the other committees are actually based around areas of substantive law practice, where a lot of the members actually work in that area.

For example, there is the Young Lawyers Property Law Committee, Criminal Law, or Civil Litigation. On the other hand, the members of our Committee are bound by that common interest in strengthening protections for animals through the law. On the flip side, that also has a real benefit because it means we come from quite a diverse range of backgrounds. Some of us do, in our day-to-day work, practice in criminal law, or civil law, or we even work in the public service or areas outside of legal practice. And that is really valuable, because it means that we

have a really diverse range of experiences and skills to draw upon in our submission work. It's both a difficulty and also something that's really exciting and a benefit to our members because of the diversity of areas of the law that crop up in animal protection matters.

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Dr Meg Good

It is unequivocal that lawyers have a lot to offer in this area. However, Lawyers for Animals President Nichola Donovan is concerned that sometimes the inclusion of animal law organisations in reform processes seems tokenistic.

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Nichola Donovan

We're just putting in little submissions here and there, where we have time, on all sorts of new standards and codes that are coming into being. They're coming into being often at the behest of industry, or co-written with industry representatives.

We sometimes feel like they are Clayton's consultations, in that they just want us there to say: "We have consulted with all stakeholders, including animal welfare". However, we'll be getting ourselves on the record and continuing to push, and you just never know. There might be a breakthrough.

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Dr Meg Good

One animal protection organisation that often has a seat at the policy-making table is RSPCA Australia. We spoke to Dr Jed Goodfellow, Senior Policy Officer, about his experiences with government consultation.

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Dr Jed Goodfellow

We have representatives that sit on a whole range of different advisory committees, and through those committees we do achieve small gains for animal welfare along the way. Certainly, one example, is in the development of the National Standards for the Welfare of Poultry, that is still currently ongoing at the moment. When that process first started, and this process is about a standard that will govern the welfare of seven hundred million or so animals every year.

Meat chickens, layer hens, ducks, geese, turkeys, etc. That process was really designed to push the standards through as quickly as possible with as little change as possible. We identified that was really a stage-managed process between the relevant government department and the leaders of the poultry industry, and we were able to expose those deficiencies with the process, which led to a complete review of the approach that we take to national standards development.

It led to the particular state government that was responsible for managing that process, forgoing its role and leadership position in that process, and another state government took it over. It also led to significant community interest and scrutiny over the process, which again contributed to a huge amount of public submissions to the process. And now we're at the stage where the dynamics within the process have really changed, and we've got a very realistic prospect now of seeing things like battery cages for egg-laying hens being phased out as part of this process. Whereas, a couple of years ago when the process started, that wasn't even on the table for discussion.

That's one example of where our input and scrutiny into a law reform process has had a positive impact. We haven't got it across the line yet in terms of getting the phase-out of cages, but it's certainly a much more realistic prospect now. You can't overlook all of the reforms in the live animal export trade over the last 12 months. It's been huge reform there following the 60 Minutes exposé with Animals Australia last year.

Following that, and all of the work that RSPCA and Animals Australia has done working with government, we've now secured things like having government observers on-board these vessels, significant reductions in stocking densities, a ban on the trade during the hottest months of the year; June, July, August, and possibly that's going to be extended to September as well. These reforms are really saving many hundreds of thousands of animals, so that was really significant.

Then of course we've got a number of different legislative reviews of animal welfare acts going on around the country at the moment; in WA, the Northern Territory just finished theirs, the ACT

and Victoria. Participating in those processes we were able to secure stronger animal welfare protections and stronger powers for enforcement, via our participation in those processes. It looks like the ACT may become the first jurisdiction in Australia to legislate a recognition of animal sentience as well, among other things.

Despite having a difficult political environment to work in at the moment, as we've had a conservative government at the federal level for the last 6/7 years, we're still seeing a degree of law reform happening, which is really positive. I think, with changes in political dynamics, we could see some major reforms happening.

Dr Meg Good

Jed was just discussing the influence of animal-use industries over the animal law reform process. In our discussion, he explained the challenges posed by this influence.

Dr Jed Goodfellow

In our view, one of the major obstacles to animal welfare law reform in Australia is the operation of, what I refer to as, the 'iron triangle' of agricultural interests. That is, the network of ministers for agriculture, departments of agriculture and, in the peak livestock industry, lobby groups. They form what is referred to as an iron triangle, in terms of a policy network, and that iron triangle has effectively exclusive control over Australia's animal welfare policy framework. That policy community is very tight knit. It has shared interests and values, and it is quite exclusive in nature.

It's exclusive towards outsider viewpoints, including viewpoints from animal welfare organisations, or indeed, the broader community and their concerns about animal welfare. That really is one of the major barriers. The good news is that the animal protection lobby, the animal protection sector as a whole, is becoming more adept at reducing the influence of that policy network. Also, we've adopted a shared policy position of seeking to dismantle that policy network through the establishment of new institutions like an independent office of animal welfare.

While we do have those major obstacles that are holding Australia back, and legalising certain forms of animal treatment that is just completely contrary to the scientific evidence, and indeed, mainstream community expectations about how animals should be treated, I think there are signs that the influence of that iron triangle is starting to wane somewhat.

Dr Meg Good

For a number of years, animal protection organisations have been pushing for the establishment of national and state/territory independent offices of animal welfare, to help increase transparency, accountability and independence in animal welfare regulation.

Politicians have also backed this campaign, with the Greens submitting proposed legislation to establish an office at the federal level. Recently, the Animal Justice Party (AJP) succeeded in achieving seats in both the NSW and Victorian state parliaments. We spoke to AJP MP Mark Pearson about the Party's plans for improved regulation.

Mark Pearson

We've made it clear that one of the things that we want to do is establish a Commission for Animal Wellbeing, I would prefer it to be called. Because I think that wellbeing is higher than welfare. Welfare is usually talked about as food, water and shelter. Where wellbeing is not rights, but it's moving towards the interests of the animal, once they've got food, water and shelter, then what are they interested in doing? A whole plethora of amazing things. Wellbeing encapsulates that.

I think we would get support. Not right now, probably the next year, maybe the year after. To start the conversation with the government and the opposition and the crossbench, to establish a Commission for Animal Wellbeing. Then of course, if that is established, then that has power. Works with the police, lifts the standing of animals up much higher, and then there will be research. I think that is an extremely important step. Not quite ready yet. The conversation is beginning. It's been flagged by other parties as well that this is something that we require. So, yes, I think that's winnable.

Dr Meg Good

Due to their involvement in the NSW State Parliament, AJP has been able to directly push for animal law and policy reform. We spoke to Mark about recent and projected successes on this front.

Mark Pearson

One example of a success is that dogs and cats that are experimented upon, and they have finished with the experiment, and in the regulation we want to put in a limit of time that they can be experimented upon, and that got the support of the whole House last year, and it's now been put into the regulation. That they must be assessed for homing. A dog and a cat. And actually they're coming out of the institutions now and being homed. Cats, mainly dogs, but some cats as well. In terms of the practical consequence of a regulation change, and the bill that I actually brought, then we're seeing animals living a life. With some, considering their circumstances, once they've been assessed. So, that's a plus.

From having the battery cage inquiry, it's pretty clear, it's a given, it has to end. The cage has to go. When we are having discussions with producers, it's how long they can use these cages for, can they incorporate these cages into and use them in a barn system, just reconfigure. So the discussion is not whether, but how. And that's a win. We will see the end of the battery cage probably - the announcement will probably be the end of this year. Or next year, as to when the cage will be unlawful.

I think that seemed, when I first started in the movement, that seemed a lot further away, and here it is. I'll see it, and you'll see it. Very soon. The sow stall is gone, but we still have to improve the mechanisms in the housing of pigs—the farrowing crate is next. But I think we can argue that one as well.

Dr Meg Good

Until recently, there were no political parties devoted purely to animal protection in any Australian parliament. As a result, many animal law reform campaigners found it hard to achieve political support for their campaigns. We spoke to Coalition Against Duck Shooting Founder, Laurie Levy, about his experience lobbying politicians to achieve a ban on duck hunting in Victoria.

Laurie Levy

We really haven't had a great deal of success in lobbying politicians. Our success really has come through changing public awareness. And the more media coverage you get, the more public awareness changes.

Over the last 33 years in Victoria, both the Liberal and Labor parties, the two main parties, have always had the same policy on duck shooting that Sir Henry Bolte had for the Liberals in the 1950s. Their policies support duck shooting. So, we knew it was going to be hard to change even the Labor party. The way we did it was by changing public opinion and reducing the numbers of duck shooters through attrition.

Dr Meg Good

Oscar's Law have experienced similar challenges, and devised a similar solution. They enlist the media and the public to help them push for their desired reforms.

Georgie Purcell

We've met with politicians before, and decision-makers that say: "Yeah, this is an issue, but the wheels of justice move slowly, and we've got a really full agenda already, and we want to do something about it, but we probably can't right now".

Our biggest thing has been making it, what we call, a burning bridge, that you have to do something about. We've really tried to force our issue into the media, which has been a key stakeholder for us to get law reform; the two just go hand-in-hand. So, we have just taken puppy farms to make them a public issue, to become a political issue.

Dr Meg Good

This discussion has demonstrated that animal law and policy reform in Australia faces many challenges. However, increasingly we are seeing reforms pass that show that consistently pushing for meaningful law reform can result in genuine improvements in the lives of animals.