

INFLUENCE CHANGE

Your guide to engaging with decision-makers





Table of contents

<u>Why engage with decision-makers?</u>	3
<u>Understanding local decision-makers</u>	4
<u>Ways to engage with decision-makers</u>	5
<u>Policy specific talking points</u>	11
<u>Increase Funding for Animal Welfare Services</u>	12
<u>Create State Animal Welfare Authorities</u>	13
<u>Remove Shark Nets</u>	14
<u>End Puppy Farming</u>	15
<u>Phase Out Battery Cages</u>	16
<u>Phase Out Live Lamb Cutting (Mulesing)</u>	17

Engaging with decision-makers is important for creating change

Engaging with decision-makers is a powerful way to drive real change in your community. Whether it's at the local, state, or national level, your elected representatives are responsible for shaping the policies that affect everyday lives. By raising your concerns, sharing your ideas, and advocating for solutions, you can help influence their decisions and ensure the issues that matter to you and your community are heard and acted upon. Every conversation counts, and by engaging, you become an active part of the change you want to see.

The following toolkit aims to empower individuals like you to feel confident when engaging with your MPs and councillors.





Understanding local decision-makers

Who can you approach about your concerns?

1. Members of Parliament (MPs)

MPs are elected representatives in the Queensland Parliament who represent various electorates across the state. They debate and pass legislation. You can find your local member by searching for your electorate here [Member List | Queensland Parliament](#).

2. Queensland Cabinet Ministers

Queensland Cabinet Ministers are MPs appointed by the Premier, each to be responsible for specific government departments and portfolios. Animal welfare policy decisions typically sit with the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities, currently Mark Furner MP, [Mark Furner MP \(cabinet.qld.gov.au\)](#).

Each of these roles plays a crucial part in shaping and implementing policies and decisions affecting Queensland. While meeting with your local MP is most effective, MPs from other areas may also be open to meeting if they are particularly interested in the topic you wish to raise.

Ways to engage with decision-makers

To get your MP to listen, it's important to stand out. You can organise a meeting, have a phone call, send them an email or letter, or engage on social media.

MPs receive many letters and emails, so personal meetings or phone calls usually make a bigger impact. You don't need to be an expert; showing up as a concerned member of their electorate is enough.



● Schedule a meeting

You can arrange a one-on-one meeting or go as part of a small group (3-6 people) to increase your chances of being heard but avoid overwhelming the MP with too many voices. Here are some steps to help you get the most out of your meeting:

Step 1 - Secure your meeting

To request a meeting, start with a friendly email. Make your request clear and concise about who you are, why you wish to meet, and what you want to discuss. Tailor the request to highlight why the issue matters to the MP and their constituents. If you haven't heard back within 10 days, follow up with a phone call to the MP's electorate office. Try to identify the Diary Manager who manages the MP's schedule and follow up with a written request to this person.

Don't be afraid to be persistent but always be respectful. MPs are busy people but they want to hear from local constituents. Sometimes it just takes a bit of time. Keep trying until you get a meeting or otherwise receive a definitive response.



Step 2: Get prepared

While you don't need to be an expert, it's important to research the issue you are concerned about before organising a meeting. This involves gathering facts, statistics, and personal stories that align with the issue to help make your case stronger. You should also research common counterarguments and prepare a response. We recommend creating a short briefing document with key points about your issue, why it concerns you, and what you would like the MP to do.

If attending as a group, choose people who can help tell a compelling story and show community support for your issue, and agree beforehand who is going to take the lead in speaking. If multiple people will speak, ensure everyone knows their assigned roles to enable a smooth discussion.

Before your meeting with an MP or councillor, we recommend getting to know them as individuals. Learn about their political party, their stance on your issue, any government or shadow roles they hold, and their values or concerns for their community. Research their public statements, parliamentary speeches, and causes they support.

You can also look into their interests outside of politics and their involvement in parliamentary committees or working groups. Also, determine whether they are in a safe or marginal seat (a voting margin over their closest rival of more than 5% is generally considered safe, while under 5% is generally considered marginal), as this can influence their priorities.

To gather this information, you can use tools like Google, social media, parliamentary records, and independent sites like "They Vote For You". Gathering this information will give you important context and help you to find areas of commonality with the MP. It's also a good idea to ensure you know how to pronounce their name. MPs usually bring staff to meetings, so be prepared for that as well.

By aligning your message with their past engagement or positions on similar issues, you can increase the chances of resonating with them and encouraging their support. Being both prepared and strategic in your approach makes your advocacy far more effective.

Step 3 - What to bring to your meeting

We recommend bringing the following items to your meeting:

- A summary of key points to review before the meeting ends.
- A brief (1-2 page) document with case studies, your request, and contact details to leave behind.
- A camera or phone for taking a photo at the end of the meeting.

It's best to give the MP any briefing materials at the end of the meeting to avoid distractions during your discussion. Bring three or four copies of your resources, including for any staff (advisers) present.

Step 4 - During your meeting

Meetings are typically short (15-20 minutes), so ensure you are on time and prepared. During your meeting you should focus on one key issue. We suggest breaking the meeting down into four components:

Welcome and Introductions

- Introduce yourselves and your roles within the community.
- Thank the MP for making the time to meet with you
- Mention a topic of interest to the MP based on your research.

Present Your Case

- Clearly outline the issue and its importance to the community.
- Share personal and community stories and propose a solution. Limit yourself to two or three case studies or personal stories that are relevant to the issue.
- Specify what you want the MP to do - raise the issue in Parliament, discuss it with their party or the relevant Minister, or advocate locally.
- Speak confidently in your own words. If you don't know something, it's okay to say so. The goal is to show you care, not to display extensive knowledge.

Engage in Discussion

- Be open to learning new information, such as political challenges or support for your issue.
- Pay attention to the MP's reactions and adjust your presentation accordingly. Dive deeper into topics they find interesting and avoid over-explaining areas where they show little interest.
- Be sure to allow space for the MP to ask questions or give their own personal perspective
- Address objections or questions as they arise.

Conclude and Confirm Commitments

- Recap the key points and confirm any commitments made during the meeting.
- Summarise action items for each participant, with timelines.
- Ask for a contact person for follow-up and confirm when the MP will act on your request.
- Hand over your briefing document (with contact details), express thanks to the MP and their staff, and request a photo.

Step 5 - After your meeting

After your meeting, send a follow-up email within 48 hours to thank the MP and provide any promised information. In this email, also remind the MP of any commitments they made during the meeting and note any additional information they agreed to provide. Documenting these commitments helps ensure accountability.

Stick to the timelines discussed during the meeting and set reminders to follow up before deadlines. If you don't get a response within a week or by the agreed deadline, follow up again politely. Be patient, as MPs manage many issues, but persistent to ensure promised actions are taken.

You may also like to engage with the MP on social media. This can help develop your relationship and give you more influence. If you do not agree with your MP's position on the issue you are discussing, don't be afraid to express the reasons for why you disagree, but we still recommend maintaining a positive relationship with them to facilitate further discussion.



● Have a phone call

Having a phone call with an MP or councillor is similar to having a physical meeting. It's important to follow the same steps as above. It's very important to be prepared with a short introduction, your key points, and what you would like the decision-maker to do.

● Engage on social media

Start engaging with decision-makers on Facebook, Instagram or X, by following them and interacting with their posts. Leaving comments and sharing posts with comments is a great way to start discussions, but please remember to be polite, as it will increase the likelihood of them replying. You can also tag them in your posts and use hashtags where appropriate to engage with a wider conversation about the issue.

● Send a letter or email

Letters and emails are a great way to start a discussion with your representative. Politicians do receive hundreds of letters, so it is important to keep your letter short, concise and respectful.

What do I write in an email or letter?

Make sure your subject line is clear and engaging. In your email, briefly introduce yourself and your issue. In your opening paragraph, get straight to the point by letting them know who you are (including which suburb you live in), why you are writing, and any request you are making from your opening.

Then, include a short paragraph describing your issue and why it's important to you. Including facts will strengthen your argument and help get your point across in a more convincing manner. Make sure that you're concise and not vague.

After describing the issue, include a paragraph outlining what you would like the MP to do. You can set this out as clear dot points, to make it easy for them to enact.

Lastly, close with a paragraph thanking them for their time and state that you look forward to their response.

Example letter/email

To: _____

Subject: **Urgent action needed to end puppy farming in Queensland**

Dear [MP's Name],

I'm from [insert suburb]. I am writing to you regarding the urgent issue of puppy farming in Queensland. Puppy farming, the practice of breeding dogs in poor conditions for profit, poses significant welfare concerns and contributes to the suffering of countless animals. As an advocate for animal welfare, I urge you to support measures to end this cruel industry and improve animal protection laws in our state.

The conditions in many puppy farms are deplorable, with animals often kept in overcrowded and unsanitary environments. This not only causes physical and emotional distress to the animals but also results in health issues and behaviour problems that affect their well-being and quality of life.

I respectfully request that you:

1. Advocate for and support the introduction of stronger regulations and legislation to ban puppy farming in Queensland. This includes stricter licensing requirements, regular inspections, stopping the sale of puppies in pet shops.
2. Encourage the promotion of responsible breeding practices and support initiatives that educate the public about the consequences of puppy farming and the importance of adopting pets from shelters or reputable sources.
3. Ensure that existing animal welfare laws are effectively enforced and that funding and resources are allocated to investigate and shut down illegal puppy farms.

The people of Queensland, and indeed all Australians, value animal welfare and expect our leaders to take a stand against practices that cause harm to animals. Ending puppy farming is a crucial step towards ensuring a better future for our furry companions and aligning with the ethical standards we uphold as a community.

Thank you for considering my request. I am hopeful that with your support, we can make meaningful progress in addressing this important issue. I look forward to your response and am willing to provide further information or participate in discussions on this matter.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]



Policy specific talking points

Here are some key talking points you might like to mention during your discussions with MPs during the Queensland election about:

1. Increasing funding for animal welfare services
2. Creating a State Animal Welfare Authority
3. Ending the use of shark nets
4. Ending puppy farming
5. Phasing out battery cages
6. Phasing out live lamb cutting (mulesing)

Increase Funding for Animal Welfare Services

- Animal services are underfunded, limiting the ability for animal rescue and rehabilitation, investigations, and the prevention of cruelty.
- The RSPCA Queensland Inspectorate is already performing crucial work for the state, investigating nearly 14,000 animal welfare complaints annually. This service operates on behalf of the government, yet the current funding is inadequate to cover the \$7 million annual cost.
- Government funding is essential to ensure that RSPCA inspectors have the resources they need—fit-for-purpose vehicles, proper training, and safety equipment—to continue enforcing animal welfare laws effectively.
- The lack of full funding means that RSPCA Queensland is forced to divert donations intended for animal welfare programs to cover the shortfall for government-required services. This limits the impact of community-based welfare initiatives and leaves animals vulnerable.
- The RSPCA Wildlife Hospital is overwhelmed, designed to care for 8,000 animals but handling over 23,000 cases annually. Without additional funding, the hospital will continue to be stretched beyond its capacity, putting wildlife at risk.
- \$15 million state government contribution to support the construction of a new Wildlife Hospital Centre of Excellence, a vital project that will not only care for more animals but also serve as a hub for wildlife veterinary research and education.
- Donors and federal support have already contributed significant funds toward the new hospital. A state government investment would strengthen Queensland's wildlife conservation efforts and align with programs like the South-East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy.
- Funding animal welfare services is an investment in Queensland's future, ensuring both domestic and wild animals receive the protection and care they deserve while contributing to conservation, public health, and social impact.
- Call to Action: Ask the candidate/party to support an increase in funding:
 - \$39.1 million over four years for the RSPCA Qld Inspectorate to uphold the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001.
 - \$15 million capital contribution to the RSPCA Qld Wildlife Hospital Centre of Excellence to meet the increasing need for wildlife care and rehabilitation services, research and education within Southeast Queensland



Create State Animal Welfare Authorities

- A State Animal Welfare Authority would provide independent oversight of animal protection laws.
 - An independent authority would eliminate the real or perceived conflict between animal welfare and industry promotion, ensuring decisions prioritise the protection of animals, not industry profits.
 - Biosecurity Queensland, part of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), currently oversees animal welfare while also promoting agriculture, fisheries, and forestry—sectors that can directly impact animal welfare. This dual role creates a conflict of interest that can undermine the enforcement of welfare laws.
 - Oversight should be independent of industries that profit from animal use. An authority solely focused on animal welfare would ensure that regulations are enforced without bias, benefiting animals in industries like greyhound racing, agriculture, and medical research.
- An independent body would strengthen enforcement, providing inspectors with clear authority to act on animal welfare breaches, backed by a well-resourced, impartial agency that reports on and oversees compliance.
- A dedicated authority would increase transparency in animal welfare investigations and outcomes.
 - Transparency is crucial for public trust. An independent Queensland Animal Welfare Authority would bring greater transparency to decision-making and enforcement, improving community confidence in how animal welfare laws are applied.
- An authority would coordinate efforts across the state, ensuring all animals receive consistent care and protection.
 - Developing better policies: A Queensland Animal Welfare Authority would be responsible for refining and updating welfare legislation, policies, and guidelines, ensuring they keep pace with scientific understanding and community expectations.
- Call to Action: Strengthen animal welfare enforcement arrangements by establishing a Queensland Animal Welfare Authority as an independent statutory body under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 with responsibility for administering the Act, and with an appropriate budget allocation to ensure adequate resourcing.

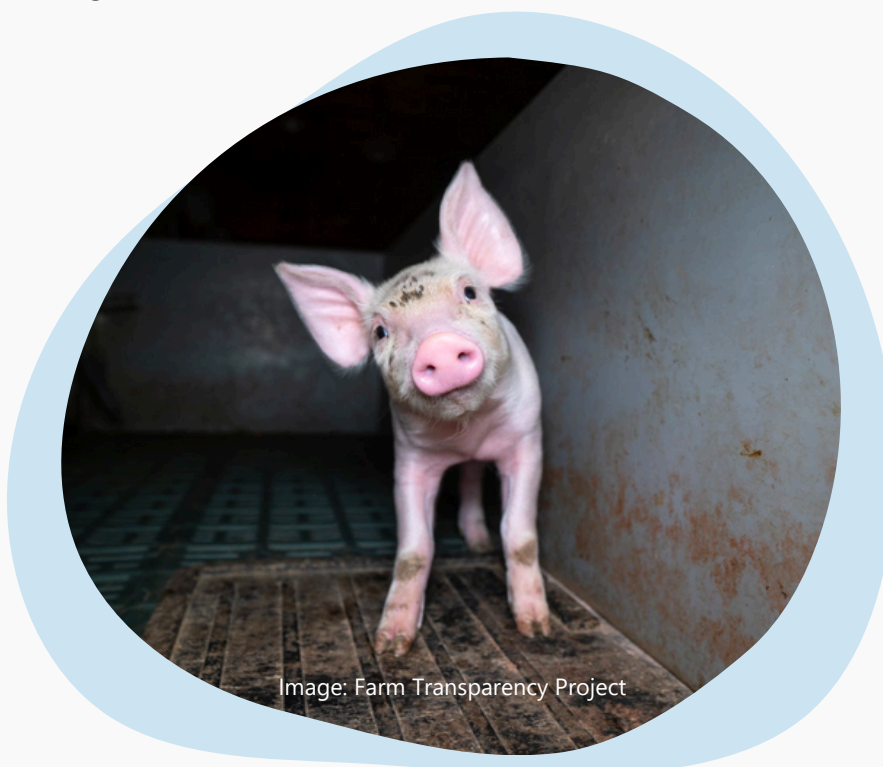


Image: Farm Transparency Project

Remove Shark Nets

- Shark nets are outdated and cruel:
 - Shark nets trap countless other marine species, including dolphins, turtles, and rays, causing immense suffering.
- Shark nets are not effective at preventing shark attacks.
 - Shark nets don't create a barrier between water users and sharks—sharks can swim under or around the nets.
 - Nets give a false sense of security, leading to complacency in water safety.
- There are non-lethal alternatives, such as drone surveillance, personal shark deterrents, and alert systems.
- Marine life conservation is crucial for the health of Queensland's ecosystems and tourism industry.
 - Removing shark nets will protect endangered species, including whales and sea turtles.
- Queensland is one of only two states in Australia that still uses shark nets. NSW removes them during whale migration season, yet Queensland keeps them in year-round, increasing the risk of entanglements.
- Call to Action: Ask the candidate/party to commit to ending the use of shark nets and invest in safer, non-lethal shark management solutions.
 - Remove shark nets from Queensland waters
 - Implement alternatives: tagging and tracking systems, drones, and beach surveillance, are proven methods that offer effective shark management without harming marine life.



Image: ENVOY Foundation

End Puppy Farming

- Puppy farms prioritise profit over animal welfare, leading to overcrowded, unsanitary conditions where dogs suffer from neglect and a lack of basic care.
 - Dogs on puppy farms are often kept in cages their entire lives, without proper exercise, socialisation, or medical care, resulting in severe health and behavioural problems.
 - Puppy farm dogs are more likely to develop long-term health issues, including genetic defects and diseases, due to the lack of proper breeding practices and care.
- Puppy farms contribute to overpopulation, leading to more abandoned and surrendered dogs, which puts a strain on animal shelters and rescue organisations.
- Current regulations fail to adequately protect animals, allowing breeders to exploit loopholes and continue harmful practices under the radar. Stronger laws are needed to close these gaps.
 - A cap on the number of litters a dog can produce and tougher rules for large-scale breeders would help ensure better welfare for breeding animals and reduce the risk of puppy farm cruelty.
 - Prohibiting the sale of puppies in pet stores unless sourced from reputable animal rescue organisations would prevent puppy farms from profiting through retail channels.
 - Routine inspections of breeding facilities by inspectors, without the need for a warrant, would help ensure compliance with animal welfare laws and stop puppy farms before they cause more harm.
- Call to Action: Ask the candidate/party to commit to ending puppy farming and enforcing stronger breeding regulations, including:
 - Cap on number of litters
 - Prohibit sale in pet shops
 - Powers for inspectors to conduct routine inspections.



Phase Out Battery Cages

- Battery cages are cruel and deprive hens of their basic needs, including space to move and engage in natural behaviours, like dust bathing, foraging, and nesting.
- Hens in battery cages suffer from physical and psychological distress due to extreme confinement.
- Australia is lagging behind other countries that have already phased out or committed to ending battery cages.
- Consumers are increasingly concerned about the welfare of farm animals and demand higher welfare standards.
- In 2023, the Queensland Agriculture Minister committed to phasing out battery cages, but has failed to enshrine this in legislation.
 - Consumers expect battery cages to be phased out
 - Enshrining the phase out in legislation gives farmers time to transition to more sustainable, higher-welfare systems.
- Call to Action: Ask the candidate/party to implement the agreed and endorsed Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry into Queensland legislation before June 2025 with a phase out date for conventional battery cages of 2032.



Image: Farm Transparency Project

Phase Out Live Lamb Cutting (Mulesing)

- Mulesing is a painful and outdated procedure where skin is cut from lambs to prevent flystrike.
 - Mulesing causes intense suffering, with many lambs left in pain without proper pain relief.
 - Pain relief isn't enough. While some producers use pain management, this doesn't address the broader issue of why mulesing is still allowed when humane alternatives exist.
- Australia is the only country that still practices live lamb cutting.
 - Global standards are shifting and demand for non-live lamb cut wool is growing.
 - Australia risks falling behind if it doesn't align with higher welfare standards – economically beneficial to phase out the practice.
- Humane alternatives to mulesing exist, including breeding sheep with naturally resistant traits.
 - Phasing out live lamb cutting in under 5 years is possible.
- Call to Action: Urge the candidate/party to commit to phasing out live lamb cutting (mulesing) and support humane alternatives.
 - Introduce legislation to phase out live lamb cutting by 2030
 - Require multi-modal pain relief while the practice continues
 - Promote breeding of fly-strike resistant sheep.



Image: FOUR PAWS

THANK YOU FOR BEING A VOICE FOR ANIMALS



www.allianceforanimals.org.au



www.rspcaqlld.org.au