

Dear Secretary,

The wellbeing and safety of lutrawita/Tasmania's precious wildlife is of great concern to our community. In light of a number of shocking attacks on native wildlife in recent years, Animal Liberation Tasmania welcomes the review of the *Dog Control Act 1999* and appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Animal Liberation Tasmania supports increasing the maximum penalty for dogs injuring or killing wildlife and for taking a dog into a prohibited area of sensitive habitat. Beach nesting birdlife are particularly impacted by dogs, with lutrawita/Tasmania seeing several major dog attacks on little penguins over the past year. With over 170 penguins lost in these attacks this represents a significant loss of individual lives as well as the stability and long-term viability of their breeding colonies. Animal Liberation Tasmania fundamentally believes that wildlife should be free to live their lives without interference or impact from human causes, particularly when Australia is also in the midst of an escalating faunal extinction crisis. These amendments are a step in the right direction to protecting the safety and well-being of Tasmania's wildlife.

For these amendments to effect real change, however, there needs to be greater enforcement of penalties. To date, no dogs have been caught or owners have been charged in relation to any of the penguin attacks. Animal Liberation Tasmania urges the government to commit greater resources enforcement of the *Dog Control Act 1999*, including monitoring around sensitive habitats and breeding areas, to ensure that offending dogs and owners can be caught before wildlife are harmed.


We also believe that in order to take wildlife preservation seriously, the government needs to more strongly legislate for the control of domestic cats. Roaming cats kill millions of native animals in lutrawita/Tasmania, and an individual cat has the potential to disrupt entire colonies of many species of sensitive wildlife. Last year in Western Australia a single cat was implicated in the total collapse of a fairy tern breeding colony, comprising over 100 nests. Tasmania's combination of rich native habitats and much of our population living in close contact with wildlife means the potential for cats to devastate native species is equally great here. As such, Animal Liberation Tasmania urges the government to implement cat control legalisation in a similar vein to that which governs dogs. Cats ought to be kept under the

direct control of their owners when not on private premises, and should not be allowed to roam or stray unattended.

Finally, in relation to the amendments pertaining to greyhounds, we support the amendment allowing for greyhounds to be exercised in designated areas as other dogs. When socialised correctly greyhounds a gentle breed and most lead ordinary lives as pets like any other dog. As such, greyhounds should be free to be exercised in appropriate designated spaces like all other dogs.

In summary, Animal Liberation Tasmania believes that the amendments to the *Dog Control Act 1999* are a step in the right direction to protecting wildlife. However, for our wildlife to be truly protected by law the Government needs to commit greater resources to enforcing these regulations, and to take greater responsibility in managing the significant threat that cats also pose to wildlife.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Inala Swart

Animal Liberation Tasmania