



The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education
Minister for Agriculture

121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 8392 2220

Ref: CMIN-2-23-20333

Dr Judi Inglis
info@rabbitrunaway.org.au

Dear Dr Inglis,

Thank you for your email to me and the Premier about pet rabbits. I was particularly distressed by the case studies you shared.

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA Act) protects the welfare of pet rabbits. Offences under the POCTA Act apply to rabbits in the same way as they apply to other animals. Abandoning a domesticated rabbit is considered an act of cruelty and is illegal. It is also an offence to fail to provide appropriate food, water, shelter and veterinary treatment to a domesticated rabbit.

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* regulates the sale or rehoming of rabbits. For example, unless an animal sale permit is in place, rabbits cannot be sold or given away at markets. Pet shops must comply with the mandatory Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet shops, and must provide rabbits with standards of accommodation, management and care appropriate for their physical and behavioural needs.

If you have a specific complaint regarding the welfare of a domesticated rabbit, I encourage you to report your concerns to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Victoria online at <https://rspcavic.org/cruelty-report/> or by phoning (03) 9224-2222.

The Andrews Labor Government is in the process of reforming our animal welfare laws so they better align with contemporary values and expectations. A draft of the proposed Animal Care and Protection Bill 2023 will be published later this year. This Bill will recognise that animals are sentient and include requirements for the care of animals, including pet rabbits. Specific requirements for the care of rabbits will also be considered as part of the regulations that will be developed once the new laws are in place.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP
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