

Senator the Hon Chris Ellison
Minister for Justice and Customs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

6 November 2006

Dear Minister

CALL FOR BAN ON FUR IMPORTS FROM UNREGULATED JURISDICTIONS

The NSW Young Lawyers Animal Rights Committee (**the Committee**) is part of NSW Young Lawyers, a voluntary organisation and division of the Law Society of New South Wales. The Committee consists of lawyers and law students interested in animal welfare and laws regulating the treatment of animals.

The Committee believes that the animal abuse that occurs in Chinese fur farms is one of the most extreme examples of animal cruelty worldwide. In its 2005 report *Fur Fur? A report on the Chinese fur industry* Swiss Animal Protection states:

"Conditions on Chinese fur farms make a mockery of the most elementary animal welfare standards. In their lives and their unspeakable deaths, these animals have been denied even the most simple acts of kindness. Instead, millions of individuals are forced to endure the most profound indifference to their suffering, dignity and most basic needs - in the name of fashion ... China's colossal fur industry routinely subjects animals to housing, husbandry, transport and slaughter practices that are unacceptable from a veterinary, animal welfare and moral point of view."
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We are of the view that the Australian Government should not support the cruel practices undertaken in Chinese fur farms by allowing the products of this cruelty to be imported into Australia.

The Committee is extremely disappointed that the Australian Government is unwilling to consider the "non-economic" impacts of the Australia - China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) presently being negotiated. In light of this unwillingness, the Committee urges you to implement a total ban on fur imports from unregulated jurisdictions, such as China.

Section 50(2) of the *Customs Act 1901* (Cth) allows the Governor General to prohibit the importation of goods into Australia from a specified place, in specified circumstances or unless specified conditions or restrictions are complied with. The Committee calls on you and your Department, to use these powers to ban the importation of fur from jurisdictions such as China, where animal cruelty is rampant.

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Australians have demonstrated time and time again that they will not tolerate cruelty to animals. One need look no further than the public outcry that followed exposure of the Chinese cat and dog fur trade in 2003. It is likely that the Australian public would be similarly appalled by the cruelty inflicted upon other animal species in Chinese fur farms. The Australian Government should therefore reflect public sentiment on this issue and immediately ban all fur imports from unregulated jurisdictions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue.

Yours faithfully

Ref: 

Ms Angela Radich

Chair

NSW Young Lawyers Animal Rights Committee

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