

RSPCA Australia Submission

Australia–India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement

7 October 2025

The RSPCA is an independent, community-based charity dedicated to advancing animal welfare for the humane treatment of animals. Guided by our vision that all animals have a good life, we work tirelessly to prevent cruelty by actively promoting the care and protection of animals Australia-wide.

Our activities span all states and territories and include operating animal rehoming shelters, investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty complaints and educating the community on responsible pet ownership. Informed by contemporary values and the latest scientific knowledge, we work with governments and industries to address critical animal welfare issues.

This submission reflects our ongoing commitment to the development of policies and practices that uphold the welfare of animals across all sectors. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this consultation, with the objective of working collaboratively towards meaningful progress in animal welfare.

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Recognising animal welfare under an Australia–India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement

I would like to officially register RSPCA Australia’s interest in the Australia–India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA negotiations). These negotiations present a significant opportunity for the Australian Government to demonstrate its commitment to high animal welfare standards and sustainable development practices.

Animal welfare is a critical component of sustainable development, having implications for all three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. This should be recognised in any trade agreement that Australia is party to. Australia is well placed to be an international leader in animal welfare practices and should seek to capitalise on this comparative advantage and market opportunity.

Animal welfare has been recognised in Australia’s recent trade agreements with the United Kingdom (the Australia–UK Free Trade Agreement) and with the United Arab Emirates (the Australia–UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement). RSPCA Australia has also advocated for the recognition of animal welfare as part of negotiations on the Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement.

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In addition, we are aware that India and the United Kingdom have recognised animal welfare in their Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, signed on 24 July 2025. A range of animal welfare provisions are included in this agreement under Article 6.12. These include:

- recognition of the connection between the improved health of farmed animals and their welfare
- recognition that the protection and improvement of animal welfare may be an interest in the context of each Party's trade objectives
- a commitment to cooperation in the field of animal welfare, including the exchange of information, expertise and experience
- a commitment to cooperation on the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) animal welfare standards.

At a minimum, we would urge the Australian Government to advocate for similar provisions in the Australia–India CECA.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely



Dr Suzanne Fowler

Acting Chief Executive Officer