

21 June 2018

Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Attention: Committee Secretary

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Regulatory approaches to ensure the safety of pet food

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. As an Australian pet owner this is an issue close to my heart and I am pleased to see it being considered by the Senate.

Our family loves our pets. We are responsible pet owners. Our cats are neutered, registered and well cared for. They are indoor animals with access to outside in a way that protects both them and the wildlife in our area. We want to do the best we can for our pets as they are members of our family.

Recently our beloved younger cat passed away from complications associated with dilated cardiomyopathy possibly as a result of a taurine deficiency. Prior to him exhibiting the first symptoms, I had never heard of taurine nor how necessary it is for a cat's health and wellbeing. Suddenly we found ourselves trying to care for a pet with high care needs and no certainty that pet food met his needs regardless of what is on the packaging.

Many Australians have pets they love, who are a comfort to them and help them lead healthier and less stressful lives. Mandatory pet food standards with accompanying nutritional labelling would allow pet owners to make informed decisions about what they feed their pets particularly when their pets have a medical condition. However, these standards must be accompanied by a mandatory recall framework so that pets (and their owners) are protected when standards have failed. These criteria should apply to all pet food available for sale in Australia. I have no specific comments about various approaches to administer these frameworks except to say that in a democracy transparency and accountability are important aspects upon which proposed frameworks should be based.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Burow