

# The frightening reality of the fur industry

Cruelty, COVID-19  
and changing times -  
why it is time to end  
Australia's contribution  
to the cruel fur trade

Animal Welfare.  
Worldwide.





# THE FRIGHTENING REALITY OF THE FUR INDUSTRY

*Cruelty, COVID-19 and changing times  
– it is time to end Australia's contribution  
to the cruel fur trade*

November 2021

### **About FOUR PAWS**

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, which reveals animal suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them through our sanctuaries and campaigns. Founded in 1988 in Vienna by Heli Dungler and friends, the organisation advocates for a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding.

FOUR PAWS' campaigns and animal welfare projects focus on animals who are abused for the fashion industry, companion animals including stray dogs and cats, farm animals, and wild animals – such as bears, big cats, and orangutans – kept in inappropriate conditions, and those animals who suffer in disaster and conflict zones. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, the UK, the USA and Vietnam, as well as sanctuaries for rescued animals in twelve countries, FOUR PAWS provides rapid help and long-term solutions for animals. [www.four-paws.org.au](http://www.four-paws.org.au)

FOUR PAWS has achieved many lasting improvements for animals used within the textiles industry. In recent years this includes:

- Working with the European bedding industry to lead a successful industry-wide transition away from the down of live plucked and force-fed ducks and geese.
- Continued support of the highly successful Fur Free Retailer program, an international initiative of the Fur Free Alliance with over 1,500 brands and retailers who stand united in their commitment against fur. FOUR PAWS Australia is the Australian representative of the Fur Free Retailer program, connecting brands to the global program.
- Successful work towards regulations to end fur farming in EU countries, such as Austria and Germany, and supporting the 'Stop Deadly Fur' global campaign.
- Launching the Wear it Kind animal friendly fashion campaign, with actions supported by over 1,000,000 people internationally.

**Our vision** is a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Cruelty, COVID-19 and Changing Times

1. INTRODUCTION
2. THE INHERENT CRUELTY WITHIN FUR
3. FUR, ZOO NOTIC DISEASES AND THE CORONAVIRUS CONTAGION
4. LIMITED LAWS AND LABELLING LIES
5. ENDING FUR SALES IN AUSTRALIA: STATE AND TERRITORY ACTIONS
6. RECOMMENDATIONS
7. FALSEHOODS OF THE FUR INDUSTRY
8. THE WILDLIFE TRADE AND THE FUR INDUSTRY
9. CONCLUSION
10. REFERENCES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The fur industry inflicts horrific suffering on animals around the world. It is estimated that 100 million animals are killed annually on fur farms and by trapping in the wild<sup>1</sup>, a figure since impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The fur industry is also linked to environmental degradation, and serious human health risks, with COVID-19 outbreaks on numerous fur farms confirmed worldwide.*

### Animal Suffering and Threats to Wildlife

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Fur production is dependent on one of the worst abuses inflicted on animals – industrialised farming. On fur farms across the world, millions of animals are imprisoned for life in tiny, barren, and filthy cages. These animals are then slaughtered in grisly ways, including being skinned alive<sup>2</sup>.

Fur trapping accounts for around 5% of fur<sup>3</sup> produced, and it is equally horrific in terms of animal suffering. Animals might be trapped for days before they are cruelly slaughtered, with many non-target animals also trapped and killed through this process, including endangered species<sup>4</sup>.

The fur industry propagates the perception of wild animal parts as luxury items, which in turn promotes demand for wildlife trading. Further, after escaping fur farms, introduced species, such as raccoon dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) and American mink (*Neovison vison*) have established stable populations in various countries with detrimental effects on biodiversity and the environment<sup>5</sup>.

Compounding this, there are alarming issues in relation to zoonotic diseases and the wildlife trade, with COVID-19 ravaging through mink farms in Europe and North America<sup>6</sup>, causing further animal suffering and public health risks.

### Consumer Sentiment

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Fur is, arguably, one of the least consumer-supported animal derived textiles still in use today. In 2021, a YouGov poll found that 71% of surveyed Australians were concerned about the fur industry. Further, thousands of Australian and international fashion brands are now enacting policies to assure that their supply chains are fur free.

There is strong opposition worldwide to fur sales<sup>7</sup>, with many countries, states and cities having banned<sup>8</sup> fur, and momentum is building.

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<sup>1</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, 2019; Humane Society International, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/fur-trade/>.

<sup>2</sup> Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfree NYC.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.

<sup>3</sup> Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/our-issues/>.

<sup>4</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Division, Literature Review on the Welfare; Implications of Leghold Trap Use in Conservation and Research 30 April 2008; Born Free USA, <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapping-incidents-search/>.

<sup>5</sup> Invasive alien mammals of European Union concern, 2021, <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.04.21.440832v1.full>.

<sup>6</sup> Detection of new SARS-CoV-2 variants related to mink, <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/detection-new-sars-cov-2-variants-mink>.

<sup>7</sup> Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/public-opinion/>.

<sup>8</sup> Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/fur-bans/>.

Within Australia this is most prominent in NSW and Victoria, with local councils banning sales across NSW, and the Victorian government setting up a fur taskforce with the aim of protecting consumers from mislabelling on fur labelled products.

## Industry Insights

Investigations into the production of fur have been damning, revealing abysmal conditions and routine abuse of animals by workers in the fur industry<sup>9</sup>, with charges laid in several instances<sup>10</sup>.

Independent scientists have debunked the voluntary certification system the fur industry as contrived<sup>11</sup>, along with any claims of sustainability<sup>12</sup>. The fur industry has been penalised several times for false advertising in relation to spurious claims of 'good' welfare and of being environmentally friendly<sup>13</sup>, while the environmental impacts and toxicity of fur and its production has been uncovered by numerous studies and investigations<sup>14</sup>.

In 2020 there was opposition from within the fur industry itself, with the former CEO of the British Fur Trade Association denouncing the industry and advocating for a ban<sup>15</sup>.



Mink on a Polish fur farm © FOUR PAWS

<sup>9</sup> Fur Industry Lies, Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfree NYC.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.

<sup>10</sup> Investigations are undertaken by non-profits, so it is not indicative of the scale of the problem. A few examples: SPCA Montreal, <https://www.sPCA.com/en/monteregie-fur-farmer-found-guilty-of-animal-cruelty/>; Last Chance for Animals, <https://www.lcanimal.org/index.php/investigations/investigations-in-the-field/millbank-fur-farm>.

<sup>11</sup> Heather Pickett and and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'WelFur', 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, Advertising Standards Authority, <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/European-Fur-Breeders-Association-A11-164462.html>; Press Release Faux Fur Institute, [https://www.24presse.com/fur\\_industry\\_s\\_advertising\\_declared\\_misleading-9920787.html/](https://www.24presse.com/fur_industry_s_advertising_declared_misleading-9920787.html/).

<sup>14</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011; ACTAsia and Fur-Free Alliance, Toxic Fur: A Global Issue Research in China, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Humane Society International, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/former-british-fur-ceo-backs-furfreebritain-campaign/>.

## Fur Production, Deception and Australia's Contribution

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Most fur is produced in China, Europe, and North America, with China now the primary producer and consumer of fur<sup>16</sup>. It is essential to note that although there are regulations in Europe and the US, the horrendous treatment of animals exploited for their fur, such as extreme confinement and terrible killing methods, is similar irrespective of region. Further, regulations set very low minimum standards which still allow for lifetime imprisonment of animals and brutal killing methods, such as electrocution.

Australia imports millions of dollars' worth of real and faux fur products each year<sup>17</sup>, a portion of which have been found to be mislabelled as faux when they are in fact real fur<sup>18</sup>. Australian fur imports often include less expensive fur items, such as trims on clothing, accessories, souvenirs, and children's toys<sup>19</sup>.

FOUR PAWS investigations have exposed mislabelled fur products across NSW and Victoria, deceiving Australian consumers and highlighting an alarming lack of transparency and traceability in fur supply chains. The investigations found that real fur items were deliberately mislabelled as 'faux', or as being from a different species than what DNA tests revealed.

Indeed, deceptive labelling is a worldwide problem<sup>20</sup>, and it has been found that products are deliberately mislabelled when exported to countries where there is local opposition to fur<sup>21</sup>.

In Australia, there is an absence of laws on fur sales and use, but NSW and Victoria should lead the way by enacting bans on fur sales, accompanied by information standards on labelling and testing mechanisms.

## Fur Farming: A Threat to Human Health

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Central to standard fur industry practice is the requirement for masses of animals, who are genetically similar, to be housed in intense confinement. As a result of poor hygiene and irregular cleaning, cages are filthy and animals exhibit great distress through manic behaviour/psychosis, open wounds, self-mutilation and even cannibalism<sup>22</sup>.

The animals are highly stressed in these prison-like and unhygienic conditions and then mass-slaughtered or transported and traded within animal markets. This creates an ideal environment

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<sup>16</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Australia's Merchandise Imports 2007-2019 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Pivot Table.

<sup>18</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Fur Free Alliance, [https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MislabelledMisleading\\_Fur-Labeling-Problems-in-the-EU-Market.pdf](https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MislabelledMisleading_Fur-Labeling-Problems-in-the-EU-Market.pdf); HSUS to FTC: Take action against 17 retailers that sold animal fur as "faux fur", <https://www.humanesociety.org/news/hsus-ftc-take-action-against-17-retailers-sold-animal-fur-faux-fur>; Fake Faux Fur Scandal: Mislabelling of Fur Clothing and Accessories in the UK, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/mis-labelled-fur-uk/>.

<sup>21</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Heather Pickett and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'WelFur', 2015; Jespersen et al. Acta Vet Scand (2016) 58:6 Anatomical distribution and gross pathology of wounds in necropsied farmed mink (*Neovison vison*) from June and October.



for zoonoses (an infectious disease that has jumped from a non-human animal to humans) to emerge and propagate.

Unsurprisingly, SARS-CoV-2 which causes COVID-19, has spread through over 440 fur farms, at time of publication, as two of the main fur species, mink and raccoon dog, can become infected with and transmit COVID-19<sup>23</sup>. People have become infected with SARS-CoV-2 by mink and mutations of the spike-proteins, which potentially risk undermining the efficacy of vaccines, occurred on fur farms<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, foxes can become infected with and transmit SARS-CoV<sup>25</sup>.

Therefore, fur farms pose a risk of becoming a reservoir, for spill over into populations in the wild, and of undermining the effectiveness of vaccines<sup>26</sup>. Species such as raccoon dog on Chinese fur farms are even considered possible intermediate hosts<sup>27</sup> which drove the development of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and various experts have called for an end to fur production<sup>28</sup>. Fur farming also poses the risk of other zoonotic diseases such as rabies<sup>29</sup> or Influenza A<sup>30</sup>.

Fur trapping, another practice in the industry, also creates risk as it involves close contact with wild animals and habitat interference as hunters encroach into the wilderness to hunt animals. Further, habitat destruction is a major factor in zoonosis spread<sup>31</sup>.

**Many countries and cities across the world have banned fur sales due to these serious concerns. Australia is falling behind and must cease its support of the cruel and dangerous fur industry by banning fur and fur sales. This can begin with councils and states, and ultimately lead to a national ban on production, imports and sales of fur. The harm against animals, the deception of consumers, the risk for zoonotic diseases, and the environmental devastation more than justifies Australia banning this cruel industry and the sale of its products for good.**

<sup>23</sup> Detection of new SARS-CoV-2 variants related to mink, <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/detection-new-sars-cov-2-variants-mink>; Conrad M. Freuling et al, Susceptibility of raccoon dogs for SARS-CoV-2, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Tedeschi et al., Preliminary report of an outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 in mink and mink farmers associated with community spread, Denmark, June to November 2020, <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.5.210009>; Hoffmann et al., SARS-CoV-2 mutations acquired in mink reduce antibody-mediated neutralization, 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33857422/>.

<sup>25</sup> Nicola Decarao and Alessio Lorusso, Novel human coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): A lesson from animal coronaviruses, *Veterinary Microbiology*, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Detection of new SARS-CoV-2 variants related to mink, <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/detection-new-sars-cov-2-variants-mink>.

<sup>27</sup> S. Lytras et al., The animal origin of SARS-CoV-2, 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34404734/>; Xiao Xiao et al., Animal sales from Wuhan wet markets immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-91470-2>.

<sup>28</sup> Eurogroup for Animals, Scientific statement on public health risks from SARS-CoV-2 and the intensive rearing of mink, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Hao Liu et al, Rabies viruses in specific wild fur animals in northern China 2017–2019.

<sup>30</sup> Ban unsustainable mink production, 2020, <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/370/6516/539.1.full>; L. E. Larsen, et al., Outbreaks of Influenza A Virus in Farmed Mink (*Neovison vison*) in Denmark: Molecular characterization of the involved viruses, 2012), [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.3920/978-90-8686-760-8\\_21](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.3920/978-90-8686-760-8_21).

<sup>31</sup> Christine K. Johnson et al, Global shifts in mammalian population trends reveal key predictors of virus spillover risk, 2020.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over recent years, a staggering 100 million animals were slaughtered annually<sup>32</sup> to create fur fashion items. Farmed species include mink, raccoon dogs, foxes, rabbits, and chinchillas. The number of animals farmed and trapped has been reduced due to the pandemic, however the industry is still harming vast numbers of animals, and posing zoonotic risk.

Fur farms are located in China, Europe and North America, with China the biggest producer, exporter, and consumer of fur<sup>33</sup>, while fur trapping is popular in the United States, Canada and Russia.

Cruelty is inherent throughout the trade, from the moment the animals are born or captured to when they are slaughtered. On fur farms, millions of animals are imprisoned in unsanitary and abysmal conditions, crammed inside wire mesh cages for life, while fur trapping practices and hunting result in prolonged suffering and indiscriminate killing of many species. In addition to this systematic suffering, investigations have revealed that cruelty and abuse inflicted on animals by human workers is routine<sup>34</sup>.



Mink on a Polish fur farm © FOUR PAWS

<sup>32</sup> 'The Fur Trade', Humane Society International, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/fur-trade/>; ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019.

<sup>33</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Fur Industry Lies, Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfreennyc.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.

Seventy-five percent of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, for example COVID-19, Ebola, SARS, Zika virus and bird flu were all transmitted to people by animals<sup>35</sup>, a key factor being exploitation of animals and extreme forms of captivity, such as live markets or farming.

The current COVID-19 crisis has shown that animal trading and the abuse of animals carries colossal global consequences.

While China is one of the known hotspots for zoonotic diseases<sup>36</sup> due to wet markets and wildlife trade, the large-scale outbreaks of COVID-19 on mink farms in Europe and North America demonstrates the risk fur farming brings to humans is global.

Fur farms, like other factory farms and animal markets, employ the same practices which lead to the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases<sup>37</sup>. This is evidenced by COVID-19 ravaging through mink farms in Europe and North America. Other species exploited for fur, such as raccoon dogs, are also able to become infected with and transmit the virus<sup>38</sup>, while foxes can become infected with SARS-CoV-1<sup>39</sup>. American mink on fur farms are highly susceptible to the Sars-CoV-2 virus<sup>40</sup>.

Due to the stressful conditions within fur farms, animals' immune systems become compromised, making them susceptible to disease, and the killing methods are both horrific and unhygienic.

Thousands of animals can be held on one site, and in some places in Europe and China, there is also cross-species contact<sup>41</sup>, facilitating the 'mixing' of viruses. This refers to when animals become infected with several viruses from humans and other animals, and they become a 'mixing vessel' for viruses to combine<sup>42</sup>.

In addition to animal cruelty concerns, fur production is environmentally devastating, and the fur items themselves can contain toxic levels of chemicals harmful to human health<sup>43</sup>. Independent scientists have debunked the voluntary certification system the fur industry contrived, along with any claims of sustainability<sup>44</sup>. Further, the fur industry has been penalised several times for false advertising in relation to spurious claims of 'good' welfare and environmental sustainability<sup>45</sup>.

There is rising opposition to the use of fur and fur sales in Australia, with multiple NSW local councils prohibiting both fur and exotic products.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Environment Programme and International Livestock Research Institute, Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Quan Liu, Lili Cao and Xing-Quan Zhu, Major emerging and re-emerging zoonoses in China: a matter of global health and socioeconomic development for 1.3 billion, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, [https://www.hsvma.org/fur\\_riskofdiseas](https://www.hsvma.org/fur_riskofdiseas).

<sup>38</sup> Conrad M. Freuling et al, Susceptibility of raccoon dogs for SARS-CoV-2, 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Nicola Decarao and Alessio Lorusso, Novel human coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): A lesson from animal coronaviruses, Veterinary Microbiology, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Anna Michelitsch et al, SARS-CoV-2 in animals: From potential hosts to animal models, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> We Animals Media.

<sup>42</sup> Raina K. Plowright et al, Pathways to zoonotic spillover, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> ACTAsia and FOUR PAWS, Toxic Fur: A Global Issue Research in China, 2018; Poison in Furs Report II – Questionable Chemicals in Fur Products, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011; Marijn Bijleveld Natural mink fur and faux fur products, an environmental comparison Delft, CE Delft, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> For instance, Advertising Standards Authority, <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/European-Fur-Breeders-Association-A11-164462.html>; Press Release Faux Fur Institute, [https://www.24presse.com/fur\\_industry\\_s\\_advertising\\_declared\\_misleading-9920787.html/](https://www.24presse.com/fur_industry_s_advertising_declared_misleading-9920787.html/).

In Victoria, a motion by the Animal Justice Party to investigate illegal labelling was passed, and animal protection organisations including FOUR PAWS are working towards a ban. The support for FOUR PAWS petitions calling for an end to fur farming and sales are further evidence of the increasing opposition to fur within Australia.

Many countries, both in and outside of Europe, have instituted fur farming bans<sup>46</sup>. Similarly, cities<sup>47</sup> in the US introduced fur sales bans which led to the first US state ban in California<sup>48</sup>. In June 2021, Israel became the world's first country to prohibit the sales of fur, with the ban effective by the end of 2021<sup>49</sup>. More countries and states continue to join the movement to ban fur<sup>50</sup>, with a recent acceleration due to COVID-19 spreading through farms.

Australia imports millions of dollars' worth of real fur and faux fur products each year<sup>51</sup>. There are no laws in Australia which govern the use of fur, apart from customs regulations which prohibit the importing and exporting of dog and cat fur. Likewise, there are no laws in relation to fur labelling, and consumers are being deceived into purchasing products by mislabelling<sup>52</sup>.

In 2019 and 2020, FOUR PAWS carried out joint investigations with the Animal Justice Party in Victoria, making the alarming discovery that 'faux' fur was falsely labelled and was, in fact, real fur. Similarly, in NSW, FOUR PAWS has also uncovered mislabelled fur products. See chapter 4 for more details.

State-wide prohibitions on fur products are the solution for ending our detrimental contribution to this cruel industry. Coupled with taskforces for enforcement, labelling regulations, and testing mechanisms to ensure items are not deceptively mislabelled.

**COVID-19 has taught us many hard lessons, and central to this is that we must change the way that humans treat animals. As three-fourths of emerging human infectious diseases come from animals<sup>53</sup>, the world's leading scientists and experts have demonstrated the undeniable link between animal welfare and increasing pandemic risk.**

<sup>46</sup> Fur Bans, Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/fur-bans/>; FOUR PAWS Map.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, San Francisco Health Code Article 1D: Animal Fur Products.

<sup>48</sup> Fish and Game Code California Division 3 2023, Division 4 3039.

<sup>49</sup> Ban on animal fur sales! Minister of Environmental Protection Gila Gamliel signs regulations forbidding trade in usage of furs for fashion industry in Israel, [https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/fur\\_trade\\_is\\_prohibited](https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/fur_trade_is_prohibited)

<sup>50</sup> FOUR PAWS Map.

<sup>51</sup> Australia's Merchandise Imports 2007-2019 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Pivot Table.

<sup>52</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019: Due to growing opposition in Australia etc. China purposefully mislabels items.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Environment Programme and International Livestock Research Institute, Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission, 2020.



## 2. THE INHERENT CRUELTY WITHIN FUR

The global fur trade slaughters around 100 million animals every year. Around 95% of these animals are killed within industrial farming systems with the remaining 5% trapped in the wild.

### Fur Farms

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Animals on fur farms are imprisoned in tiny, barren, metal-wire cages for the entirety of their lives. The most common species of animals farmed for their fur includes mink, raccoon dogs, foxes, rabbits (as by-product of meat production as well as fur breeds), and chinchillas.

Animals suffer from trauma and various health issues, from weak bones to tooth decay<sup>54</sup>. The rearing systems on fur farms are usually standardised, with cages often hung in long rows, around half a metre above the ground. Due to the wire mesh underfoot, the animals' sensitive paws are often injured from constantly standing on hard wire. Excrement and urine fall through the mesh floor, so that the animals' fur remains unsoiled, collecting beneath their cages. With their exceptional sense of smell, the animals are permanently exposed to an unbearable stench, with no opportunity to bathe nor engage in any other natural behaviours.

As a result of poor hygiene and irregular cleaning, cages are filthy and animals exhibit great distress through manic behaviour/psychosis, open wounds, self-mutilation and even cannibalism<sup>55</sup>. There are high rates of infant deaths and infanticide, and animals are denied veterinary care, as is evidenced by animals with serious untreated injuries and dead animals left in cages with their cell mates.

Animals farmed for fur never leave their cage throughout their entire lives, until they are slaughtered.

Breeding for pelt size has also caused significant welfare issues, resulting in obesity, diminished mobility, and gastrointestinal problems<sup>56</sup>.

In Finland, the selective breeding of super-sized polar foxes has resulted in massively obese animals, with males weighing 20kg or more while in nature such foxes usually weigh between 3-4kg. Welfare problems related to obesity, such as foot deformities and abnormal locomotion, are observed frequently on blue fox farms<sup>57</sup>.

In addition to the cruel confinement inflicted on animals by the industry, investigations have revealed horrendous abuse and slaughtering practices<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> EU Commission, The Welfare of Animals Kept for Fur Production a Report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Heather Pickett and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'WelFur', 2015; Jespersen et al. Acta Vet Scand (2016) 58:6 Anatomical distribution and gross pathology of wounds in necropsied farmed mink (*Neovison vison*) from June and October.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Anne-Mari Mustonen et al, Skeletal Pathology of Farm-Reared Obese Juvenile Blue Foxes (*Vulpes lagopus*), 2017, [https://journals.ekb.eg/article\\_45445\\_4d7d8dc6198834f4b8b872edf346a35b.pdf](https://journals.ekb.eg/article_45445_4d7d8dc6198834f4b8b872edf346a35b.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfreenyc.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.



Selective breeding of foxes predisposed to lose skin and intentional overfeeding for obesity on a fur farm in Finland.  
© Kristo Muurimaa | HIDDEN | We Animals Media

Acts of cruelty perpetrated by workers has been routinely uncovered on fur farms, and killing methods are terribly cruel – with animals electrocuted anally or vaginally, strangled, gassed, beaten or crushed to death and skinned alive. Investigations have documented skinned animals still moving and blinking their eyes<sup>59</sup>.

Compounding this is the fact that animals used for fur are wild animals, who have undergone minimal domestication, and are not accustomed to co-existing with humans, causing further stress in an already traumatic environment<sup>60</sup>.

The minimum standards relating to fur farming and trapping in Europe and North America suffer from fatal flaws, and there is improper oversight and enforcement<sup>61</sup>. But even if these minimum standards were enforced, they would not come close to ensuring good welfare.

For instance, cage sizes are often little more than the length of the animal's own body, barely allowing animals to move, while trapping regulations allow for an array of cruel traps to be used.

Tellingly, in countries like Russia and China where there are significant fur trades and no animal welfare laws in existence, the conditions for the animals are the same as for animals in the European fur industry.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Heather Pickett and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'WelFur', 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/trapping/>.

## Fur-Trapping

Animals trapped for fur are estimated to range from 3-5 million, primarily from North America and Russia<sup>62</sup>. A wide range of species are trapped, including beaver, bobcat, coyote, fox, lynx, muskrat, and raccoons<sup>63</sup>.



Coyote caught in a fur trap. © Fur Free Alliance

Various traps are used, including leg hold traps, body gripping traps and snares<sup>64</sup>, which can result in animals dying slowly by being crushed, strangled or by drowning. Animals caught in traps can also die slowly from exposure, dehydration, starvation, predation, or injury due to mutilating or chewing off their own trapped limbs. If they survive the trap, they are killed by trappers. The exact scale of suffering is unknown due to poor monitoring and reporting.

Importantly, there are no official numbers for non-target animals as there is either no requirement to report or insufficient monitoring. It has been estimated that between 3 and 10 animals might be caught for every intended species<sup>65</sup> - these animals are referred to as 'trash animals' by trappers.

Steel leg-hold traps are banned in many states in Australia<sup>66</sup> but we are importing fur from animals who might have been caught by the use of these cruel traps.

## The Rising Opposition to Fur

Countries and states have been responding to growing public opposition by enacting bans on both fur farming and the sale of fur as the most effective means to bring this cruel industry to an end.

Many similar jurisdictions in Europe and the US have implemented fur farming or trade bans and can serve as models for Australia.

<sup>62</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019.

<sup>63</sup> The Canadian Encyclopedia, Fur Trapping, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/fur-trapping>.

<sup>64</sup> The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, <https://thefurbearers.com/our-work/make-fur-history/trapping/trapping-and-wildlife/types-of-traps/>.

<sup>65</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Division, Literature Review on the Welfare Implications of Leghold Trap Use in Conservation and Research, 30 April 2008.

<sup>66</sup> *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW) s23; *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019* (VIC) pt 3.



Fur farming has been prohibited in Austria, Croatia, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the UK. While many remaining countries are phasing out farming, such as Belgium, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Luxembourg, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, and the Republic of Macedonia<sup>67</sup>.

Recently Estonia and France announced a ban on fur farming, and Ireland made a commitment to bring forward legislation in 2021<sup>68</sup>. Switzerland and Germany both adopted stricter regulations, rendering breeding unprofitable. Similarly, Sweden eliminated fox and chinchilla production in this way, and Denmark prohibited the breeding of foxes on animal welfare grounds.

Israel became the world's first country to prohibit the sales of fur. The ban will come into force by the end of 2021<sup>69</sup>.

In the US, major cities have instituted bans on fur sales<sup>70</sup>, with other cities following suit and introducing similar bills, for instance New York City<sup>71</sup>. California became the first US state to ban fur<sup>72</sup>, and more states are getting on board, including Connecticut, Hawaii, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island<sup>73</sup>.

In 2020, the former CEO of the British Fur Trade Association, Mike Moser, spoke out against fur and is calling for a Fur Free Britain, while Copenhagen Fur, the world's largest auction house, is set to close in the next couple of years<sup>74</sup> due to a combination of rising opposition and COVID-19 outbreaks on farms.

The fur industry has engaged in a long-running campaign to de-stigmatise fur by moving away from fur coats to affordable fur trims and accessories, which are often dyed to appear very different from the natural animal's fur appearance, while also matching the look of faux fur products.

<sup>67</sup> Fur Free Alliance, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/fur-bans/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> NPR, <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/14/1006279660/israel-has-become-the-first-country-to-ban-the-sale-of-fur-clothing>.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, Health Code San Francisco Article 1D Animal Fur Products.

<sup>71</sup> The New York City Council, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3903503&GUID=EBE55293-8737-4620-945A-308ADC3A23DC&Options=&Search=>.

<sup>72</sup> Fish and Game Code California Division 3 2023, Division 4 3039, <https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codesTOCSelected.xhtml?tocCode=FGC>.

<sup>73</sup> For instance: Proposed H.B. No. 5031, [https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill\\_num=HB5031;SB969SD2HD2,969https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/measure\\_indiv.aspx?billtype=SB&billnumber=969](https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB5031;SB969SD2HD2,969https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=SB&billnumber=969).

<sup>74</sup> Humane Society International, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/worlds-largest-fur-auction-house-to-close-as-eu-warns-mink-mutations-of-covid-19-could-make-vaccines-ineffective/>.

### 3. FUR, ZOO NOTIC DISEASES AND THE CORONAVIRUS CONTAGION

The fur industry not only poses risks to animals, but it also poses serious risks to human health – most recently demonstrated with COVID-19 spreading across fur farms in Europe and North America. There are concerns that animals susceptible to the virus can become reservoirs for the virus and interfere with the effectiveness of vaccines<sup>75</sup>.

The majority of previous disease outbreaks originated from intensive animal rearing and trading<sup>76</sup>, and once again, the COVID-19 pandemic exposes how animal trading can have devastating global consequences.

Given these grave risks and the scale of suffering, precaution is essential as is removing Australia's contribution to these risks.

#### Fur Farming and Danger of Disease

The main species farmed for fur, mink and raccoon dog, can carry and transmit COVID-19 to humans<sup>77</sup>. SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, has rapidly spread through fur farms in Europe and North America. Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden have all had outbreaks on numerous mink fur farms<sup>78</sup>, leading to mass culls.

In the Netherlands, nearly three million mink were culled<sup>79</sup>, and the government officially announced the shutting down of fur farming<sup>80</sup>. In Denmark, the whole population of farmed mink – at least 17 million animals - were culled to stop the spread of infections<sup>81</sup>, and COVID-19 outbreaks in Spain lead to almost 100,000 mink culled<sup>82</sup>.

There were further reports of outbreaks in Greece, Canada, and Poland, including both mink and employees<sup>83</sup>, as well as outbreaks in France, Lithuania<sup>84</sup> and Latvia<sup>85</sup> and mink-mutated strains in Denmark, the Netherlands, Faroe Islands, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, and outbreaks in the

<sup>75</sup> OIE, World Organisation for Animal Health, <https://www.oie.int/en/for-the-media/press-releases/detail/article/oie-statement-on-covid-19-and-mink/>; Lassaunière R. et al. In vitro Characterization of Fitness and Convalescent Antibody Neutralization of SARS-CoV-2 Cluster 5 Variant Emerging in Mink at Danish Farms, 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8267889/>.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Environment Programme and International Livestock Research Institute, Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Bas B. Oude Munnink et al., Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 on mink farms between humans and mink and back to humans, 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Events in animals, <https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-offer/emergency-and-resilience/covid-19/#ui-id-3>.

<sup>79</sup> Humane Society International, White Paper: Fur Farming, COVID-19 and Zoonotic Disease Risks, updated July 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Dutch Government, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/08/31/nieuwe-besmetting-covid-19-bij-nertsenbedrijf>.

<sup>81</sup> NBCNews, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/animal-news/here-s-why-denmark-culled-17-million-minks-now-plans-n1249610>.

<sup>82</sup> Washington Post, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/scientists-study-coronavirus-outbreaks-among-minks-in-europe/2020/08/02/1cbe001c-d48e-11ea-826b-cc394d824e35\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/scientists-study-coronavirus-outbreaks-among-minks-in-europe/2020/08/02/1cbe001c-d48e-11ea-826b-cc394d824e35_story.html).

<sup>83</sup> The Mink Pandemic Is No Joke Nine countries have now reported outbreaks on mink farms, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/12/minks-pandemic/617476/>; Covid-19 Found In Polish Mink, Cull Feared, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roberthart/2020/11/24/covid-19-found-in-polish-mink-cull-feared/?sh=5a7e8a911926>.

<sup>84</sup> EFSA, Monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 infection in mustelids, <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6459>.

<sup>85</sup> Covid-19 has been found in nine dead mink in SIA "Baltic Devon Mink" fur farm, <https://www.pvd.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/sia-baltic-devon-mink-kazokzveru-audzetava-devinam-mirusam-udelem-konstatets-covid-19>.

US across major fur farming regions Utah<sup>86</sup>, Michigan, Wisconsin<sup>87</sup> and Oregon<sup>88</sup>.

COVID-19 has also emerged within the fur industry in China, which is the second biggest producer of mink, and potentially the largest fur farming region<sup>89</sup>.

Recent research has revealed that raccoon dogs, of which approximately 15 million are killed each year, primarily in China<sup>90</sup>, can also become infected and transmit the virus. Unlike mink, raccoon dogs show little to no symptoms for the entirety of their illness, so infection can spread almost entirely undetected<sup>91</sup>.

Further, raccoon dogs have been found to carry and transmit SARS-CoV-1<sup>92</sup>, and foxes can also become infected with SARS-CoV-1<sup>93</sup>.



Raccoon dog on a fur farm in Finland. © FOUR PAWS | Fred Dott

<sup>86</sup> USDA, [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa\\_by\\_date/sa-2020/sa-08/sare-cov-2-mink](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2020/sa-08/sare-cov-2-mink).

<sup>87</sup> Department of Agriculture Michigan, <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125--541996--,00.html>; Department of Agriculture Wisconsin, [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News\\_Media/TaylorCountyMinkTestPositiveCoronavirus.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/TaylorCountyMinkTestPositiveCoronavirus.aspx).

<sup>88</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association, <https://www.avma.org/javma-news/2021-06-01/oregon-mulls-ban-mink-farms-covid-threat>.

<sup>89</sup> ACTAsia, China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Susceptibility of Raccoon Dogs for Experimental SARS-CoV-2 Infection.

<sup>92</sup> Conrad M. Freuling et al., Susceptibility of raccoon dogs for experimental SARS-CoV-2 infection, 2020.

<sup>93</sup> Nicola Decarao and Alessio Lorusso, Novel human coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): A lesson from animal coronaviruses, 2020.



Farming thousands of the same species in intensive confinement means that disease can readily spread through a population<sup>94</sup> – as has occurred with the COVID-19 outbreaks on fur farms. Farming different species also creates risk, as it results in cross-species infection, mutation, and mixing.

Within fur farming, several species are sometimes farmed together, as is the case in China<sup>95</sup> and some parts of Europe.

While it is clear several factors need to be present to result in pathogen spill over and widespread transmission<sup>96</sup>, the practices of industrialised farming create the necessary conditions which give rise to pandemics<sup>97</sup>. The major risk factors include<sup>98</sup>:

- Devastation of the environment and interference with habitats, increasing exposure to wild animals and diseases.
- Transportation of animals across distances and borders.
- High volumes of animals contained in unsanitary conditions, which compromises their immune systems, causing animals to become ill and shed pathogens.
- Masses of animals, whether the same or different species, housed in close proximity to each other and humans.
- High numbers of people working in close proximity to each other and animals.
- Unhygienic slaughter practices and storage of carcasses.

Environments, such as fur farms which include the above factors, are ideal places for viruses to immediately spread between thousands of animals, mutate and ‘mix’. ‘Mixing’ refers to when animals become infected with several viruses from humans and other animals, and they become a ‘mixing vessel’ for viruses to recombine<sup>99</sup>, resulting in new pathogens, such as Avian Influenza A viruses and swine flu<sup>100</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern, Zoonoses: Blurred Lines of Emergent Disease and Ecosystem Health, 2016.

<sup>95</sup> We Animals Media.

<sup>96</sup> Raina K. Plowright et al, Pathways to zoonotic spillover, Perspective, 2017.

<sup>97</sup> Ivan V. Kuzmin et al, Bats, emerging infectious diseases, and the rabies paradigm revisited, 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Raina K. Plowright et al, Pathways to zoonotic spillover, Perspective, 2017; Ivan V. Kuzmin et al, Bats, emerging infectious diseases, and the rabies paradigm revisited, 2011.

<sup>99</sup> Raina K. Plowright et al, Pathways to zoonotic spillover, Perspective, 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/virus-transmission.htm>.



In the USA and in Europe, wild ranging American mink have been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus near fur farms, thus such farms may also pose disease risks to wildlife populations<sup>101</sup> that could then develop into an ineradicable reservoir for the virus.

The fur industry in China is of particular concern given the pollution the industry generates and because China is a hotspot for zoonosis.

Further, harmful chemicals used to prevent fur from rotting in the dressing process can render workers more susceptible to infection<sup>102</sup>.

Piles of faeces under mink cages at a fur farm in Sweden.  
© Jo-Anne McArthur | Djurrattsalliansen | We Animals Media

FOUR PAWS, alongside leading international scientific experts in the field, has produced a startling report 'How to Prevent the Next Pandemic?' highlighting the stark evidence between health, animal welfare and pandemics.

According to the 29 international experts from disciplines such as virology, human and veterinary medicine and climate research who contributed to the report, nothing less than a "paradigm shift" is needed in how humankind treats animals in the future, enabling the prevention of future pandemics.

[Download the report here.](#)

<sup>101</sup> Lauren A Harrington et al, Wild American mink (*Neovison vison*) may pose a COVID-19 threat, 2021.

<sup>102</sup> ACTAsia and FOUR PAWS, Toxic Fur: A Global Issue Research in China, 2018.

#### 4. LIMITED LAWS AND LABELLING LIES

There are no federal or state laws in Australia which specifically govern the use and sale of fur.

Nationally, the importing and exporting of dog and cat fur into and out of Australia is prohibited<sup>103</sup>, however, there are exemptions<sup>104</sup> and the regulations do not specify criteria for these exemptions. Similarly, there is no express ban on the use and sale of cat and dog fur. There is also no tracing or testing mechanisms in place at customs to ascertain source of fur, and whether fur is real or faux.

##### Limited Protection from Deceptive Labelling

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The Australian public trust that they will be protected from mislabelling and from being deceived into purchasing products that do not align with their principles. Improved labelling and interest in transparency is a growing movement and awareness about animal welfare continues to rise.

The Australian Consumer Law<sup>105</sup>, part of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth), is a national law to protect consumers and their rights when purchasing goods and services. Relevantly, the Consumer Law deals with misleading or deceptive conduct, unfair practices, and product safety<sup>106</sup>.

Mislabelled fur products relate to deceptive conduct and unfair practices which deceive consumers into purchasing products<sup>107</sup>.

Mislabelled products also relate to product safety due to the harmful chemicals used in real fur, which is then deceptively sold as faux fur. The heavy dyes and chemical treatment can also prevent items being identified through both microscopy and DNA testing.

Joint investigations with the Animal Justice Party in Victoria and a FOUR PAWS investigation in NSW have revealed, however, that deliberately mislabelled products are freely available across both states and online.

While brands have been found to sell mislabelled items, most of the mislabelled items are from innumerable cheap, overseas brands, making traceability arduous at best. Issuing fines to brands or shopkeepers will not stem this practice. It needs to be stopped at its source and fur items should be prohibited from entering the market.

Despite there being some import prohibitions on fur derived from animals who are categorised as endangered under CITES, such as tigers and certain fur seals<sup>108</sup>, animals used by the fur industry; mink, foxes, and raccoon dogs, are offered no protection under CITES or Australian wildlife protection laws, and their fur can legally be imported into Australia.

<sup>103</sup> *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* (Cth) r 4W (1); *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* (Cth) 9AB.

<sup>104</sup> *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* (Cth) r 4W (3); *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* (Cth) 9AB – regulations do not provide criteria for the basis for such permissions.

<sup>105</sup> *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) Schedule 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid* ss 18, 29, 54, pts 3-3, 4-1.

<sup>107</sup> *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) Schedule 2 ss 54, 56: Intention is irrelevant and includes statements by staff.

<sup>108</sup> Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in Flora and Fauna Appendices I, II and III.



In response to rising consumer concerns, and the lack of traceability and standards, many brands are taking responsibility themselves by banning fur from their supply chains altogether.

At the time of publication, 1572 Australian and global brands had taken the Fur Free Retailer pledge not to sell fur.



Cap and gloves with fur appliqués. © FOUR PAWS

## 5. ENDING FUR SALES IN AUSTRALIA: STATE AND TERRITORY ACTIONS

Around the world, FOUR PAWS, as part of the global animal protection movement, is calling on governments to ban fur. Many similar jurisdictions to Australian states and territories, in Europe and the US for example, have implemented fur farming bans and fur trade bans and can serve as models for Australia.

Put simply, trade bans on fur should include both the sale and the use of new fur, to eradicate the outdated and damaging image of fur as fashionable and as a luxury item, while also reducing demand and ultimately the suffering of animals for fur.

Within Australia, an important phase in this mission has been the work of local councils in advancing motions to investigate and implement bans on fur and exotic products.

Importantly, there is strong community support on this issue, as the FOUR PAWS petitions and brand actions demonstrate, supported by thousands of concerned Australians<sup>109</sup>.



Foxes on a fur farm in Finland. © FOUR PAWS | Fred Dott

### Investigations in Australia

Our joint investigations with the Animal Justice Party in Victoria exposed mislabelled and unlabelled fur products in Australia.

Victoria: In 2019, 12 items featuring fur or fur-like material were collected from two Melbourne markets. The fur items were sent for microscopy testing at Forensic Science and Wildlife Matters, which provides expertise and advice to law enforcement authorities, conservationists, and the public. The results were shocking, including:

<sup>109</sup> FOUR PAWS Petitions.

- One jacket with a fur trim which was labelled as “100% polyester”, but testing confirmed the hairs were from a raccoon or raccoon dog.
- One garment labelled “Brim and Brawn 100% rabbit blend”, but test results found “the appearance of the medulla and the shaft of hairs in this item indicated that they are inconsistent with rabbit ... but consistent with raccoon ... or raccoon dog”.
- One item had no label at all, but testing revealed it had fur from a rabbit.
- One garment was labelled with “Husk Mystic Leather”, but the forensic testing instead found that the material was made from hairs, and not synthetic fibres, yet due to the heavy colour dyeing, the animal species could not be identified.

A follow up investigation in 2020 revealed similar results, with mislabelled fur items discovered at the same markets.

New South Wales: In 2020, FOUR PAWS collected 11 samples including scarves, jackets, handbags, and gloves, from both online and market retail outlets across Greater Sydney.

The samples were submitted for laboratory testing, which included microscopic examination and a comparison with other samples to determine species. Even based on a small-sample investigation, products found were either mislabelled, had no label, or the vendors gave inaccurate information. Of the 11 samples:

- Eight items had no labels at all.
- One item was claimed to be faux fur by the vendors, but forensic testing revealed it was animal fur.
- Four items were made of different animal fur than claimed by label or vendor.
- Fur from three species were identified via testing, these were rabbit (found in seven items), fox (found in three items), and raccoon dog (found in one item).
- There was little to no information on all the products tested as to the origin of the animals used.

Mislabelling has also been exposed in the UK<sup>110</sup>, the EU<sup>111</sup> and the US<sup>112</sup>, we can look to these similar jurisdictions for guidance on what we can do here to combat the same problem.

## Parliamentary and Council Motions

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In Victoria, the Animal Justice Party is working towards a ban on fur. Following its joint investigation with FOUR PAWS, Andy Meddick MP successfully passed a motion to investigate illegal fur labelling and to establish a taskforce<sup>113</sup>. Subsequent investigations found more mislabelled items<sup>114</sup>, indicating the ongoing need for action.

<sup>110</sup> Humane Society International, <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/illegal-cat-fur-sold-as-faux-041017/>.

<sup>111</sup> Fur Free Alliance, [https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MislabelledMisleading\\_Fur-Labeling-Problems-in-the-EU-Market.pdf](https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MislabelledMisleading_Fur-Labeling-Problems-in-the-EU-Market.pdf).

<sup>112</sup> Humane Society US, [https://www.humanesociety.org/news/hsus-ftc-take-action-against-17-retailers-sold-animal-fur-faux-fur?credit=blog\\_post\\_id8351](https://www.humanesociety.org/news/hsus-ftc-take-action-against-17-retailers-sold-animal-fur-faux-fur?credit=blog_post_id8351)

<sup>113</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, 27 November 2019, Motions Fur Industry.

<sup>114</sup> Choice, <https://www.choice.com.au/shopping/packaging-labelling-and-advertising/labelling/articles/real-fur-that-is-labeled-faux>.



In NSW, the Animal Justice Party passed a motion condemning fur supported by the Upper House<sup>115</sup>. In addition, the concern around fur can be seen via the increasing number of councils in NSW working towards banning fur and exotic products. Sydney City Council<sup>116</sup>, Canterbury City Council<sup>117</sup>, Inner City Council<sup>118</sup>, Blue Mountains Council<sup>119</sup> and Liverpool City Council<sup>120</sup> all announced bans against fur in 2019/2020.

Councils can institute bans under the *Local Government Act*<sup>121</sup> and can also raise this issue through the Australian Local Government Association, which represents local government on national bodies and ministerial councils, including on the Coalition of Australian Governments. By taking action against fur, councils are demonstrating that this is an important policy area.

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<sup>115</sup> NSW, Legislative Council, Parliamentary Debates, 14 November 2019, Motions Fur Trade.

<sup>116</sup> City of Sydney, Agenda Minutes from Meeting, 9 March 2020.

<sup>117</sup> Canterbury Council, Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council Held in Council Chambers on 26 May 2020.

<sup>118</sup> Inner West Council, Council Meeting, 23 June 2020.

<sup>119</sup> Blue Mountains City Council, Business Paper Ordinary Meeting, 25 August 2020.

<sup>120</sup> Liverpool City Council, Council Agenda Ordinary Council Meeting, 27 October 2020.

<sup>121</sup> *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) s 68.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### New South Wales and Victoria Bans

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A ban should be instituted in NSW and Victoria by amending animal anti-cruelty legislation in each state, which, as at time of publication, were undergoing reviews in both NSW and Victoria.

For instance, under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW) Pt 10 Offences, a provision could be inserted prohibiting killing animals solely for fur and the use of such products in NSW. While in Victoria, a similar amendment could be inserted into the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (Vic) Division 1 Cruelty.

A fur ban in NSW and Victoria should also encompass any fur products purchased online, and be completed by labelling standards, testing mechanisms and the continuation of taskforces necessary to achieve the intended objectives.

### National Action on Fur

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Customs regulations and the protection of consumer rights is governed by federal legislation, as they come under the category of commerce and trade<sup>122</sup>.

Customs regulations, which currently prohibit cat and dog fur<sup>123</sup>, could be expanded to include all fur bearing animals. This should be accompanied by testing mechanisms to ensure products comply with the law and that fake products are not mislabelled. Further, under the Australian Consumer Law, an information standard on fur labelling could be introduced, similar to the free-range egg information standard<sup>124</sup>.

Consistent testing mechanisms applied at customs have an essential role in proper labelling and as part of a ban. Visual checks can help determine whether fur is real or fake, while microscopy and DNA testing can ascertain species.

The EU discovered that proper testing mechanisms at customs<sup>125</sup>, including the testing of products purchased online<sup>126</sup>, is crucial to enforcement.

### Reducing Cruelty Through Labelling

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Fur sales and imports must be banned to ensure Australia does not support the cruel fur industry. However, an interim solution is to enact labelling provisions for all fur products entering the country, which would entail customs ensuring all fur products have clear accurate labels. Labelling, however, should only be a supporting factor.

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<sup>122</sup> Part V Powers of the Parliament, [https://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Senate/Powers\\_practice\\_n\\_procedures/Constitution/chapter1/Part\\_V\\_-\\_Powers\\_of\\_the\\_Parliament](https://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/Constitution/chapter1/Part_V_-_Powers_of_the_Parliament).

<sup>123</sup> *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* (Cth) r 4W (1); *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* (Cth) 9AB.

<sup>124</sup> Australian Consumer Law (Free Range Egg Labelling) Information Standard 2017 (Cth).

<sup>125</sup> Laura Donnellan, *The Cat and Dog Fur Regulation: A Case Study on the European Union's Approach to Animal Welfare*, 2018.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

Clear labelling would necessitate:

- country of origin,
- the specific animal the fur is derived from,
- whether the animals were farmed in wire cages or non-wire mesh, or caught through trapping, and
- specifying whether those traps are permitted under our laws<sup>127</sup>.

Both the US<sup>128</sup> and Switzerland<sup>129</sup> have clear labelling laws which serve as an example.

Clear labelling, including mandatory fibre content and country of origin declarations, could be enacted through the Australia Consumer Law, which protects consumers nationally and applies in each state. For instance, the Australian Consumer Law Information Standard on free-range eggs could serve as an example for fur and exotic product labelling. The underlying rationale is the same – ensuring consumers have accurate information about animal welfare-related matters and the product in question so they can make an informed ethical choice.

Clear labelling standards could also be enacted at state-level in NSW and Victoria. For instance, enacting a fur labelling information standard under the *Fair Trading Act 1987* (NSW) and in Victoria under the *Competition Policy Reform Act 1995* (Vic).

## Taskforces

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Motions for taskforces have passed in both NSW and Victoria. Taskforces require powers that allow for the issuing of fines or notices but also proper investigation to uncover prevalence. Currently, taskforces regulate labelling on council land, working in conjunction with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. This could be expanded if state-wide bans and labelling laws were implemented.

<sup>127</sup> *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW) s 23; *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019* (Vic) Part 3.

<sup>128</sup> US Code, Title 15, Subchapter IV, <https://uscode.house.gov/browse/prelim@title15/chapter2/subchapter4&edition=prelim>.

<sup>129</sup> Ordinance on the declaration of furs and fur products 2012, The Swiss Federal Council, <https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20121468/index.html>.



## 7. FALSEHOODS OF THE FUR INDUSTRY

There has been growing opposition to the fur trade for decades and an increasing number of brands going fur free<sup>130</sup>. In response, the fur industry has pursued a campaign to remove the stigma attached to fur – changing its products and trends from fur coats to other clothing items and accessories<sup>131</sup>.

Further, the industry has been expanding operations in China in the wake of opposition in Europe leading to fur bans<sup>132</sup>. The industry has also attempted a voluntary ‘welfare’ accreditation scheme in Europe. Unsurprisingly, this scheme has been debunked. Compounding these factors, is the detrimental environmental impacts of fur, and any claims to the contrary have been discredited.



Arctic fox pelts. © FOUR PAWS

### Futile Welfare Certifications

Cruelty is entrenched into all aspects of the fur industry, from the housing conditions to the slaughter practices, rendering welfare certification or regulation futile.

<sup>130</sup> Fur Free Retailer, <https://furfreeretailer.com/>.

<sup>131</sup> Care for the Wild International, FUN FUR? A report on the Chinese fur industry.

<sup>132</sup> ACTAsia, China’s fur trade and its position in the global fur industry, July 2019.

Battery cages, in particular, are increasingly recognised as grossly controverting animal welfare. Almost two decades ago, the EU Commission's scientific committee on animal health and welfare criticised the conditions on fur farms<sup>133</sup>.

Attempts at welfare certification are disingenuous, as cruelty is ingrained in the industry, and the voluntary certification attempted in Europe does not even begin to address the fundamental aspects of animal welfare, such as freedom to move and freedom from suffering<sup>134</sup>.

In the voluntary 'Welfur' certification, only one system is allowed – intensive cage-systems, precisely the system that has been routinely criticised as responsible for great suffering. Further, it does not address major welfare issues – such as the unacceptable reality that the animals abused for fur are wild, undomesticated species who are forced to live in wire cages for life, systems clearly unable to meet their natural behaviour needs or instincts.

'Welfur' is voluntary self-regulation, where the industry commissions a company to carry out audits, and there are proven financial ties between those auditing companies and the fur industry<sup>135</sup>. Predictably, an independent assessment by scientists found that 'Welfur' cannot deliver a welfare guarantee for animals<sup>136</sup>.

Tellingly, when Germany and Sweden (for certain animals) implemented stricter welfare standards, fur farming ceased to be profitable<sup>137</sup>.

Systems where animal abuse is inherent cannot be reformed<sup>138</sup>, and undercover footage continually reveals the dismal conditions and violations of even minimal standards in Europe and North America<sup>139</sup>.

## Environmental Destruction

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Claims that fur is sustainable have been debunked and the fur industry has been penalised several times for misleading advertisements making claims of sustainability<sup>140</sup>.

Fur begins to decompose once it is stripped from the animal and harsh chemicals are used to stop the putrefying process. This is known as fur 'dressing' and is similar to leather tanning.

<sup>133</sup> European Commission's Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare.

<sup>134</sup> Heather Pickett and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'Welfur', 2015; Fur Free Alliance, CERTIFIED CRUEL Why Welfur fails to stop the suffering of animals on fur farms, 2020.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Heather Pickett and Stephen Harris, The case against fur factory farming: A scientific review of animal welfare standards and 'Welfur', September 2015.

<sup>137</sup> In Germany: Law for the implementation of Union law regulations on bans and restrictions with regard to trade in certain animal products as well as on keeping and sale bans in certain cases (Animal Products Trade Prohibition Act - TierErzHaVerbG); in Sweden: Animal Welfare Act 2019:66, Regulations and general guidelines of the Swedish Board of Agriculture on the rearing and keeping of fur animals (2019).

<sup>138</sup> Andrew Linzey, The Ethical Case Against Fur Farming, A statement by an international group of academics, including ethicists, philosophers and theologians, 2002.

<sup>139</sup> There have been numerous investigations by various organisations. Just two examples include: Humane Society International Australia, <https://hsi.org.au/index.php/newsroom/shocking-investigation-shows-foxes-beaten-and-skinned-alive-for-fur-that-could-be-sold-to-unaware-australian-consumers>; Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfreenyc.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.

<sup>140</sup> For instance, Advertising Standards Authority, <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/European-Fur-Breeders-Association-A11-164462.html>; Press Release Faux Fur Institute, [https://www.24presse.com/fur\\_industry\\_s\\_advertising\\_declared\\_misleading-9920787.html/](https://www.24presse.com/fur_industry_s_advertising_declared_misleading-9920787.html/).

A whole host of hazardous and carcinogenic chemicals are used in fur production and maintenance.

From known carcinogens, such as formaldehyde and Chromium VI<sup>141</sup>, which can also damage the human nervous system and the kidneys<sup>142</sup>, to various other chemicals that can affect hormones and the respiratory system<sup>143</sup>. These chemicals are hazardous to workers, the environment, and consumers, with several studies conducted in Europe and China reporting toxic levels of chemicals in fur garments for both adults and children<sup>144</sup>.

Similarly, studies that have addressed the environmental impact of the fur industry refute claims that fur is 'green' or preferable to other textiles<sup>145</sup>. Fur is far more damaging to the environment in comparison to other textiles, including synthetics<sup>146</sup>.

Fur farms release significant amounts of animal manure into local waterways, contributing to nitrogen and phosphorus pollution<sup>147</sup>, and eutrophication<sup>148</sup>.

Fur farming also contributes to GHG emissions due to animal feed and waste, and because it consumes significant quantities of energy and releases GHGs during production.

It is estimated that to produce a real fur coat from farmed animals demands over 15 times more energy than that needed to produce a fake fur garment<sup>149</sup>.

For each kilogram of factory-farmed mink fur, almost 150 kilograms of carbon dioxide is produced, which is over five times higher than other energy intensive textiles like wool<sup>150</sup>.

Even when so-called longevity of fur coats is factored in, it still does not result in lesser environmental impact in comparison to faux fur<sup>151</sup>. There is also the significant environmental impact of maintaining fur garments, such as storage<sup>152</sup>, further countering so-called benefits of longevity. Advertisements claiming that fur is environmentally friendly or is produced under good welfare standards have been prohibited in several countries<sup>153</sup>.

<sup>141</sup> IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, Formaldehyde, 2-Butoxyethanol and 1-tert-Butoxypropan-2-ol, Volume 88, 2006; IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, Chromium, Nickel and Welding, Volume 49, 1990 OR <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=61&toxid=17>.

<sup>142</sup> ACTAsia and FOUR PAWS, Toxic Fur: A Global Issue Research in China, 2018; Poison in Furs Report II – Questionable Chemicals in Fur Products, 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011. The Fur Trade Federation's (ITFF) commissioned report admits that a conclusion on whether fur is more environmentally friendly than synthetics cannot be made.

<sup>146</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011.

<sup>147</sup> The impacts of the mink industry on freshwater lakes in Nova Scotia: An overview of concerns, 2011.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Marisa Korteland, Maartje Sevenster, The environmental impact of mink fur production, 2011.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Marijn Bijleveld, Natural mink fur and faux fur products, an environmental comparison Delft, CE Delft, June 2013.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> For instance, Advertising Standards Authority, <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/European-Fur-Breeders-Association-A11-164462.html>; Press Release Faux Fur Institute, [https://www.24presse.com/fur\\_industry\\_s\\_advertising\\_declared\\_misleading-9920787.html/](https://www.24presse.com/fur_industry_s_advertising_declared_misleading-9920787.html/).





Aerial view of fur farms in Nova Scotia. © Jo-Anne McArthur | #MakeFurHistory | We Animals Media

Overall, great strides are being made to improve the sustainability of a wide range of materials and develop new ones, from plant-based fibres through to synthetics<sup>154</sup>. There are both new technologies and new eco fibres being developed or already entering the market with potential for widespread use. But there are no such viable options for fur because factors such as feed, manure and dressing of fur and the associated pollution cannot be eliminated.

## Introduced Species

Animals escaping from fur farms has resulted in populations of introduced species, and more cruelty when those introduced species are then culled<sup>155</sup>.

Spain specifically enacted laws to prevent mink escaping and this resulted in preventing new farms from being built<sup>156</sup>.

While fur farms exist, however, there is always the danger of fur farm escapees causing further damage.

<sup>154</sup> Fashion at a Crossroads Greenpeace Report, 2017; Jane Wood, Bioinspiration in Fashion—A Review, 2019.

<sup>155</sup> Laura Bonesia and Santiago Palazonb, The American mink in Europe: Status, impacts, and control, 2007.

<sup>156</sup> Law 42/2007, of December 13, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-21490>; Royal Decree 1628/2011, of November 14, which regulates the Spanish list and catalog of invasive alien species, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2011-19398>.

A Danish study estimated that 80% of free-roaming mink were fur farm escapees<sup>157</sup> and there have been similar findings in Poland<sup>158</sup>. Other species used in fur farming such as raccoon dogs<sup>159</sup> are also on Europe's most invasive species list.

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<sup>157</sup> Mette Hammershøj et al., Danish free-ranging mink populations consist mainly of farm animals: Evidence from microsatellite and stable isotope analyses, 2005.

<sup>158</sup> Mikołaj Iwański and Tomasz Marcinkowski, PhD –The Attitudes of Local Residents towards Fur Farms in Poland.

<sup>159</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017 1263 of July 2017.

## 8. THE WILDLIFE TRADE AND THE FUR INDUSTRY

The fur industry perpetuates the highly damaging notion that products from wild animals are luxury items. This notion of wild animal parts as luxury items and status symbols is a major driver of wildlife trade – it spurs on the demand for such products and the trade in fur from animals caught in the wild.

Fur trapping not only harms target animals, it harms and kill endangered animals<sup>160</sup>, but because there is an absence of monitoring and reporting requirements, the scale of the problem is unknown.

Despite there not being comprehensive research and a lack of monitoring requirements, the preliminary knowledge we have indicates it is a widespread problem, as demonstrated by the Fur Trapping Incidents Database<sup>161</sup> and by estimates that between 3 and 10 unintended animals might be caught for every target species<sup>162</sup>.

Further, animals trapped unintentionally are not included in trapping numbers, resultantly, the death toll for animals trapped is higher than currently estimated.

The fur trade has a deplorable record of causing animals to become threatened or extinct, for instance historically the fur trade was one of the driving factors for koalas becoming an endangered species<sup>163</sup>. More recently, the trade caused the lynx to become a threatened species<sup>164</sup>. And generally hunting various animals for fur has been a major factor in their extinction or endangerment<sup>165</sup>.

In Australia, tens of millions of kangaroos have been killed in the last decades<sup>166</sup> - it is the largest on land commercial slaughtering of wildlife globally<sup>167</sup>. Kangaroos are killed for their meat, skins and fur, and this brutal slaughter is further spurred on by myths of overpopulation and environmental damage<sup>168</sup>.

The long-term impact of these killings on kangaroo populations is unknown<sup>169</sup>, particularly following the devastating bushfires of 2019/2020. The trade also poses serious risks for zoonosis due to the interference with habitats and the unsanitary treatment of dead kangaroos.

<sup>160</sup> Fur Trapping Incidents Database, <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapping-incidents-search/>; American Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Division, Literature Review on the Welfare Implications of Leghold Trap Use in Conservation and Research, 2008.

<sup>161</sup> Fur Trapping Incidents Database, <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapping-incidents-search/>.

<sup>162</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Division, Literature Review on the Welfare Implications of Leghold Trap Use in Conservation and Research, 2008.

<sup>163</sup> Fur Free NYC, <https://www.furfreeusa.com/blog/fur-industry-lies>.

<sup>164</sup> Canada Lynx, <https://www.endangered.org/canada-lynx/#>.

<sup>165</sup> Animal Welfare Institute, Endangered Species Handbook.

<sup>166</sup> Kangaroo and wallaby statistics archive, <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-trade/natives/kangaroo-wallaby-statistics>. No statistics post-2012.

<sup>167</sup> Dror Ben-Ami et al, The ends and means of the commercial kangaroo industry: an ecological, legal and comparative analysis, Think Tank for Kangaroos, University of Technology, 2011.

<sup>168</sup> Dror Ben-Ami et al, Advocating kangaroo meat: towards ecological benefit or plunder? Think Tank for Kangaroos, 2010; Penny Olsen and Tim Low, Situation Analysis Report Update on Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Kangaroos in the environment, Including Ecological and Economic Impact and Effect of Culling, Prepared for the Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel, 2006.

<sup>169</sup> Dror Ben-Ami et al, The ends and means of the commercial kangaroo industry: an ecological, legal and comparative analysis, Think Tank for Kangaroos, University of Technology, 2011; Is there a need to kill kangaroos or wallabies?, RSPCA knowledgebase, <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/is-there-a-need-to-kill-kangaroos-or-wallabies/>.

There are grave welfare issues, as slaughtering takes place at night and in remote regions<sup>170</sup>. Joeys are often not killed by the first blow<sup>171</sup> and hundreds of thousands of kangaroos are not killed by the first shot<sup>172</sup>. Orphaned at-foot joeys are left to die of starvation or exposure to the elements<sup>173</sup>, with an estimated 800,000 to 855,000 dependent joeys perishing annually as a consequence of commercial shooting alone<sup>174</sup>.

## Regulation of wildlife and fur

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Fur farming and trapping are inexorably cruel, inflicting immense suffering and appalling deaths on animals for the purpose of fashion and textiles.

Any form of regulation essentially sanctions brutal capture, rearing and killing practices. Implementing bans in destination countries like Australia is integral to reducing demand, which is an essential factor for both ending the cruel fur industry and combatting wildlife trade.

Regulating an inherently cruel industry conveys conflicting messages about the acceptability of mistreating animals and wildlife trading. The distinction between protected species and species who can be traded is easily distorted, particularly as the so-called legal and illegal trades intersect<sup>175</sup>. And the animals suffer just the same whether they are allowed to be traded or not.

Bans are also more effective at reducing the threat of zoonotic diseases, both due to farming and due to the interference and destruction of habitats caused by taking animals from the wild. It is now well known that intruding into habitats is a major factor behind zoonotic disease emergence and spread.

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<sup>170</sup> Keely Boom et al, The role of inspections in the commercial kangaroo industry, 2013.

<sup>171</sup> Steven R. McLeod and Trudy M. Sharp, Improving the humaneness of commercial kangaroo harvesting Report No 13/116, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> Dror Ben-Ami et al, The ends and means of the commercial kangaroo industry: an ecological, legal and comparative analysis, Think Tank for Kangaroos, University of Technology, 2011: estimates of miss-shoot kangaroos 4-40% depending on assessment of carcasses; Kangaroo Shooting Code compliance, 2002, <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/51748/20050829-0000/www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/publications/kangaroo-report/field-inspections.html#423>.

<sup>173</sup> What happens to joeys when female kangaroos are shot?, RSPCA knowledgebase, <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-happens-to-joeys-when-female-kangaroos-are-shot/>.

<sup>174</sup> Dror Ben-Ami et al, The ends and means of the commercial kangaroo industry: an ecological, legal and comparative analysis, Think Tank for Kangaroos, University of Technology, 2011.

<sup>175</sup> OECD, Illicit Trade: Converging Criminal Networks, OECD Reviews of Risk Management Policies, 2016.



## 10. CONCLUSION

**As a global animal welfare organisation, FOUR PAWS is fundamentally opposed to the killing of animals for their fur. As shown in this report, the breeding of fur animals as well as trapping them in the wild to produce fashion or luxury items is cruel, unethical, and unnecessary. The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the serious pandemic risks related to fur, for animals and people.**

The past two years have shown that fur farms pose significant threats of zoonotic disease outbreaks. COVID-19 has been devastating fur farms across Europe and North America, continuing to spread to new fur farming regions.

Conditions on fur farms and fur trapping create the dangerous and unsanitary conditions, ideal for the emergence and spread of zoonosis.

This is not a trade that can be regulated nor improved to meet community standards. The fur trade is out of touch with modern consumer expectations, and no longer has a social license to operate.

The fight to bring this horrendous industry to an end has been fought for decades and is increasingly gaining momentum, with most European countries banning fur farming and more joining the movement. US states and cities are enacting trade bans, and Israel will become the first country in the world to ban fur sales.

Australian consumers have shown public support for an end to the sale of cruel fur products. What's more, Australian consumers are at risk of being misled into purchasing decisions which do not align with their values, as demonstrated by repeated evidence of mislabelling of fur products available for purchase within Australia.

It is time for Australia to act.

There is progress in NSW and Victoria but at present, there is a lack of laws on fur use and sales both federally and at state level. As such, both states must lead the way in banning fur and fur sales in Australia.

**Our compassionate society can no longer tolerate the serious pandemic risks, animal abuses and environmental devastation of the fur trade. Australia must end its ongoing support of fur and join the fur free future.**

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