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Hawkesbury veterinarian looks to government for reform in the pet food industry

[Finn Coleman](#)

Hawkesbury veterinarian Dr Tom Lonsdale has continued his fight against junk pet food, wanting improved pet nutrition and more insightful veterinary teaching in Australia.

Dr Lonsdale believes that there is a junk pet food/veterinary alliance and has been protesting and campaigning for reform in the veterinarian industry since 1991.



Fighting: Dr Tom Lonsdale outside his Bligh Park veterinary clinic where they advise the use of clean, natural and unprocessed food for pets. Picture: Supplied.

The most recent step he took, was to write a letter to the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud - and other Federal Members - informing them of the deep concerns he holds about the Pet Food Review Working Group.

"Every senator and federal member in parliament has received a letter that I sent to Minister Littleproud," said Dr Lonsdale.

"Everyone knows that humans can't sustain a diet of industrial, highly processed foods. For carnivores, with their special dietary imperatives, the consequences are arguably much worse.

"They need to rip, tear and chew to be stimulated, and to keep their teeth and gums healthy.

"The stimulation from this, releases chemicals that gives a natural high, which conditions the immune and digestive systems.

"The processed food, dry or wet, is unnatural and inferior. The degree of processing is ridiculous and the body is forced to work overtime to deal with the toxins and everything that is in the junk food."

- [Dogs and cats need to eat raw meaty bones - vet](#)

The letter to the Minister outlines what Dr Lonsdale believes are the multiple shortcomings of the Pet Food Review Working Group, that was set-up to review and assess the pet food industry.

One big issue he raised was the compromising of the Pet Food Review Working Group due to the involvement of the multinational pet-food makers.

"The regulators have been hoodwinked into doing the bidding of Mars Inc., Nestle and Colgate-Palmolive," said Dr Lonsdale.

"People don't know the issue of feeding the processed stuff until they see what an animal is like without it.

"They need to see the difference of the before and after because it really is astonishing."

Some of the issues raised about the Working Group in the letter include:

- It makes the assumption that pets must be fed industrial, highly processed products
- It declines to specify what an optimum diet for domestic carnivores, as dictated by nature, might look like
- It declines to examine the evidence that industrial, highly processed products devastate the health of pets
- It focuses on relatively minor matters of product improvement acceptable to the multinational corporations
- It bends to the needs and dictates of the multinational corporations and their veterinary allies
- It provides government validation and thus a propaganda vehicle for the manufacturers of harmful dietary products

Dr Lonsdale owns and operates Bligh Park Pet Health Centre, where he says everyone who works there and that visits them follow the practices that he has been fighting for.

"We only see a pet once," he said. "We see them once and the owners learn about the correct nutrition and food they need to be giving their pets and they don't need to come back.

"We have a lot of welfare groups who need us to do work ... we have our own patients but not many."

Dr Lonsdale is hoping that after nearly three decades of campaigning they will ultimately see a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the matter.

But until then he wants Minister Littleproud to answer questions surrounding the Pet Food Review Working Group.

"It appears that the government Working Group suffers from layers of regulatory capture," said Tom.

"They are primarily serving the interests of pet-food makers and vets at the expense of pets, pet owners and the wider community.

"We want to know if the Government will review the membership and conduct of the Pet Food Review Working Group.

"If they will take the necessary steps to investigate and resolve the widespread issues of animal cruelty and fraud arising from government neglect and regulatory capture.

"And will the Government examine the scientific and medical issues free from sponsorship and affiliation with the pet food industry."

<https://www.hawkesburygazette.com.au/story/6841818/lonsdale-continues-fight-for-better-food-for-pets/>