

**The Secretariat**  
**Legislative Council, Economy and Infrastructure Committee**  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

**By email only to:** [aglawsinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:aglawsinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr Nazih Elasmr

### **Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture Inquiry Hearing**

The Law Institute of Victoria ('LIV') wishes to clarify its position following its appearance before the Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture ('the Inquiry'), on 23 September 2019.

The LIV is aware that for efficacy, additional weight may be given to verbal testimony at the hearing. Therefore, we seek to further clarify our position to ensure they accurately reflect the recommendations made in our submission to the Inquiry. During a lively discussion between Co-Chair of the LIV Criminal Law Section, Mel Walker and the Inquiry, the Parliamentary Committee explored with Ms Walker the idea of where CCTV cameras would be placed. Ms Walker responded:

*'And so our proposition would be that the CCTV footage covers those particular areas, such as the housing of and where animals are dealt with on that property, and also with transport. I accept that farms are very expansive, but I believe that it could properly be restricted to those particular areas.'*<sup>1</sup>

Upon reviewing the Hansard transcript, the LIV considers that our verbal commentary does not provide the clarity, nor reflect the context of our initial submission. In reviewing our verbal evidence, we believe it could be construed that the LIV position was applicable to *all* farms. This is not, nor ever has been, our position, nor Ms Walker's intent in answering the questions put to her at the hearing.

The LIV wishes to bring the Committee's attention back to our initial recommendation. In researching its submission, the LIV noted the primary motive for trespassing expressed by animal activists was with the intent of shedding light on what they perceive to be a lack of transparency in the primary production industry.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee, *Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture Hansard Transcript*, 22

The LIV believes that unconscionable conduct in the industry is absolutely an exception and not the norm. However, in recent years there have been a number of examples of footage exhibiting gross misconduct in the process of slaughtering animals, which results in widespread damage to the image of the primary production industry as a whole. The perceived unethical treatment of animals in the primary production industry is increasingly one of the leading motivations cited by people who have chosen to move away from the consumption of meat products.

The LIV submission, submitted to the Inquiry on 8 August 2019, recommended that Victoria emulate the precedent set in the English regulations titled *The Mandatory Use of Closed Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses (England) Regulations 2018 ('the Regulations')*.<sup>2</sup> As the name of the Regulations indicate, the cameras are to be installed and operate exclusively within slaughterhouses. The LIV submission further explains that the Regulations are to ensure compliance with the *Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 (the WATKR)*.<sup>3</sup> The use of CCTV systems on slaughterhouse kill floors would require a similar affordable system to that which most corner stores across the nation use.

It is the LIV's view that this is a balanced and reasonable recommendation that helps bolster the primary production industry's defence that their industry is transparent and that there are adequate mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with industry regulations. In turn, such transparency removes the stated primary motive of animal activists to trespass.

The LIV in making this submission understands that farms are often expansive and that it would be impractical and excessively costly for cameras to be installed across these properties. Further, the LIV submission does not call for CCTV to be on all farms as there are a substantial number of farms that do not operate as slaughterhouses. In fact, LIV members report that almost no farms operate as slaughterhouses. Slaughtering is generally done at abattoirs.

Our members who informed this submission are active legal practitioners representing clients across Victoria, in the CBD, suburbs and in rural and remote areas. Our local lawyers work closely with their clients, including farmers, to provide the best legal advice applicable to their needs.

I hope this provides clarity as to the LIV's position. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me or Gemma Hazmi, General Manager of Policy on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



**Adam Awty**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Law Institute of Victoria

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<sup>2</sup> Law Institute of Victoria, *Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture*, 21 (Web Page, 8 August 2019)  
<[https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Animal\\_rights\\_activism/Submissions/S424\\_-\\_Law\\_Institute\\_of\\_Victoria\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Animal_rights_activism/Submissions/S424_-_Law_Institute_of_Victoria_Redacted.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 22-23