

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 6 August 2019 12:30 PM
To: aglawsinquiry
Subject: Submission: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

I [REDACTED] kindly request that this version of my submission to Parliament, replace the original version submitted on Friday 2 August, and that my name and contact details remain withheld from public view.

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Animal liberation whistleblowers (including investigators and rescuers) pride themselves on acting non-violently at all times. Their intention is to expose the inherent violence inflicted upon animals by the agricultural and related sectors. As such, investigations by animal liberation whistleblowers are in the public interest, as currently agricultural standard practices are hidden from public view and lack transparency.

Animal liberation whistleblowers pose no threat to farmers or their families, including their children, as their primary concern are the animals confined in agricultural operations and under no circumstances do they approach, nor enter, the homes of farmers. Additionally, animal liberation whistleblowers pose no threat to biosecurity as they wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to mitigate spread of disease, and unlike those in the agricultural sector, do not move from one farm to another. Investigations into the animal agricultural industry have spanned decades and not a single disease outbreak has ever been attributed to the actions of animal liberation whistleblowers. The assertion that animal liberation whistleblowers pose a biosecurity risk or a threat to farmers, is false and misleading and is utilised by the agricultural industry and related stakeholders, to garner public support.

Conversely, farmers and slaughterhouse workers are those who exhibit violent tendencies, having killed and injured numerous whistleblowers during their struggle to protect animals. Tom Worby and Jill Phipps are to name a few. In addition, multiple whistleblower exposés have revealed animals crammed into filthy ammonia filled sheds, forced to live in their own urine and excrement. These sheds are infested with rodents, cockroaches and insects, carrying all manner of disease. The farming industry allows for the transportation of animals from multiple farms, "stock" yards, and slaughterhouses and this movement of animals between facilities poses a far greater risk to biosecurity.

In the name of transparency, CCTV cameras operating 24 hours a day, should be installed within every farm and slaughterhouse (or similar), and be readily accessible by the public. The public has the right to know that which is hidden behind closed doors. Armed with this information they will make informed choices as to whether they continue supporting the animal agricultural industry, or denounce it. The public will quickly realise, these violent practices are inherent throughout the industry, and not isolated incidences as suggested by the industry, and this is the likely motivator to introduce repressive laws that are aimed at silencing dissent.

The Aussie Farms map is a contentious issue between industry bodies/government and animal liberation whistleblowers. The contact details of farmers are readily available on the internet and the Aussie Farm's map simply collates this publicly available information. Furthermore, whistleblowers have been investigating the animal agricultural industry for decades, without the necessity of this recently developed map, so any suggestion that the map intends to incite trespass is false and misleading. The Aussie Farms map is an interactive tool available for the public to easily access information and footage uncovered during investigations, hence it's primary aim is transparency. The fact is that any censorship of this information, is intended to prevent the public from accessing footage, that is standard industry practice and important from a public interest perspective. These investigations have the potential to impact

consumer behaviour to denounce these industries and hence, the motivation for suppressing the release of such information is not in the public interest.

Animals are not units of production, commodities, inanimate objects to be traded and sold to the highest bidder. There is no way to humanely slaughter an animal that does not want to die. They fight, resist and rebel and they do not willingly go towards the slaughterer's knife. This knowledge is in the public's interest. The animal agricultural sector itself recognises and acknowledges animals as sentient beings, yet kills them by the billions, yearly. Furthermore, there have been cases where legal personhood of animals and their sentience has been sought and recognised globally. In a landmark ruling, the Indian state of Uttarakhand has recently accorded the status of "legal person or entity" to animals. Australia and its elected representatives must move in this direction.

A civilised society prides itself on non violence. This must extend to include the invisible class of beings, bred into existence by the billions, simply to be exploited and killed for profit. In addition, the animal agricultural sector not only harms animals, it also harms the environment and human beings. Recently, a report released by the Ministry of Health in New Zealand, encourages plant-based eating as a key strategy for reducing our national health sector's carbon footprint.

Animal ethics is not a new concept. For thousands of years people have opposed the exploitation and killing of animals. Renowned figures such as Pythagoras and Leonardo Da Vinci, whose names have lived on throughout history, recognised that killing animals is an injustice.

Leonardo Da Vinci says "A day will come in which men will look upon an animal's murder the same way they look today upon a man's murder." Pythagoras, a pioneer of ethical veganism, taught his students the importance of animal ethics. He believed animals had a soul. Pythagoras states : "As long as Man continues to be the ruthless destroyer of lower living beings, he will never know health or peace. For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love." Perhaps the time has come for society who revere Pythagoras and Da Vinci for their mathematical and philosophical prowess, to also consider and embrace their position on animal liberation.

In a democratic nation the right to express dissent against injustice is a human right. This is evidenced in articles, 9 to 11, of the 1950 European Convention on human rights, amongst many others. There is no greater act of violence, than killing. This includes the killing of animals. The time has finally come for society to choose between justice and the injustice of oppressing and killing animals against their will, in order to earn the right to be referred to as civilised. Furthermore, if draconian laws are implemented to stifle the actions of animal liberation whistleblowers, they will have far reaching implications, as their intention is to quell dissent in many other whistleblower spheres. In the US ag-gag laws have been challenged in a court of law. On July 22, 2013, the ALDF, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and others filed their first lawsuit challenging ag-gag laws on constitutional grounds, in Utah. In August 2015, Idaho's ag-gag law was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. District Court for Idaho, and the decision was upheld on appeal. The outcome of this lawsuit should serve as a warning that if ag-gag laws are to be implemented in Australia, similar lawsuits will ensue.

In closing, democracy is built on equality and underpins the right to express dissent against injustice. Killing billions of sentient beings is unjust. Therefore, the actions of animal liberation whistleblowers must be permitted to continue in a democratic nation such as Australia, unimpeded and without persecution.