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From: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 19 July 2019 6:14 PM
To: aglawsinquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Dr Sue Schofield
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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The bottom line with intensive animal agriculture is profit making. These businesses are profit driven. While that in itself is not a problem...it is the methods by which this is achieved that IS the issue. Animal cruelty in this industry is endemic no matter what species of animals are involved. Profit making by those involved blinds these business owners to the appalling suffering of all these animals. It is interesting that there is a longstanding difference in legislation which separates .. allows....and even supports ...shameful acts of cruelty to agricultural animals but for which the perpetrators of these same acts would be prosecuted if they were carried out against a domestic Animal (Pet) ...or our wildlife.

Obviously, if cruelty could be avoided to the agricultural animals - with the same level of profit...I am sure this would have already happened...BUT it has not! WE must ask WHY NOT!!

Animal activists and whistleblowers are motivated by much more than profit. They are compassionate individuals who see a wrong and try to right it. They know that ALL animals...and certainly those in agriculture...are SENTIENT. They can not just be ignored because they are considered as non thinking/feeling "things", "commodities" or just a \$\$\$\$\$. The greater public has a right to know that all these animals suffer...like they do! A 2019 report titled "Australia's Shifting Mindset on Animal Welfare" - commissioned by the federal Dept of Agriculture and Water Resources)..found that 95% of responders viewed farm animal welfare with concern and 91% wanted reforms to address this.

Knowingly causing direct suffering to farm animals is Reprehensible by all parties concerned!

Animal activists risk a lot to bring the information of cruelty to light and public scrutiny.

They are not interested in harming the farmer's property...let alone his home or his family...and to date...THIS HAS NEVER OCCURRED! The proposal by some in the industry that they have been harmed or threatened by animal activists is a total fabrication! There have been NO VIABLE REPORTS of AGGRAVATED TRESPASS.

I have,however, seen footage of activists being threatened and a female activist's car being overturned into a ditch by farmers. That is criminal damage!

Activists have only ever entered properties where animal cruelty has been previously documented, often on multiple occasionswith no investigation or punitive action taken by governing bodies.

There has NEVER been a BIOSECURITY BREACH or event as a result of animal activists entering a property. There have been many as a result of the intensive manner of agricultural farming methods

including bird and swine flu epidemics .

If there is nothing to hide...what is the problem? Open the doors on factory farms and let the public see how animals are treated...and the often appalling conditions in which they are forced to live...until slaughter.

In 2016 a Productivity Commission report suggested the current process for setting standards for farm animal welfare does NOT ADEQUATELY value the benefits of animal welfare to the community...and it suggested the process for setting standards would be improved by the creation of a statutory body responsible for developing national farm animal welfare standards using rigorous science and evidence of community values for farm animal welfare.

In short,the proposal for essentially what are "AG-GAG laws" to prohibit...and criminalise...the activities of activists and whistleblowers from exposing animal cruelty is a shortsighted push by the National party to carry out "business as usual" in factory farms. Their claims of harrassment, threats and damage are just UNTRUE and are not supported by any EVIDENCE! Activists, on the other hand, have been subject to all these acts...by farmers...while trying to help suffering animals.

It is a truly unjust proposal...and I ask that it be overturned.

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File1:

File2:

File3: