



31 July 2019

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

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Submission - Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Rivalea Australia is one of the largest pork producers in Australia, producing approximately 15% of the national pork volume. Rivalea employs more than 1200 staff across the business, delivering high quality pork to consumers for over 40 years. While our head office is based in Corowa NSW, we operate farms throughout Victoria including birth to bacon units as well as contract grow out facilities, high value genetic herds and a boar stud. Approximately 32 % of Rivalea's breeding herd is based in Victoria, with the business employing 110 staff in this state directly responsible for pig production & animal welfare. The Victorian Pork Industry contributes significantly to the Victorian economy, with Rivalea alone contributing in excess of \$6 million annually in direct take home Victorian household incomes.

Rivalea operate a transparent farming enterprise and are proud of what we do. Rivalea is an accredited APIQ (Australian Pig Industry Quality Assurance Program) pork producer, with every Rivalea farm frequently and independently audited to ensure our operations comply with state and national standards. In addition to the frequent audits we open our farms to many visitors every year from all different backgrounds – school tours, customers, local community, respected animal welfare organisations, university researchers etc. Illegal animal activism activities pose a significant threat to our people, our pigs, our business and our communities.

Unauthorised trespass on Victorian pig farms has occurred on numerous occasions, with Rivalea farms and Meat Processing facilities amongst those impacted. Illegally obtained footage of all our Victorian farms appears on animal activist websites. Every individual incidence of illegal trespass on our farms poses a very real treat to the health and welfare of our pigs and the wellbeing of our people.

Existing strong biosecurity protocols (see **attachment**) are in place in our business to prevent the transfer of disease to our pigs. We have strong controls in place for all visitor, staff and material movements onto, within and between our farms. Activists enter our farms uncontrolled and illegally, likely breaking all our biosecurity protocols in the process. Trespass by activists onto our farms has the high potential to introduce diseases to the pigs. The impact of this is heightened if there is a delayed awareness of illegal trespass activity, potentially allowing diseases to spread throughout the individual farm, business and state through the movement of pigs, people, trucks or equipment. Illegal farm entry by animal activists and the stealing and keeping of pigs in unregistered facilities breaches the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

QUALITY + PEOPLE + INTEGRITY



The Victorian Work Health and Safety Act 2011 stipulates businesses have a primary duty of care for the safety of all workers and any other persons at the workplace, including visitors. Uncontrolled and illegal visitor entry risks injury to the visitor, injury to our people, and possible subsequent compensation claims against our business. We do not believe primary producers should carry this burden.

Rivalea take the wellbeing of our employees and their families very seriously. Many of our people work after hours and reside on our properties with their families. Our staff and families have the right to feel safe and free from confrontation and harassment from (activist) intruders. Our staff have experienced abuse in the form of verbal, physical and online abuse whilst carrying out their day to day, lawful activities.

The Victorian Government could improve protection for our people, pigs, business and community by:

- Prosecuting animal activists who trespass onto our farms and imposing significant penalties, including jail time, for those convicted;
- Ensuring quick response times from emergency services when illegal trespass activity occurs on our properties;
- Enhancing privacy laws for primary producers to deter animal activist organisations from publishing such material and to allow prosecution for breaches of privacy;
- Considering laws that enforce the removal of illegally obtained footage from online sources;
- Ensuring the Victorian Work Health and Safety Act protects primary producers from any subsequent injury/ other liability claims arising from illegal trespass activity.

Yours faithfully

MICK HEWAT
MANAGING DIRECTOR

KENTON SHAW
DIRECTOR & GENERAL MANAGER –
AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS