

The Secretary  
 Victorian Parliament's Economy  
 And Infrastructure Committee  
 Animal Activism on Victorian Agriculture  
 Parliament House, Spring Street  
 East Melbourne Vic 3002

**K KELLY  
 V ANGUS**

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29 July 2019

### **Submission into the Victorian Animal Activism Inquiry**

I, Vicki Standish, Director of Vicki Kelly Primary Production Pty Ltd, make this submission to you as an owner operator of a premium farming concern, Kelly Angus, located in the Victoria's Murrindindi Shire.

I am becoming increasingly concerned for the welfare of my staff due to the aggressive nature that the face of animal activism has assumed. From media accounts, activists appear to be extremely organised, militant and have little, if no concern, that they are trespassing on agricultural land and into the livelihoods of small business operators and their staff. They consider their actions to be above the law and have no concern whatsoever about the fear that they are generating within broader rural communities when they travel in aggressive packs and invade farms. They are using this fear to their advantage!

This threat is particularly damaging to the emotional health and welfare of my staff as they go about their daily activities. Fear that activists could directly approach staff going about their lawful business or that activist intruders could enter the property should they so choose, is particularly worrying to me as my staff often work alone and in remote areas.

As a business owner, I continue to actively grow my farming enterprise by employing local people and contractors. Whenever capital works are required, local contractors are retained wherever possible. My business also supports the local community with trade, sponsorship and other philanthropic activities. Adopting this community focussed approach by my business in lieu of outsourcing, is done at considerable cost to me. I do this as I consider that local community's support for small business is vitally important for both the financial and emotional welfare of smaller Victorian rural communities.

The threat of a biosecurity incidents and hazards introduced by activist intruders into my property puts at risk, not only my business enterprise and that of other local Yea farmers, but jeopardises our ability to undertake trade/transit within the immediate locale. It would also render my livestock valueless and any biosecurity threat would need to be quarantined. I am acutely aware that chances of a breach in our farm's biosecurity protocols is all but inevitable should trespassers enter sections of the farm without the proper authorisation. Further, any incident where the livestock were released into a public space would mean not only the chance of significant harm coming to my employees and livestock, but also any other party who might be in that immediate area.

The threat of attracting unwelcomed attention from animal activists has resulted in reducing our ability to advertise upcoming Field/Information Days and brings into question the issue of whether roadside signage/advertising is appropriate. This therefore significantly reduces our ability to conduct business, let alone grow our farming enterprise.

Along with similar farming enterprises who deal in premium livestock, maintaining animal welfare is our top priority as poorly treated livestock damage both our brand and our final product. This is not good for business. I believe this message needs to be more clearly and regularly conveyed by responsible authorities & the Victorian Government so that the message of militant activism is not the only voice being heard by members of the public.

Yours sincerely



Vicki Standish

Director

Vicki Kelly Primary Production PL

