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

Mr Sam McGrath  
[REDACTED]

**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. I am an Engineer who has worked in Water Resource Management within State Government and Rural Water Authorities and I welcome this inquiry.

1. a) the type and prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian farms and related industries, and the application of existing legislation;

In regards to the 'type' and 'prevalence' of unauthorised activity, the available evidence indicates that cruelty to animals is the most prevalent activity occurring on Victorian Farms. Sanctioned investigation of animal cruelty would undoubtedly reveal further evidence. The application of existing legislation for the prevention of animal cruelty relies on whistleblowers providing the information to authorities.

Evidence from last month: ABC News, Aug 2 2019 "Video footage allegedly reveals animal cruelty at illegal abattoir near Melbourne"; Weekly Times, July 9, 2019 "Mooroopna North farmer fined for animal cruelty";

1. b)  
the workplace health and safety and biosecurity risks, and potential impacts of animal activist activity on Victorian farms, to Victoria's economy and international reputation;

The inquiry should consider that there is a significant range of hygiene and biosecurity standards on Victorian farms. Farms complying with biosecurity and animal welfare are under no risk from animal activists causing breaches in biosecurity. Where this inquiry is pertinent are the facilities where whistleblowers have revealed biosecurity risks in the form of faeces, rodents, and in the worst cases rotting animals. Therefore, careful distinction must be made between the risks to the majority of farms and the risks to the facilities in question where non-compliances have already been identified in both biosecurity and animal welfare.

1. d) the civil or criminal liability of individuals and organisations who promote or organise participation in unauthorised animal activism activities;

There is a long history in Australia of whistleblowers revealing unlawful activity in various industries including the financial services, law enforcement and animal agriculture. Increasing the liability of whistleblowers would erode the culture of moral justice and protection of those who speak out,

1. f) provide recommendations on how the Victorian Government and industry could improve protections for farmers' privacy, businesses, and the integrity of our biosecurity system and animal welfare outcomes, whether through law reform or other measures

The only way to protect farm privacy, biosecurity and animal welfare is through transparency of slaughterhouse and other animal agriculture activities. A simple approach would eliminate the need for activist activities and protect farms who are doing the right thing.

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File1:

File2:

File3: