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

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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

Whistleblowers and rescuers enter farms/slaughterhouses, not for their own enjoyment, it is traumatising and dangerous for their mental health. They go in there because extreme animal cruelty may be (and has found to be) happening inside. They go in there because current legislation and enforcement of animal cruelty breaches is failing the animals and without them, no one will actually know what is happening.

Trespass, theft, damage to property, assault, (plus the civil offences of assault and battery) are all already sufficient offences and there does not need to be any further offences created. Farmers families are as safe under these laws as any other new laws.

Rescuers and whistleblowers do not enter premises to seek to harm or intimidate any humans who live or work on these farms or slaughterhouse, they go in there solely for the sake of the animals, to try to bring attention to their horrible suffering, and at other times to rescue them from this.

Australia's reputation for animal cruelty is already international. We already have the international community looking at us for our live export fails and why we haven't banned duck shooting and our horrible racing industry. These whistleblowers are doing the country a big favor by trying to get some practices enacted that will make us look like less of an embarrassment internationally around the way we treat animals. It is insulting to good humans and other animals to talk about the economy when making an inquiry into practices that expose cruelty. Alleviating cruelty to all animals should have no cost. When this cruelty is exposed, if there was a requirement to alleviate this, which has an economic cost to the farmer, that is necessary. We can not let these inhumane practices carry on.

In terms of health and safety and biosecurity, these places are already a risk and have very little biosecurity protection. There are bugs such as cockroaches crawling around everywhere, carcasses, faeces, rats, and cats running rife in these places. The idea that some whistleblowers and rescuers entering these premises at this point of the animal agriculture process is any kind of biosecurity risk is misleading and moot - the actual places ARE a biosecurity risk, and that is being exposed by these whistleblowers.

In relation to current legislation, whistleblowers and rescuers are no more of a risk to disease than the very existence of these very unhygienic places. Any legislation that is

being broken already has penalties attached, there is no need for further legislation to criminalise whistleblowers and rescuers. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 is the legislation that needs to be looked at and expanded to better protect animals in farms and slaughterhouses from the abuse that they experience. Chickens are locked in tiny cages their whole lives, chicks and ducklings are thrown alive into slaughterhouses, ducks are grown in conditions with no water to paddle in... they are DUCKS! Animals are slaughtered without proper stunning, so they are killed in painful, inhumane ways. Pigs are kept in sow stalls, unable to turn around, in the most horrendous conditions, then they are gassed in truly painful and horrific conditions. Farms are often incredibly unhygienic, with animals having to exist in their own faeces and live amongst the carcasses of deformed animals they share sheds with. The list goes on. The suffering in this industry is unacceptable and needs its own inquiry.

Individuals and organisations who promote or organise participation in unauthorised rescues or activities to expose animal cruelty are already covered by sufficient laws. There should be no further sanctions attached to individuals or organisations. Instead, there should be further investigation into and sanctions imposed on farmers or slaughterhouses who engage in activities which are cruel to animals. These could include, but not be limited to, compulsory opening of their gates to random inspections, compulsory CCTV in farms and slaughterhouses which is monitored by an inspectory body, including animals at farms and slaughterhouses in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, enacting mandatory codes for slaughterhouses and farms, as well as legally recognising the sentience of these animals.

The new laws enacted in NSW are draconian and will hinder the protection of the safety of all animals (including humans) which is a government's responsibility. The law should protect the most vulnerable. In this case, it is the animals. The huge majority of Australians want animals protected, are opposed to animal cruelty and would be horrified at what happens on some farms and slaughterhouses. The only current way for this to happen is for whistleblowers and rescuers to expose it.

Animal cruelty whistleblowers and rescuers shouldn't be further criminalised. Instead, a new system needs to be put in place which exposes the true cruelty in this industry. Standards must be tightened, mandatory codes must be implemented and enforced, including compulsory CCTV in farms and slaughterhouses and regular random inspections, and all animals must be legally recognised as sentient beings.

Watch a video of ducks in the animal agriculture industry here:

<https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/videos?id=acab32bf8c>. It is too big to attach. And there is much much more which can be found at <https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/>

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File1:

File2:

File3: