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Sent: Monday, 17 June 2019 2:56 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

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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All Australians have a right to conduct a business without fear of illegal trespass, persecution or illegal surveillance. This is even more important if a person's home and business are on the same property as is the case with farms.

Animal activist incursion on farms has raised the level of anxiety for farmers, those same farmers are already plagued with anxiety related to variable climatic factors, market and commodity price fluctuations, financial and personal issues. Farmers usually work alone or in a workplace where there are few companions, so are made to feel very vulnerable if under attack from activists.

In recent times, there has been a lot of angst created by the radical vegan activists' protest activities and the reporting about these has been prolific. Comments on social media posts relating to these activities and reports, from both sides of the argument, have been aggressive and disturbing. Judgments and penalties imposed on activists brought before the courts on charges of trespass and other charges have not met the expectations of those impacted by- or the target of- the vegan activist protests. The courts have not considered any of the breaches in terms of biosecurity, animal welfare or agricultural integrity system requirements and legislation. The agricultural community views this as short sighted and unjust. Legislation should be amended to protect farmers and food safety and ensure that trespass in this format is moved into the realm of a police prosecution rather than a civil case and penalties should reflect the seriousness of the trespass in terms of biosecurity, food safety, workplace health and safety and impacts on the mental health and well being of the agricultural sector. Animal activists equate to terrorists from the perspective of forcibly and with menace attempting to convert the community to their beliefs.

The agricultural community is being unfairly and unjustly portrayed by bigoted and ignorant animal activists whose core agenda is to remove all animals from the "dominion of man". The extrapolation of this ideal is that all domestic animals would be destroyed because they cannot be "put back into the wild" as they are exotic to Australia. This means their claims of being animal lovers are contradictory. Their claims of cruelty are, in general, disproportionate and unfounded. However, as in any industry I think there should be transparency and audits to ensure that all farmers meet the standards of best practice. To this end, I think

that more funding should be directed to increase the number of LPA random audits and expand the check list to ensure that agriculture can be demonstrated to be best practice and the few rogue farmers can be exposed and penalised to uphold the reputation of the majority in agriculture who treat their stock with the highest consideration for animal welfare.

Please act to protect Australian farmers, and in fact all persons associated with animals (pet owners, equine industry and pleasure horse owners, zoos, etc) because their livelihood, their persons and our community's food, fibre, companionship and entertainment is being held to ransom by ignorant radical animal activists.

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File1:

File2:

File3: