

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

We need transparency from agricultural industries, not repressive laws Dilan Fernando  
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### **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Recent reports show that a vast majority of Australians are concerned about how animals are treated, and almost all of them wish for the world to be better for animals. In light of this overwhelming public sentiment, we should be focusing on making Australia's agricultural industries more accountable for the wellbeing of Australia's animals, rather than introducing laws designed to repress those who advocate on their behalf.

Rescuers, investigators, whistleblowers and protesters play a crucial role in Australia's civic life:

1. They raise awareness of practices that are typically hidden from the Australian public, but which when revealed, pose critical moral questions about who we are and who we wish to be as nation. For instance, without investigators, the Australian public would still not know that the Australian egg industry grinds to death thousands of male chicks each day.
2. They ignite conversations designed to progress us as a nation. For instance, the protests across the country in April of this year had millions of Australians talking about animals in a way they had never done before, and many of those conversations concerned the morality of eating animals.
3. They provide care to animals when government bodies are unable to step in. Rescuers provide relief to suffering animals on a daily basis, and to condemn this would be to take an extremely harsh stance.

Simultaneously, these individuals do not seek to harm farm workers, and as far as I am aware, no farm workers have been harmed in the course of these advocates' actions. Indeed, as I understand it most, if not all, of the protests on agricultural properties take place at slaughterhouses and industrial feedlots, not at the doorsteps of farm workers' homes. In addition, I also understand that there has never been a biosecurity incident as a result of the work of animal advocates in Australia.

We live in a world where Australians are increasingly concerned about animals. In the meantime, animal agricultural industries still do not openly engage the public regarding how we can create a world that treats animals as individuals, not objects. The industries perpetuate an image of Australian farming being a paradise for animals, when in reality they suffer immensely and are killed against their will.

The Federal and State governments should therefore be focusing on opening a dialogue about transitioning farmers in an equitable manner towards a plant-based food system, and mandate that agricultural industries be transparent about how animals suffer in Australian agriculture, for instance by requiring that all agricultural facilities be fitted with CCTV cameras which stream footage to a public domain.

Australians want to do better for animals, and to instead focus on punishing animal advocates would be a gross betrayal of the public's moral inclinations. Let us be better as a nation - let us together create a world that is peaceful, compassionate and inclusive of our fellow animals.

Yours sincerely,  
Dilan Fernando

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File1:

File2:

File3: