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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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I am deeply concerned about the government's proposal to make things more difficult for people who are trying to expose animal cruelty in the agricultural industry and in Victoria in general.

Throughout history, the human species has relied on whistleblowers and justice-seekers to expose activities that in this century, are not acceptable. This is why women can vote, slavery is illegal etc.

Being a business person myself, I agree everyone has a right to get on with their business but it is not acceptable to cut corners at another being's expense to save money. As a person who lives a vegan lifestyle, I am very well aware of what happens in our agriculture and entertainment industry where animals are seen purely as a commodity. There are so many practices that are considered 'legal' and this does not make them morally right. Tail docking, shredding male chicks, using gas chambers to kill pigs, debeaking hens, the list goes on. We all know that when it comes to money-making, efficiency is king and many working in the animal agriculture industry don't truly care about the welfare of the animals in their charge. They do what they do according to legality and they do it with their bottom line clearly in focus. We have seen so many examples in the past few years where animal welfare has not been considered. Some of these are featured in the documentary "Dominion" though I know this is dismissed as propaganda - I do ask however how some of the scenes could possibly have been made up. The existence of this cruelty is denied by the industry and some in government. It is not in the industry's interests for consumers to know about such details as it could affect demand for their product.

Gathercole's Abattoir in Victoria <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6081583/Footage-shows-Australian-abattoir-worker-drop-kicking-dead-sheeps-head-pool-blood.html>

Gippsland Goat Farm - this farm blamed rescuers for their cafe shutting down when the truth is that many goats were displaying symptoms of Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE). This is a contagious, viral disease (similar to HIV in humans) and is incurable. I know the Department of Agriculture is trying to eradicate CAE because I had a 2 pet goats many years ago (that I bought from Chesterfield Farm in Ferntree Gully) and one of them had this. The only way of eradicating the disease is to cull and owners can't breed from

these goats. I was permitted to keep this goat (I was not breeding or milking) and she lived a shorter lifespan than is normal (for goats that are not slaughtered for meat) but her upkeep in medicine and care was expensive and she was just one goat! The other way of controlling the disease is to segregate does and kids at birth and test every 3 months. The Gippy Goat farm had I believe over 5,000 goats on their property and many of them were displaying obvious symptoms of CAE. The farm and cafe managers were allowing the public to move through their property (an obvious biohazard risk) and also consume products (CAE is transferred through bodily fluids such as milk) from their goats. When rescuers took affected animals from the property and the media story blew up, Gippy Goat cafe cried foul and blamed the rescuers, not the fact that they were operating a farm and cafe that was an obvious health risk to the public and other animals not to mention the lack of care for the affected goats they had.

Today I read in the paper about an illegal slaughterhouse in Koo Wee Rup.

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-02/video-footage-reveals-alleged-cruelty-at-illegal-slaughterhouse/11375854?](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-02/video-footage-reveals-alleged-cruelty-at-illegal-slaughterhouse/11375854?fbclid=IwAR07dZvXiXviyk8PLEC779IsJ2FIxxwTwtgHoLUJhFmtyvFN6F29XIM9s4)

This is an absolute case-in-point about why we need people to be able to blow the whistle on these places of horror. And if we think that these home operations of animal abuse are not common, then consider that we have a high proportion of immigrants from countries where slaughtering animals in the backyard is common practice. I know for a fact that this still goes on when some of them come to Australia. I remember when I was at University in 2017, a migrant from Mauritius who lived in Dandenong, telling me in gory detail about how he and his Dad frequently slaughter goats in their back yard for family celebrations. I know that is a different issue but the government should be aware of it. We are naive to think it's not happening around Australia especially when you can buy livestock easily here (from places like Chesterfield Farm).

Most Australians don't agree with cruelty to animals. The 2019 report, AUSTRALIA'S SHIFTING MINDSET ON ANIMAL WELFARE commissioned by the Federal Dept of Agriculture suggests that 95% of the people they interviewed for the study, were concerned about animal welfare and 91% wanted animal agriculture's approach to welfare reformed.

We have strict laws to protect our native animals and our domestic pets, why are laws not in place to afford the same protection to animals we class as livestock? Why are farm animals exempt from the protection of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act? WHY? As outlined in the 2016 Productivity Commission report, I am very much in favour of having a statutory agency that directly oversees national farm animal welfare standards using strict science and evidence of the values that the community places on animal welfare.

I am also in favour of having mandatory CCTV in ALL places where animals are housed and slaughtered.

Last but not least, I am thankful for 'the map' that was produced by Aussie Farms. I have used it to make 2 personal consumer decisions. I am quite frankly disgusted by the hype being put out by the Federal Agriculture Minister and the industry about how vegan activists are stalking their farms and threatening their children. It's almost laughable if it were not so insulting!

I am also disgusted by the use of the word 'terrorist' used to describe peaceful people who are trying to protect animals! The use of this word by the Prime Minister (quite frankly he should be ashamed of himself) and other members of federal and state government is an absolute and utter insult to anyone who has suffered at the hands of real terrorists that threaten our country, our civilisation and our peace. How dare they compare non-violent action with terrorism. How dare they!

Lastly, I would like the Parliament of Victoria to know that I am not a hippy, I am not unemployed. I wear business suits when I have meetings, I am educated, I don't smoke mind-altering substances and I am a vegan animal advocate. Governments need to

recognise that the demand for vegan products is increasing and that just because people want to see the welfare of other species counted and their commodification stopped, does not make someone radical.

Thank you.

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File2:

File3: