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

Ms Laura Murphy
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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To Whom It May Concern,

I have been following animal rights groups online, primarily through social media, for a number of years. I regularly watch and share videos and articles showing breaches of animal welfare standards and unethical practices in the agricultural industry.

In regards to point 1b in the terms of reference, it is my belief that this type of activism does not damage a single company, industry or state's reputation (even if it ought to), but rather that it has resulted in a shift in consciousness and behaviour: firstly, by consumers who are making more considered choices about where their agricultural produce (e.g. provenance, welfare standards, and organic/non-GMO), and secondly, by (small-scale) farmers to capitalise on this burgeoning market through promoting their ethical credentials.

In regards to points 1a and 1c in the terms of reference, it would seem to me that animal rights activists who breach other legislations are punished accordingly (e.g. trespassing, damage to property, libel etc). Whereas farmers – or more often than not their suppliers towards the middle-to-end of the chain such as abattoirs, shearers, and exporters – are regularly being exposed for major breaches of animal welfare standards, only because of the actions of whistleblowers and/or stealth investigatory tactics used by Animal Rights groups such as Animals Australia and the Animal Justice Party. I am thankful that they exist and that their important work is shining a light on dodgy practices in the agricultural industry, and in no way feel that it diminishes the reputation or gratitude that myself and other ordinary Aussies have towards farmers doing the right thing (especially those that are moving with the times and innovating!)

Finally, my suggestion for point 1f in the terms of reference, is that you consider how farming and agricultural practices can be more transparent, particularly further down the supply chain e.g. cameras and/or drug testing in abattoirs, shearing sheds and export ships, which can be reviewed by a regulatory body to ensure animal welfare and other ethical standards are met. Also, ensuring that ethical standards are maintained in the countries where Australian livestock end up. This would increase consumer trust in the Victorian

agricultural industry and negate the need for animal rights activists to obtain such reassurance by illegal means.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Regards,

Laura Murphy

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File1:

File2:

File3: