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

Ms Connie Walker
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Whistleblowers and rescuers are people who love all sentient beings, and are prepared to stand up where they see injustice and cruelty, and do whatever is necessary to shed light on the situations that others might prefer stay hidden. Documentaries like Dominion have done so much to expose practices used in the business of animal commoditization - practices that the general population - the end user in animal commoditization businesses - are unaware of, and judging by the reactions seen, find abhorrent and unacceptable. In a perfect world there would be no need for whistleblowers, because laws and basic commonsense would prohibit the disgraceful abuse of animals that we have been made aware of. Perhaps it would be better to re-evaluate who the criminals actually are.

Respectfully, I would like to see the following:

1. Transparency in all aspects of animal commoditization businesses - including installation of CCTV cameras so that everything can be seen.
2. Proper training and ongoing evaluation of all staff in these businesses - animal cruelty is known to be a precursor to sociopathic and psychopathic behaviours - how do we monitor workers exposed to very trying conditions - surrounded by death and fear?
3. Scrutinizing of current laws - well there are none for farm animals - why not? They are sentient beings too, just like our dogs and cats. Not having laws that protect them in any way just allows for their ongoing mistreatment and abuse. It is a loophole that needs to be addressed urgently.
4. 'Whistleblowing' should not be seen as a criminal activity. In a world where so much is hidden, often for the benefit of the few, we need to applaud whistleblowers - the people who become aware of injustices and at great risk to themselves, do whatever is required to expose the wrongdoing. I might add, that there is no evidence of the rescuers and whistleblowers ever willfully causing harm to others. They conduct themselves peacefully. There have been examples of farmers and other animal commoditization business owners voicing concern and fear for their safety, yet there has never been an incident that warrants the kind of fear-mongering we are witnessing in the media. Why is that?
5. Regarding threat to biosecurity - when animals are left to live in their own filth, when injured animals are left amongst the others with no medical attention, when animals die due to illness or injury, and are left for any amount of time - does this not seem rather

risky? Why are we not questioning the biosecurity risks posed daily on every farm, for instance? Who monitors that?

6. Because these are businesses we are talking about, where is the code of practice? Where are the properly trained inspectors who regularly and randomly inspect every business, to ensure best practices are being adhered to?

7. We need a clearly and carefully thought out set of guidelines for the animal commoditization businesses ensuring proper care and treatment of all animals in their sphere of control - created by independent people (that is,have no vested interest in the outcome). Do these people exist?

8. Finally, we are a nation of people who have prided ourselves on caring for the less fortunate, for fighting injustice, for protecting the vulnerable. We need to remember who we are, and construct our laws and guidelines for living accordingly. When others show us where we stray, we need to stop and listen, not attack them for the inconvenience this poses. This is the mark of the intelligent evolving human.

Thank you.

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File1:

File2:

File3: