

From: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture
Sent: Tuesday, 18 June 2019 8:34 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

Ms Julie McHenry

T:

E:

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

--

I have addressed three of the points of reference below and added one last point about the animals.

Point of reference b. Risks and Reputation.

While I think it's important to protect against these risks, I believe a realistic assessment comparing the level of these risks against the existing reality of animal abuse within the industry, and its impact on said international reputation, is needed. Furthermore, if these small potential biosecurity risks are used to effectively outlaw whistleblowers from exposing cruelty, such as the infamous "Ag Gag" laws in the USA, that will also raise suspicions and affect Victoria's, and Australia's, international reputation even further than it already has been. Australia's reputation regarding whistleblower protections is already damaged following the Federal Police raid on the ABC and the silencing of the press regarding other issues the public has a right to know about, I quote; > (Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2019/jun/06/whistleblower-protections-a-sham-says-lawyer-whose-leaks-led-to-abc-raids>)

I hope concerns about the threat of Australia being seen as a "totalitarian regime" or, worse still, becoming one, are higher than potential biosecurity risks posed by whistleblowers.

Point of reference d. Liability of promoters/organisers.

I believe the risks are similar to the point I made above regarding being seen as a "totalitarian regime". Whistleblowers are, by their very nature, "unauthorised". Those who organise or promote peaceful forms of activism cannot be held responsible for the actions of the individuals who decide to follow or not follow the law, and to what extent, when participating. Making the messenger legally responsible for the actions of others, I believe, is an attempt to silence anyone who wants to object to the status quo. It fits in better with a regime than the free society I hope Australia wants to be or return to being.

Point of reference f. Recommendations. The only way to stop whistleblowers is to reform industry so that whistleblowers are no longer so desperately needed. CCTV in all slaughterhouses, independent random inspections of farms of routine procedures carried out on farms to ensure high welfare at all times, change in

animal welfare laws to give farmed animals the kind of protection companion animals have so include them under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, implement much harsher penalties against those found guilty of abuse wherever it happens whether on farms, during transport, slaughter etc, are a minimum requirement. These laws and codes need to reflect the reality of animal sentience, as do the penalties for anyone who doesn't respect this fact.

THE ANIMALS.

Last, but definitely not least, what about the animals? What about those chickens legally stuffed into cages, pigs legally being gassed, calves and sheep legally being shipped overseas to either cook alive on these hellish ships or face unimaginable horrors at destination, the routine abuses on farms, in hatcheries or slaughterhouses including being debeaked, disbudded, macerated, gassed..? All considered "humane". Humane means compassionate. How can any of these horrific, but standard, acts of cruelty ever be considered acts of compassion? Whistleblowers are not the ones who need investigating and being put at the centre of an enquiry. Animal agriculture needs investigating and reforming, not activists who are simply trying to expose it all.

Thank you for your consideration.

--

File1:

File2:

File3: