

Jessica Rogers

## SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I'd like to thank the committee for accepting submissions on this important issue.

I grew up spending much of my time on farms and around animals, a lot of my extended family members are dairy, sheep and beef farmers, dad worked on the kill floor when I was a kid at our local slaughter house, I grew up loving animals, I spend most of my time around them and I was never sheltered from the darker aspects of animal farming and this is what moulded me into the person I am today. In 2018 I was involved in an action at Gathercoles in Carrum Downs, Victoria where the facilities own CCTV footage (leaked.com.au) had been leaked for a second time (similar footage had been released just 5 months prior: [https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lambchoices.com%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3Xz\\_gIfco2QAO7D-4-JO4-KE9JdO-XOCUuJde1wCqiyQ8i9NXEEDPfc\\_Y&h=AT12gUsABUXBikqs9TUBkgdiABjFaUaGvxbacGfM1wT0sejcyAm5uN6D3oMwOTbvHd4T5rBTDSHOAhr1TKqkzPUAb4yZKGLyn4-nQUntwFYjScqQz6yghMYz4iYO-Z18mR8JO7QarVteVohTihM1](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lambchoices.com%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3Xz_gIfco2QAO7D-4-JO4-KE9JdO-XOCUuJde1wCqiyQ8i9NXEEDPfc_Y&h=AT12gUsABUXBikqs9TUBkgdiABjFaUaGvxbacGfM1wT0sejcyAm5uN6D3oMwOTbvHd4T5rBTDSHOAhr1TKqkzPUAb4yZKGLyn4-nQUntwFYjScqQz6yghMYz4iYO-Z18mR8JO7QarVteVohTihM1)) by whistle blowers, of workers torturing sheep. I spent approximately 9 hours on the roof of the facility with a hand full of other concerned members of the public in order to spread awareness of the footage as appropriate action had clearly not been taken 5 months prior in order to prevent further suffering of animals, the action resulted in a complete retraining and reassessment of the staff, the facility was shunned by the industry claiming that it was something of a "bad egg" and not a true reflection of the animal killing industry however in the same year I attended many more actions revealing footage of cruelty and mistreatment of animals, one of which being the Benalla slaughterhouse where the work place has been reported 4 years in a row for having a home-made electric prod hooked directly up to mains power with voltage that could kill a worker. (<https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/photos?id=0f0fff3b18da96d9f2fc>) Workers have been filmed hosing down pigs before prodding them up the anus and on the genitals, to this day the prod still sits upon the c02 gondola and is used daily. (<https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/videos?id=477c1ea983>)

I also attended an action in Keysborough where hidden camera footage exposed failed stunning of chickens resulting in hens either having their throats slit or/and being lowered into boiling water whilst still fully conscious. (<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/horrific-footage-shows-chickens-being-scalded-to-death-at-melbourne-abattoir/news-story/4252d3ed35cce70f9dcccfa0c5013a63>)

These are just a few of countless examples I have, the system that we have in place is clearly broken, surely Documentaries like Lucent and Dominion are proof enough to show that there is not enough protection for the sentient beings we share this earth with. I cannot comprehend how we can live in a world where animal abusers are protected when the people bringing the cruelty to light face jail time and an up to \$400,000 fine. Please, we are begging for you to hear us. Every year in Australia, 520-620 million animals are killed and they need your help.

a. the type and prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian farms and related industries, and the application of existing legislation;

Unauthorised activity on Victorian farms and related industries are generally confined to structures dedicated to the use of animals which are generally large-scale animal production facilities and are not located near the homes of farmers or their families. Whistle blowers have no interest in entering living environments of farmers thus there is no evidence of whistle blowers committing such behaviour as contrary to what Farmers and the bias Media would have you believe using grossly dramatized terms like “vegan terrorists” due to people like the Chairman of channel 7 Kerry Stokes – a multi-billion dollar agricultural tycoon who owns over 1 million acres of grazing land as of 2017

(<https://www.theland.com.au/story/5917327/kerry-stokes-sells-kangaroo-island-aggregation/?src=rss>) Kerry Stokes also owns shareholdings in Bubs Australia, (<https://www.afr.com/business/media-and-marketing/tv/how-the-rich-invest-kerry-stokes-20180314-h0xg29>) a maker of infant formula [REDACTED]

b. the workplace health and safety and biosecurity risks, and potential impacts of animal activist activity on Victorian farms, to Victoria’s economy and international reputation;

there has never been a case of a whistle blower introducing disease or infection to a farm as we care about the animals and are always very careful to sanitise ourselves before and after entering animal farming or killing facilities and always seem to be the only people wearing bio security clothing where as farmers are allowed to sell the faeces of their animals to the public as manure or spend hens and again in 2018 I attended a truck roll over just outside Ballarat, Melbourne

([https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thecourier.com.au%2Fstory%2F5226627%2Fhundreds-of-sheep-perish-after-two-trucks-crash-in-one-day%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR1IngosNeSW-EayE2zIWTqnuVWhY9fKdNjhhAGHMJ1oNJJeJEyLHMz8qU&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF\\_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc\\_8Ic73hvh4vf6\\_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb\\_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thecourier.com.au%2Fstory%2F5226627%2Fhundreds-of-sheep-perish-after-two-trucks-crash-in-one-day%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR1IngosNeSW-EayE2zIWTqnuVWhY9fKdNjhhAGHMJ1oNJJeJEyLHMz8qU&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc_8Ic73hvh4vf6_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq)) where after DIP had finished cleaning up and left we recovered 8 live ewes with snapped legs and severe bruising and internal bleeding left to suffer and die slowly as well as the bodies 3 more sheep. Then just 2 weeks later in NSW there was another truck roll over carrying day old chicks, activists attended the sight after DPI had finished cleaning up and had left it was discovered that they had taken the scoop of a tractor and pushed all of the debris into a pile burying hundreds if not thousands of chicks alive, they were found after people could hear the muffled chirps of babies under the dirt, hours were spent carefully sifting through the dirt rescuing countless baby birds yet in none of these instances anybody was held accountable for breaching bio security.

([https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com.au%2Famp%2Famp.abc.net.au%2Farticle%2F9627212%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2eshsfdasKsi8HA9U2akiPEIXbo9bCywuiZ1BVA8yn1IUWx5oigOovqNM&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF\\_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc\\_8Ic73hvh4vf6\\_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb\\_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com.au%2Famp%2Famp.abc.net.au%2Farticle%2F9627212%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2eshsfdasKsi8HA9U2akiPEIXbo9bCywuiZ1BVA8yn1IUWx5oigOovqNM&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc_8Ic73hvh4vf6_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq)) [https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.illawarramercury.com.au%2Fstory%2F5327881%2Fbaby-chicks-buried-alive-in-yass-truck-crash-clean-up-claims%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3GjzSMadOg4Va-x-tYWfnuZF6SUuWqwhWDyMau9c8IUph4LY8BLFV489I&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF\\_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc\\_8Ic73hvh4vf6\\_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb\\_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.illawarramercury.com.au%2Fstory%2F5327881%2Fbaby-chicks-buried-alive-in-yass-truck-crash-clean-up-claims%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3GjzSMadOg4Va-x-tYWfnuZF6SUuWqwhWDyMau9c8IUph4LY8BLFV489I&h=AT1cuoxEGZR6YMvAM2LJbCjSF_B0sn3ShCzDBr5wkc_8Ic73hvh4vf6_VA7Yj2mhIvFuueO8hsyHswP0IchuGGRcHQNwsFVwr9lZb_gDWoqp0nSXnQD6ILntQ8-Yjlrzi0rJYTPArOpcMDLtZ7vq)

c. animal activists' compliance with the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986;

Having grown up in a farming community, activists are the least concern to the biosecurity on Australian farms. Up until this year for example, a positive test for Johnes disease would flag a cattle property for 12 months, and though any dairy farmer will tell you that every herd will have some cattle affected with Johnes disease (an incurable, chronic wasting disease), testing isn't mandatory so the possibility of being flagged discourages testing at all, and dairy animals are typically culled by the time they show symptoms at 5yo anyway. The culture is to ignore problems and cull when it affects their bottom line, not to prevent. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] CAE is a chronic and painful disease that affects mobility and goats are still forced to walk to milking sheds lame until their bodies can no longer carry them. These animals live in pain until they can no longer bring a profit, and there are no measures to control the diseases for the next generation. With regards to removal of NLIS tags, as a farmed animal rescue I have tagged more calves and lambs with post breeder tags myself that I have had surrendered from farmers than I have been received with relevant tags and documentation. Animals being confined in sheds in large numbers and stressful environments are the bio security risk, period. Antibiotic misuse to control diseases in these environments are the leading cause of antibiotic resistance. The concern is the disease that they are creating getting out of their sheds and off their farms and they make no attempt to contain it themselves. Activists make the effort to wear appropriate biosecurity PPE when we have never witnessed police or farmers use so much as a foot bath before entering a shed or property. Many farming contractors, unlike activists, travel from one like farm to the next with no measures to sanitise shoes, tyres or equipment. Milk tankers, Bobby calf trucks, knackery transport, AI techs, hoof trimmers, shearers, scanning contractors, electrical, plumbing and machinery maintenance, etc. are more likely to spread disease than an activist entering and exiting a single farm. Rodents, cats, and birds coming and going are also more likely carriers of disease.

d. the civil or criminal liability of individuals and organisations who promote or organise participation in unauthorised animal activism activities;

This section seeks to obtain evidence to support the establishment of laws similar to those proposed by The Criminal Code Amendment Bill being considered by the Federal Government, which seeks to introduce penalties (including significant terms of imprisonment) for people who "incite" trespass. This would target organisations such as Aussie Farms.

It seems likely that the amendment will seek to criminalise the publication of information such as address details, etc., to incite tress pass. Such an amendment would have consciences for whistle blowers and the implied freedom of the press/ political communication.

Privacy isn't a protected right in Australia, in fact dairy farmers list the company they supply and the full names of the farmers on their front gates. You can find their details on google, through their ABN, if somebody intended to access a farm for the purpose of gaining footage, lack of access to a website like Aussie Farms Map would not stop them. The map is only for the public to gain perspective of scale and force transparency on an industry, not to target individuals or as a tool to access farms.

e. analyse the incidences and responses of other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally; and This presents a good opportunity to document the failure of Ag- Gag Laws both in Australia and internationally

~ Ag- Gag Laws have been introduced by stealth in both NSW (with amendment to the Biosecurity Act) and SA (with amendment of the Surveillance Devices Act).

~ Attempts to introduce Ag- Gag Laws at a federal level have so far been unsuccessful.

~ Ag- Gags Laws have been introduced into several states in the USA with many more failing to be passed. At least one state has overturned the law as it was deemed to be unconstitutional.

~ The finding in the High Court in Australian Broadcasting Corporation v Lenah Game Meats Pty Ltd

[2001] HCA 6315 November 2001, suggest that if Ag- Gag laws were introduced in Australia, they would be subject to legal challenge.

f. provide recommendations on how the Victorian Government and industry could improve protections for farmers' privacy, businesses, and the integrity of our biosecurity system and animal welfare outcomes, whether through law reform or other measures

There is a current failure of regulation to identify animal cruelty in animal use industries and the standing of Australia in regard to comparisons of other countries in animal welfare is poor. The fact that the majority of animal cruelty identified is done so by whistle blowers is reason enough not to further criminalise the actions of whistle blowers. The lack of transparency of standard animal agricultural practices resulting in the public/consumers being unable to make an informed choice when purchasing animal products. The inherent disconnect in seeking to further criminalise the actions of whistleblowers without seeking to address the animal cruelty that whistle blowers identify is heinous. Potential methods to decreasing the need for whistle blower activity may include increased animal protections under legislation, mandatory animal protection standards, an independent animal protection agency to ensure compliance with animal protection standards and CCTV cameras in animal use and related industries.

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File1:

File2:

File3: