

**F** [REDACTED]

---

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

Bronwyn Currie  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

--

Submission

I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to provide a submission on this important issue.

Whilst we live in a functional democracy I appreciate the opportunity to address the issues of this inquiry. It is better to concentrate on theriocide, that is, humans causing the deaths of animals, legally, the systematic abuse of animals and what to do about that than to look for ways to punish the very people who seek to expose the abuse and killings.

Animal Rights Advocates seek to show the public the systematic cruelty of animal agriculture which is largely hidden as those in agribusinesses do not want the public, their consumers, to know what really happens to the live, sentient beings being farmed and “processed” for food and clothing.

The National Party, in putting forward the motion to hold this inquiry, is focussing on the wrong issue. Animal Rights Advocates, Investigators, Whistle-blowers are vital to exposing the truth where dark deeds are occurring. Seeking to prevent activists from exposing abuses is the wrong focus altogether, the clear focus should be on the perpetrators of violence and abuse against animals in the industry and how to identify, rectify, manage and regulate the industry to prevent abuses occurring at all.

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

I consider the type and prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian farms by animal rights advocates/investigators would be largely unquantifiable as these are primarily covert activities for the purpose of collecting evidence. Usually these activities occur in large scale animal production facilities or factory farms. These are usually large business properties and not residential properties whereby unauthorised entry is not a regular occurrence and is usually in response to a tip off from someone within the agribusiness.

I am unaware of any private residential property ever being entered by an animal rights advocate. Generally for investigations to occur the properties are entered without any staff or business owners aware of the activity being undertaken

These agribusinesses require appropriate codes of conduct, professional recruitment, ongoing training, appropriate regulation and appropriate punishment for breaches whilst

we are on the path to the abolition of these industries altogether.

The National Party needs to provide pathways for those in agribusiness to transition away from animal farming and into plant based production. The National Party completely misses the point in understanding that as consumers become aware of the horrific practices involved with factory farming, the consumer is choosing plant based options in preference to traditional animal products.

I am also unaware of any biosecurity events occurring as a result of an animal rights investigation or open rescue. What has been obvious however are biosecurity risks being clearly evident to animal rights advocates in the factory farms themselves.

It is critical to note that production animals are exempt from protection under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and as such, legislation is woefully inadequate to account for sentient beings being used, abused and exploited. There is however existing and adequate legislation which deals with trespass matters. It is also important to note that our judiciary determines appropriate penalties for unauthorised activities and not our parliament.

Lastly on this point, the industry must recognise the dire effect of animal agriculture on our climate. We are in undeniable climate crisis and animal agriculture is proven unsustainable.

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;

This issue of biosecurity is routinely raised to further discredit advocates. It is generally the activists who take great care and are aware of biosecurity hazards and take care with their apparel and hygiene, on the contrary in some facilities the biosecurity is an absolute joke as rodents, domestic animals, filthy facilities, poor hygiene and police entering and leaving factory farm buildings can be seen without any concern for biosecurity whatsoever. I am unaware of any biosecurity event, ever, being caused by an animal rights advocate.

c) Animal activists' compliance with the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010, and the Prevention of Animal Cruelty Act 1986;

These Acts are insufficient in dealing with sentient beings. Why is one group of animals protected yet others who experience pain and suffering in exactly the same way, are not. This is hypocritical. Cruelty is cruelty, if certain things are an offence to commit against certain animals, it should apply equally to all animals. Currently in farmed animal production all manner of horrific cruelty is perpetrated and under existing laws, totally legal such as mulesing, beak trimming, tail docking, ear notching etc all without pain relief. Done to a domestic animal cruelty charges would be laid.

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

As long as systemic use, abuse, torture and exploitation of animals, sentient beings, exists animal rights advocates will seek to expose the truth to the public. Government seeking to punish those who expose the truth would be ill advised and I expect will do nothing to diminish the unauthorised activities of those determined to expose the actual abusers. Respectful conversations between all parties would achieve far more than attempting to silence whistle-blowers. There are sufficient existing laws to deal with all manner of civil disobedience and are not required in relation specifically to animal rights advocates and whistle-blowers.

e) Analyse the incidences and responses of other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally;

Ag-Gag laws ultimately will fail because the truth must be told no matter the cost. The sooner government takes action to transition agribusinesses to plant based futures the better for farmers, consumers and the environment.

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.

Animal protection laws currently in Victoria fail spectacularly to protect animals, especially those within agribusinesses. It is pointless to attempt to punish investigators, whistle-blowers and animal rights advocates who seek to do nothing more than expose animal cruelty and rescue injured and suffering animals.

The very people deserving to be scrutinised are those causing the harm, farmers and workers in the animal farming and processing industries. There is a significant lack of transparency within the industry, scant regulation, lack of regard to animal welfare, lack of appropriate penalties. The entire industry requires significant review and monitoring and at the very least CCTV cameras must be installed to every processing plant and an Independent animal protection agency must exist and replace the inept and impotent RSPCA who accepts money from the very people it is supposed to monitor for breaches – ridiculous!

--

File1:

File2:

File3: