

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

Animal activism and public awareness comes in many forms, categories are;

1. Staged awareness protests in public spaces
2. Staged awareness protests in and on facilities that kill exploit, consume animals for profit, pleasure or entertainment. (Public or private)
3. Filming injured, neglected or poor husbandry practices from public or private land
4. Acting on a duty of care and seeking medical attention for suffering, neglected or abused animals that would otherwise perish.
5. Using social media to create awareness of how our food is made, bred and produced
6. Using social media to highlight lack of law enforcement, lack of legislation in regards to protection
7. Using social media to expose known abusers that flaunt lack of animal protection
8. Whistle-blowers planting cameras to capture cruelty and neglect with no contact with business owners or operators.

There are many other forms of this but above merely highlights the main types.

The prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian Farms is minimal compared to the public awareness campaigns launched in non- farm situations. And in fact farm or associated business operators would rarely if ever come in contact with whistle-blowers. Seeking proof is sought and confined to obtaining information. Interacting with an operator can be seen as extremely counterproductive. Often violent reactions, it's the intention to not interact and gather proof.

Example; cruelty covered up or removed before being reported or exposed.

It's in my opinion that legislation is sought to shut down all of the above points mentioned. And in fact lines have been blurred deliberately to protect abusers.

A push to protect the Animal Ag industry is being played out by means of false claims of intimidation, family violence, and theft and in some cases farm animals being abused by the very people that intend to protect them.

The existing legislation that covers trespass is adequate. A farmer or animal Ag business should NOT be entitled to initiate, influence or lie to evoke singled out punishment for means of only protecting what they do. Trespass in most cases has a purpose, and that is to expose, so naturally anybody guilty would desire protection from whistle-blowers aiming to expose systemic cruelty and neglect throughout an entire sector.

I reference;

2019 report titled Australia's Shifting Mindset on Animal Welfare commissioned by the federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources suggests it's the majority of Australians who care about animal welfare. The report found 95% of respondents viewed farm animal welfare with concern and 91% wanted reform to address it.

Using the above report as reference, a focused target on the people that fight hard to implement what majority of Australians want is nothing short of evil and misleading. If most Australians new that Farm animals are classed as items of a dollar value with no specific laws to protect their sentience, majority would feel this push to adjust legislation or in fact introduce new legislation would be seen as a fight against welfare improvements.

It is blatantly clear that media play a big role in steering this new legislation change. Fuelling an exaggerated situation, creating public sympathy campaigns to encourage hate toward people that simply want laws to improve. For the animals people choose to consume are no less than the animals we choose to live with us in our homes.

I reference a Weekly Times article;

A corrupt Murdoch press that constantly manipulate truth to promote an agenda. Stop compassion, stop veganism, stop welfare improvements.

[https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/victoria/the-last-straw-family-gets-out-of-farming-after-activist-attacks/news-story/bc6ab704fb98f667f2520930bf288e5f?fbclid=IwAR2VcjxxK9xJTZ1pDvwZcDfn1fK6KEiCVjgVHec4ATebHUEi7J\\_oGb5AQA0](https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/victoria/the-last-straw-family-gets-out-of-farming-after-activist-attacks/news-story/bc6ab704fb98f667f2520930bf288e5f?fbclid=IwAR2VcjxxK9xJTZ1pDvwZcDfn1fK6KEiCVjgVHec4ATebHUEi7J_oGb5AQA0)

This article highlights the abuser as a victim and leaves out important truths to fuel an agenda. Even states mid article that activists waited for police to arrive. And that agenda is at the heart of this legislation change.

The article makes no reference to the farmer being caught carrying out horrific animal neglect, abuse and suffering within their business. Whistle-blowers obtained footage and the case was acted upon by the RSPCA.

Worth noting; what punishment did this business owner receive? And what powers did RSPCA have to prosecute? This information is not known or obtainable by the public.

Reading many of the submissions already indicates an emotional response from the average small scale farmer that has in no way ever experienced trespass or any repercussions from animal activism.

Totally fuelled and influenced by a media agenda. Legislation changes will have zero impact on these farmers but in fact merely protect large scale animal exploitation that already fly under a protective radar that are guilty of poor animal welfare.

In summing, I'm questioning the intention of this new legislation. The wording "Victorian Farms" as it implies small scale operators but in fact it's large scale factory farms that are often the target of whistle-blowers.

- 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;

Firstly, Australia has had Zero cases of a biosecurity risk caused by activism. Many known protests that have been on places that biosecurity is a concern have shown to care in the way of full white protective suits, masks etc. Whist staff and workers display no such protective equipment. I fail to see how workplace health and safety is in any way a topic of conversation in this legislation proposal. The examples of this needing to be debated are non-existent. The reality is a whistle-blower puts their own health at risk by entering some of these known contaminated businesses.

Biosecurity in Australia is what I would consider a joke. From witnessing many situations via whistle-blower reports, general observation and in some cases seeing this poor standard with my own eyes the pork and chicken industry run rampant with no regulation at all.

There is no biosecurity on an average family farm in regards to sheep and cattle. Literal none what so ever, so to imply that whistle-blowers put these businesses at risk via exposing the truth is merely a lie.

I note Meredith Goats cheese factory Victoria. It's had the largest outbreak of QFever in the country. It's deadly to older people and no vaccine for children. Yet this farm operates in an open air facility knowing QFever is an airborne disease. [REDACTED]

There have literally been so many cases of disease infested chicken farms that show no biosecurity or containment that I would consider any talk of biosecurity as simply being a made up word. Many open air facilities allowing wildlife to enter, dirt and dust to be blown through.

There are many cases of chickens simply falling out the back of trucks onto the freeway.

I quote;

There were bizarre scenes outside a Melbourne KFC yesterday as dozens of dazed chickens wandered around the car park after falling off the back of a truck.

Reference; <https://www.9news.com.au/national/chickens-fall-off-back-of-truck-and-end-up-at-kfc/d3d8980f-4b22-427d-9190-11dae2490335>

There are so many scenarios it's not practical to mention.

However, at this point in my submission I'm going to highlight a huge miscarriage of justice. And what myself and many consider a standard cover up of an average chicken farm or processing plant.

And one that I had direct involvement with in regards to the group protest at this facility. The business also showed a complete lack of biosecurity, if in fact disease control was at the heart of this meaningless word.

Star Poultry Melbourne

Nov 2017 case

I quote; Agriculture Victoria said it was satisfied with remedial action taken by Star Poultry Supply and would not be initiating any animal cruelty investigation.

"The footage is extremely horrific and very distressing to watch," RSPCA's chicken welfare specialist Kate Hartcher told the ABC.

The cruel practice was captured on video by animal rights campaigners inside Keysborough slaughterhouse Star Poultry Supply earlier this year and was aired by the ABC last night.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/melbourne-abattoir-filmed-boiling-chickens-alive/736a92b8-e6f2-4da1-a105-3a2a09faba17>

Since this case aired on the ABC, it was expected that a reprimand would have been issued to the business. But as stated above by Agriculture Victoria, no action was taken. Therefor activists arranged a protest to highlight this grouse miscarriage of justice. Again activists found mass suffering, but this time on the trucks

outside. All witnessed by a Channel 7 reporter. Chickens parts strewn all over the drive, chickens heads squashed between the crates on trucks. It was yet another shocking example of the chicken industry.

That night Channel 7 reported on one chicken being saved by activists and a little disagreement between police and them. Activists as were portrayed as extreme rebels with a disregard for law. Completely leaving out any animal suffering and avoiding the reason the protest action had taken place in the first instance. Animal cruelty was exposed and nothing was done about it.

A much bigger and evil injustice was carried out after this case was exposed. The lady that brought the case to media and in fact was the whistle-blower has had to move home. Her animal rescue sanctuary fell under attack. So much so some of her rescue animals were stolen, cut into pieces and dropped back on her door step. To this day police have not actioned this crime. Her suffering and the cruelty inflicted onto her animals is a direct result of the corruption that runs deep in animal exploitation.

To imply that activists are responsible for any affect to economy and reputation is appalling. These industries are the ones that continually bring down their own industries via no improvement and clearly constant cruelty and neglect. It is media that protect them from international shame.

I'm using this article from "The Australian" dated September 2012. The article reports on seminars held in Victoria and Tasmania. Jason Trompf, president of the national Lambex spoke at length. And not only confirmed shocking statistics about the sheep industry, but in fact warned them seven years ago that if no change was made to the neglect of 15 million lambs each year dying from nothing more than poor practices, activists will shame their entire industry, locally and internationally.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/end-to-the-silence-about-15-million-dead-lambs/news-story/dcf08eddf63e33380a5f26004c596bf>

Mr Trompf is convinced that unless sheep producers focus more on lamb survival rates instead of regarding them as a sad but unavoidable consequence of adverse weather during lambing -- they could face an international anti-wool and lamb backlash from animal cruelty campaigners to rival last year's live cattle export trade-to-Indonesia controversy.

"This is an opportunity for farmers to show they are willing to be more accountable to the wider public, to be upfront and proactive about an issue that can't be ignored any longer, and to do something about a problem that is costing us, an industry, one-third of our genetic potential."

Mr Trompf's determination to raise the issue at Lambex and recent seminars in Victoria and Tasmania has not met with the approval of the upper echelons of the sheep and wool industry.

Since this article was printed, the sheep industry has gotten worse. We have seen no change in the 15 million newborn lambs left to die. I witness this suffering continually in the place I live.

We have seen farmers breed sheep and let them starve when no food is available. Farmers send pregnant ewes off to slaughter, which I must add is an atrocious practice that is the epitome of human neglect and abuse. Sheep birthing on the back of cattle trucks on the way to slaughter. Newborn lambs falling onto the highway. A recent case of a man that carried out caesarean section on his sheep, stitched them up with dental floss, with no pain relief. He was ordered to pay court fines, had his name suppressed and was allowed to go back to farming. Just recently an animal rescue sanctuary purchased 4 ewes for sale on gumtree. They were sold as meat only. When these sheep made it to the sanctuary, all were pregnant and two had broken legs and other obvious injuries. I could list a million examples of barbaric behaviour within the sheep industry. And further prove that laws are nothing when it comes to protecting farm animals. Our governments are guilty of no action in a myriad of ways.

The industry has just announced its push to genetically manipulate ewes to carry four lambs. Sheep only have two nipples, so any push to exploit their bodies further is a push for deliberate and known cruelty.

After stating the above, how could anybody rationally think that activism is the cause of economic loss from exposing the truth? The lack of improvements within the sector and the turn a blind eye attitude that has been going on for years is the only cause, they deserve as a whole to lose all business. The moral licence was revoked a very long time ago.

Any tarnished reputation is the 100% responsibility of these industries and our governments, State and Federal.

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

The above codes are industry operator's guidelines. Activists play no role in any of these codes. Any issues with compliance have already been stated in the above comments.

Industry themselves have little regard for the codes of practice and activists expose many breaches whilst pursuing animal welfare issues.

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

To single out animal activists in this regard is evidence that freedom of speech is being compromised.

Unauthorised is a loose term in regard to which grounds an activism display is carried out upon.

All animal activism protests are peaceful displays with no intent of harm. They show a display of solidarity toward a common belief or goal, to expose the truth.

As mentioned in previous text. An action typically has a purpose or reasoning behind it. Animal cruelty has been exposed on the site of protest. No group or individual should be held liable for organising what is essentially a demonstration. If held on private land the police are quick to act and disperse. Does promote or organise apply to 3 people or several hundred people. The line is not clear and therefore unless defined no such liability should be issued. Refer back to my first points of the various forms of activism, which form of activism would be defined as being criminal? No definition is outlined.

e. **analyse the incidences and responses of other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally; and**

Many other countries have already enforced CCTV in slaughter houses. Europe has defined the temperatures at which an animal will start to suffer. Some foreign states have classed all animals as sentient. NZ has banned live export for consumption purposes. California has refused to accept Kangaroo products out of protest due to horrid barbaric treatment of them. I believe Australia should be leading the way with animal protection laws, however just these simple few examples show that we have fallen behind or place economic profit over welfare.

- 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.

Firstly farmer privacy is the exaggerated part of this entire push to punish whistle-blowers. If privacy means you are not permitted to expose the cruel practices they may enact. Then no improvements are necessary. No privacy issues have been breached by activism. Again, exposing abuse is the goal, not revealing private details.

The integrity of biosecurity is the sole responsibility of the government. As has been mentioned, our biosecurity is poor to non-existent in many cases. It's a flawed system, focusing on containing disease, or acting in some loose manner to avoid escape, but really industries should be operating in a way that avoids having disease in the first place.

I feel I've expressed my point on this topic already. The average farmer operates with zero concern for codes in regard to biosecurity. And that's because they have no need to be concerned. They have no disease that could be spread by visitors. Intensive factory farming ie pigs and chickens are the only concerns for disease and bacteria and that is due to the nature of operations. Reduce numbers, change practices and biosecurity would not be of concern.

The biggest and foremost improvements that can be made to animal welfare are to stop industry from controlling reform. Act on cruelty cases and make sure law issues correct punishment.

Establish an independent body of animal welfare operated by industry free individuals who have the power to prosecute and take the prosecution side of cases away from the RSPCA. Update animal agriculture guide lines to reflect a modern society that expects a lot more.

Integrity will only be achieved when full transparency is issued. If killing animals was an accepted part of society than nobody would have an issue with standard practices. Prevent industries such as dairy being allowed to promote in schools and pay for false research and spread propaganda. Stop all online sales of animals. The list is endless when it comes to improvements because Australia has fallen so far behind. And that is why activism has become so prevalent, government inaction.

Regards

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